

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



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Reviewed by Staff:	Summer 2019
Ratified by Full Governors:	Summer 2019
To be reviewed:	Summer 2022

Policy: Religious Education

By God's love, we all flourish together.

Vision

At St Michael's, by God's love and through our Christian values of Love, Faith, Respect and Courage, we celebrate uniqueness and nurture curiosity, enabling each child to flourish on their own rich learning journey.

"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:

At St Michael's CE (VA) Junior School, we aim to provide the best possible education for each child within the context of a caring Christian community. Our school values underpin all aspects of school life, including behaviour and relationships within our school.

Religious Education (R.E.) is taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, which will enable each and every child to develop confidently to the very best of their ability. Our curriculum promotes the spiritual, cultural, intellectual, moral, mental, physical, health and social well-being of each child. We strive to provide a high standard of education for all children, irrespective of gender, culture, ability or aptitude.

Through RE, children learn about both Christianity and other world religions and develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition, to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today and to have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society. In addition to this, they are able to develop their own sense of identity, personal values and beliefs. Alongside subject knowledge, the teaching of RE promotes key life skills such as tolerance, acceptance, respect, love and care. Religious education at St Michael's enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people.

Religious Education teaching at St Michael's will enable pupils to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge, understanding and respect for the beliefs and practices of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain;
- Reflect on beliefs, values and traditions in order to understand their influence on individuals, communities and culture;
- Make informed responses to religious and moral issues;
- Express curiosity about and learn to grapple with fundamental questions of life;
- Develop and deepen their own belief, values and sense of self-worth;
- Make their own spiritual journey.

Teaching and Learning

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. We use an enquiry-based approach, which ensures that 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.

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Teaching and learning in RE enables 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 deliver weekly collective worship, share lunch with the children and provide pastoral support for both children and staff.

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;
- Incorporating the use of religious artefacts, ICT opportunities and other resources to enhance the children's learning;
- Using support staff effectively to support or enhance children's learning.

Equality and Inclusion

There are many opportunities to promote equality throughout RE teaching. Respect and equality form an integral part of every R.E. lesson.

Although Religious Education is a statutory subject within the National Curriculum and a core subject within our church school, in some circumstances, parents may wish to withdraw their child from R.E. in school, however this has to be organized and agreed in consultation with the Headteacher.

Curriculum Planning in Religious Education

We plan our religious education curriculum using Understanding Christianity as a major resource and the Essex Agreed Syllabus (other faiths). We use Fruit of the Spirit as a resource to develop character and link it to our metacognition. Valuing All God's Children is used as a resource to support children's learning and their understanding. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. It must be noted here that our feeder infant school, Galleywood Infant School, is not a Church school and does not have to follow the same syllabus as SMJS. Therefore we have little prior knowledge to build on. However, we are currently developing links between SMJS and GIS to help them use the resource 'Understanding Christianity' in KS1. St. Michael's Church has purchased Bibles for every child in our school to use as a resource whilst they are here and to take with them when they leave. Going forward, each Year 3 cohort will receive a Bible on entry to the school. 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, achieving a greater depth of thinking in all year groups.

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 Year 6 topic of evolution is taught alongside creation and are seen as complimentary.

Class teachers are responsible for planning and delivering high-quality, thought provoking R.E. lessons in accordance with the whole school long-term plan. Lessons should provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.

Monitoring and Assessment

Termly in-house assessments are completed by class teachers; these are shared with the SLT and analysed by the subject leader, who oversees the subject's progression throughout the school. Data is inputted into a termly subject-monitoring sheet to ensure any issues are identified promptly and tracked over time.

Evidence of high-quality R.E. teaching and learning will be seen in a variety of ways, including:

- Books;
- Drama;
- Music
- Art;
- Design and technology;
- Displays around the school.

In line with our Feedback and Marking Policy, children are encouraged to reflect on their own learning.

The role of the subject leader is to support staff in the development of the subject and support the whole school promotion of R.E. This role includes regular monitoring of planning and lessons, book scrutinies, pupil voice, collection and analysis of R.E. assessments, attending CPD opportunities and leading staff meetings.

Role of the Clergy

The children take part in church services throughout the academic year to coincide with both the Christian and academic calendar. These services involve the whole school community and are led by our Worship Leaders and our local incumbent. Members of the clergy deliver and weekly whole-school collective worship and are welcomed into school to support with R.E. provision, pastoral care and governance. A weekly Christian club for children in Year 6 is run by a church youth leader and this offers a place of Biblical teaching, reflection and prayer. Our incumbent eats lunch alongside the children on a weekly basis.

SIAMS School Inspection

All Church of England dioceses use the Church of England Education Office's framework for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The principal objective of SIAMS inspection is to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church school, and how well the distinctive Christian character and ethos of the school ensure the development and achievement of the whole child or young person. The SIAMS Inspection is conducted by an external inspector.

Self-Evaluation Form (SEF): Vision Provision Impact:

Schools are expected to undertake their own self-evaluation to prepare for SIAMS. The principle of SIAMS, like most inspections, is that the inspector verifies the school's self-evaluation. Inspectors will ask schools to send them their self-evaluation when they contact the school. In whatever way it is approached, self-evaluation should have in mind the following three questions:

- Who we are as a school?
- Why we are here?
- How then do we live?

The SEF will be the starting point of SIAMS, which will seek to answer the following inspection question:

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

It is the responsibility of the governors to ensure the self-evaluation process happens, however the whole school community should be involved in developing the SEF document. Overall the SEF should be regarded as an audit tool for Church school improvement; an opportunity for the whole school community to reflect on its provision and seek ways to improve the way the school enables all pupils to flourish and be the best person God made them to be.

Learning and their understandingThe SEF and Inspection is based upon the following seven strands:

Strand 1: Vision and Leadership

Strand 2: Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills

Strand 3: Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy

Strand 4: Community and Living Well Together

Strand 5: Dignity and Respect

Strand 6: The impact of collective worship:

Strand 7: The effectiveness of religious education

Evaluation, review and revision

This policy was written in May 2015 and updated in May 2019. It will be reviewed in three years time or before, if it is felt appropriate. It was drawn up in consultation with, and reflects the consensus of opinion of the Headteacher, members of the teaching staff and members of the governing body.

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.