

A St. Michael's CE (VA) Junior School Policy



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Reviewed by Staff:	Summer 2015
Ratified by Pupil & Curriculum Committee:	Summer 2015
To be reviewed:	Summer 2018

Policy: Religious Education

Vision:

"RE gives children space, the chance to be themselves, and the realisation that there is not always a right answer to things, that a lot of people have come up with different answers to the same question."
(Ian Jameson, Award-winning RE Teacher)

Aims and Objectives:

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At St .Michael's Junior School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of their Christian faith as well as the other major world faiths. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn from religions as well as about religions.

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

Teaching and Learning Style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter and other major Christian festivals, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. Visits to and services in St.Michael's Church are organised regularly and local clergy know they have an open invitation to come into the school.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as festivals. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in class led, whole school assemblies.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- grouping the children by mixed ability in the room and setting different tasks for each group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Access and Entitlement

RE has equal standing in relation to National Curriculum subjects within the curriculum. Although Religious Education is a statutory subject within the basic curriculum, parents have the right to withdraw their child from RE in part or whole. Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Headteacher. A statement on withdrawal is published in the school brochure. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure alternative arrangements are in place.

Time allocation

The scheme of work is designed to provide course material for one hour of RE per week, which is taught as discrete or blocked lessons. As a church school this is sometimes exceeded due to other events, e.g. assemblies.

Curriculum Planning in Religious Education

We plan our religious education curriculum using the Scheme of Work provided by the Diocese of Chelmsford. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

Some units of work are also school designed as they may coincide with a theme being studied at the time e.g. during a theme on World War 2, the faith of Judaism may be explored.

The class teacher writes medium term plans each half term and will often discuss them on an informal basis with the RE Subject Leader. The RE Subject Leader is also responsible for observing RE lessons to ensure the quality of planning and teaching is of a high standard.

Contribution of Religious Education to the teaching of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship (British Values)

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Collective Worship Policy

Aims and purpose

The aims and purpose of collective worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship God;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship.

Collective worship

At St. Michael's CE Junior School we understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in the assembly.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our assemblies on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church.

While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Organisation of collective worship

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school. This forms part of each morning assembly, which is a whole-school assembly.

We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and sometimes candles or other objects that act as a focal point for the attention of the children.

The children plan and lead assemblies every Wednesday based upon the theme of the week. All children get a chance to participate in class assemblies.

The Headteacher, other members of staff, the children and local clergy conduct assemblies, but sometimes local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups conduct them instead.

We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our assemblies as part of a series of themes well in advance of the day they take place.

Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of schools. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. St. Michael's Church of England Junior School is a successful school and we shall celebrate the successes of all the children in assemblies. We also acknowledge birthdays of all our children and staff and have changed one line to the "Happy Birthday" song which again reflects our Christian values: "God bless you and keep you."

With God's love, we all achieve together.

We invite parents to an Achievers' assembly on a weekly basis and we encourage them to attend, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children.

We visit St. Michael's Church four times a year for our harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' services. These are led by the children and always attended by parents and members of our school community.

We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.

Monitoring and review

It is the role of a named school governor with responsibility for religious education and collective worship to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. The governor concerned liaises with the Headteacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship.