



## St Nicholas Church of England Primary School

---

### ***'OUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY GROWING AND LEARNING TOGETHER'***

Policy Title:	Religious Education
LT Responsibility:	Head Teacher
Review Body:	Head Teacher and Aquinas Advisory Committee
Date:	January 2019
Review:	January 2021

### **Our Christian inspiration**

Our community is one that is united by love.

This love is not to be confused with a superficial notion of love (e.g. as an emotion), it is the deep understanding of love as divine, for 'God is love (1 John 4:8). Therefore, a community that is loving, is an incarnation of divine love, and unified by being a loving community- 'God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.' (1 John 4 :16).

Fundamental in our realisation of this love, is the living out of Jesus' command to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:39). Our school values of hope, endurance, friendship, humility and compassion are outworking's of this love.

Our community is not just a community of believers, it encompasses all, 'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.' (1 Corinthians 12:12).

### **Introduction**

As a church school, religious education (RE) forms part of the core curriculum at St. Marks. It makes significant contributions to the development of children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural understanding and is supported by our school Christian values and Vision.

### **Aims of Religious Education**

As set out by The Church of England, Religious Education is an academic subject which gives children and young people an understanding of how beliefs and values affect their lives. At St. Marks, Religious Education asks about meaning and purpose in life. It gives space for individual reflection and wondering who and why. It explores Christianity, as a living religion at the heart of our community, as well as giving children a clear understanding of the beliefs, practices and traditions of other principal religions and world views; looking deeply at how they affect the fabric of personal and social life. We believe that nurturing children's development of their own personal faith, whichever religion they follow, is an important part of Religious Education.

Thus Religious Education, at St. Mark's, aims to enable pupils: -

- To gain a secure knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices as expressed in the Anglican Church and other Christian traditions.
- To learn about the major world religions showing respect for people of different faiths.
- To mature in their own beliefs, values and behaviour, by reflecting on religious beliefs and practices in a philosophical way.
- To develop a religious literacy that understands the impact of a variety of beliefs, including Christianity on British Culture and heritage, and on other cultures around the world.

### **Curriculum and Teaching**

At St Nicholas we follow the Rochester Diocesan Syllabus. With Christianity at its core, our curriculum uses an enquiry approach. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies, appropriate to the age and ability of the children, to make R.E. lessons interesting and enriching experiences. Enquiry questions are used to encourage children to think deeply about the theological concepts they are investigating and this ensures that work is challenging and aids children's progress.

Supported by the Understanding Christianity Resource the curriculum covers key concepts in Christianity ensuring that children are developing their ability to think theologically. The resource encourages children to; critically engage with religious texts, developing their interpretation of the meanings of these for religious people, examine the ways in which religious people might respond to religious teachings and connect these concepts to their own lives and individual beliefs.

The curriculum also provides a wide range of opportunities for learners to investigate the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views. Children from year 2 upwards study a major world faith for a term, including, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism. This helps foster respect for diversity and empathy for people of any belief or none. As children's knowledge of different faiths grows they are able to make links and comparisons between different views in a respectful way.

Visitors and visits to local places of worship are arranged to support the curriculum.

Teachers are regularly offered training through Rochester diocese and local groups.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Religious education will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. It seeks to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. Religious Education lessons provide a safe place where all children are able to discuss their views and reflect openly. All questions, views, and opinions will be treated with sensitivity and respect.

### **Assessment and Feedback.**

Throughout the curriculum there are many opportunities for children to develop Religious Education Skills that contribute to their Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural understanding. These include: -

- Thinking theologically and exploring ultimate questions
- Recognising that faith is a particular way of understanding and responding to

## God and the world

- Respecting those of all faiths in their search for God
- Reflecting critically on areas of shared belief and practice between different faiths
- Enriching and expanding their understanding of truth
- Developing the skills to analyse and interpret religious texts including the Bible
- Reflecting critically and expressing their views on the human quest and destiny
- Analysing and explaining the varied nature and traditions of the Christian community, reflecting on the truth claims of Christian belief so that they can make a well informed response to Christianity.

The development of these skills forms the outcomes for Religious Education within our school. To assess children's development of these skills, teachers use work produced and discussions in class to identify gaps in learning. They offer regular high quality feedback both verbally and, where appropriate, in written responses on work to help children build on the skills they already have. Teachers will, where necessary, encourage self assessment or provide pupils with success criteria which will help learners to aim high and encourage achievement for all. Teachers use the building blocks from the Understanding Christianity scheme and Diocesan Guidance on the teaching of other faiths to gauge children's level of understanding and this informs their planning.

Teachers also report termly on children's achievement against these building blocks and assessment indicators appropriate to their age group. This is done using the expectations of the Rochester Diocese Syllabus and the Aquinas Schools Agreed method for assessing children's attainment in RE and is monitored by the RE leader. Opportunities for improvement to the curriculum or for development of pupil's knowledge and understanding are identified and addressed through careful analysis of these reports. The RE Leader provides support to groups where achievement is not in line with expectations.

### **Inclusion and Withdrawal**

As a Christian school, Religious Education is a core subject. All Children take part in RE lessons and are only withdrawn if their parents have requested it.

At St. Mark's the diversity of our school community is something we are very proud of. In RE lessons we always make sure that children from other faith groups are included and made to feel comfortable expressing their own beliefs, thoughts and opinions. These are invaluable in the development of children's understanding of other faiths and they help us to nurture strong relationships within our school community, which are built on respect for faith, belief and each other.

Parents retain the right to withdraw children from RE lessons although they should realise that Christian values permeate the whole life of the school. Parents are strongly encouraged to meet with the Head teacher and the RE coordinator beforehand to discuss any request for withdrawal.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Religious Education Leader, the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team. policy statement will be reviewed every three

years.

*As a result of the Trust's statutory responsibility, the Trust will receive personal data, some of which will be sensitive personal data. The Trust processes personal data in accordance with the data protection principles embodied in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). The Trust complies with the requirements of the data protection legislation as detailed in the Trust data protection Policy.*

*All staff are aware of the principles of data protection and will not process personal data unless necessary. The Trust safeguards the personal data it collects through the operation of the Trust's data protection policy and processes and the IT policy. In addition, the Trust and the relevant academy has taken steps to ensure that all its contracts that process data have the GDPR compliant provisions.*

*We recognise that our pupils bring with them a wide variety of behaviours influenced by life experiences outside school. We aim to respond to each case professionally, objectively and compassionately. We are sensitive when working with children and families with specific needs and experiences and we continuously seek ways to promote successful partnerships. The basis of differentiation will vary dependant on the needs of each case but we will take into account the views of Parents/carers and families, colleagues and external agencies together with any Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plan. We will also ensure compliance with the trust's Equality Policy taking into account pupils with protected characteristics and making reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Both the school and trust respects the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. By following the trust's Equality Policy, the school seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by such legislation.*

***This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Equality Policy.***



