

# **Religious Education Policy**

**Name of School:**

St Mary's C of E Primary School

**Consultation:**

This policy has been drawn up by the governors at St Mary's School, following recommendations from Birmingham LA and Diocese of Birmingham.

## **ETHOS STATEMENT**

In accordance with the aims of the school, the Governing Body of St Mary's believe that all members of the school community should be esteemed, cared for, treated courteously and encouraged to make their unique contribution. Within our Christian ethos of love, forgiveness and justice for each person as a valued child of God, we aim to develop understanding and respect for each other's faith, culture and language, and to teach, exemplify and uphold equal opportunities for all.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Religious Education (R.E.) at St Mary's C of E School fulfils the requirements of The Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2007 and is regularly reviewed in the light of guidance from Birmingham Diocesan Board of Education and Non Statutory Guidance produced at regular intervals to support the Agreed Syllabus. At St Mary's we believe that "Every child matters to God" and recognise that Religious Education makes a distinctive contribution to the life of the church school. As such, our behaviour systems incorporate the dispositions and clusters from the RE scheme of work for the children to work towards and consider daily.

RE teaching is most effective when it includes learning from faith and learning about religious traditions. Together, these topics develop pupils' awareness of that religion is about, including its function in human life. Pupils are unlikely to learn effectively from faith if they have inadequate knowledge and understanding of the religions being taught. But, to learn fully about religions pupils need to be involved in forming some kind of response to what is being taught.

RE will provide opportunities for:

- **spiritual development**, through helping pupils to consider and respond to questions of meaning and purpose in life, and questions about the nature of values in human society;
- **moral development**, through helping pupils to consider and respond to areas of morality using their knowledge and understanding of religious and ethical teaching. This enables them to make reasoned and informed judgements on religious and moral issues;
- **social development**, through helping pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in a plural society;
- **cultural development**, through fostering pupils' awareness and understanding of a range of beliefs, practices and values in their own society and in the wider world. Pupils explore issues within and between faiths, developing their understanding of the cultural contexts within which they live.

## **WHAT ARE OUR AIMS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ST MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL?**

At this school we uphold the aims of the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus, and in addition we believe that as a church school, Religious Education should offer opportunities (for us) to:

- provide children with an understanding and knowledge of Christianity- its beliefs, traditions and festivals.
- sustain a view of God as central to our daily lives (both within and beyond the school community) and to create opportunities for God to be (revered, worshipped and prayed to) the focus of reverence, worship and prayer through our daily acts of worship and other activities.
- nurture the spiritual growth of each child in our care, by introducing them to and enabling them to reflect on the many wonders in their own lives and the world beyond.
- foster links with places of worship and representatives of religious groups of the faiths learned about in R.E lessons (both locally and in other parts of Birmingham) – see Collective Worship Policy.
- Establish and utilise strong curricular links with the range of core and foundation subjects

The pupils will:

- develop a caring attitude towards others.
- experience the significance of religion for many in our community, through a range of activities including meeting people, sharing stories, hearing music seeing art;
- have the opportunity to discover and research information at appropriate depth about a range of approaches to life and faith;
- evaluate the experiences and information for themselves, to consider their personal response to moral and religious life, and to make decisions about the way in which they will choose to live;
- develop the skills of living in a world where people of different faiths are valued.

### **RE CURRICULUM PLANNING**

As a church school we believe that Christianity has a primary place in the teaching of RE. A scheme of work based on the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus will be followed in conjunction with guidance from the Diocese of Birmingham for Church Schools. We ensure that the topics studied in RE build on prior learning as part of a spiral curriculum. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

During the course of their time at this school, pupils will become familiar with the main stories, symbols and ceremonies of each major world faith (i.e. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism). Knowledge of religions will also be acquired by experiencing celebrations, festivals and rituals, and appreciating their symbolic significance. We intend that our

strong link with the parish church of St. Mary's and its clergy, and links with other religious communities, will enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding by providing opportunities for first hand learning experiences.

We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach RE topics in conjunction with other subjects, where possible. Across each key phase at least 5% of curriculum time will be devoted to the teaching of RE. This time may be blocked if required.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. At the end of each unit the teacher evaluates the effectiveness of the planning and resources used. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.

### **THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

In reception classes, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

### **HOW DO WE ASSESS AND RECORD PUPIL DEVELOPMENT?**

Pupils' attainment in R.E. will be assessed against the attainment target descriptions in the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. Class teachers will take into account the evidence of the knowledge and understanding that each pupil demonstrates in his/ her written work and art work; personal comments and reflection; contributions to discussions and debate; contributions to relevant cross curricular work e.g. in Drama. Music, Science, PSHE.

### **HOW IS THE SUBJECT RESOURCED?**

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our RE teaching units. We keep resources for RE in a central store. There are a variety of bibles that are suitable for use in both Key Stages, and a collection of religious artefacts that we use to enrich teaching in RE. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research. Religious Education is allocated a sum of money annually from the school's budget. Resources are purchased to meet the needs of the Programmes of Study, in consultation with the headteacher and staff.

### **INCLUSION**

At our school, we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. RE forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our RE teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or

different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

All pupils have the right of withdrawal from R.E. However, before exercising this right, parents must submit a written request which will then be followed by a meeting with the Headteacher.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The teaching of R.E. will be monitored regularly, according to the school's monitoring timetable. The Policy and Programmes of Study for R.E. will be reviewed bi-annually according to the review timetable.

The coordination and planning of the RE curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in RE and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in RE and indicates areas for further improvement;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe RE lessons across the school.