



# **R.E. Policy**

## **2022-2023**

# St Thomas' CofE Primary Academy

## **Rationale for RE:**

At St Thomas' CofE Primary Academy, we recognise that Religious Education (R.E.) should enable every child to flourish in the modern world and live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10) We recognise that pupils and families come with their own individual beliefs and faith or no recognised faith at all and we are thankful for each individual. As a church school, the study of Christianity as a diverse living faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the church, is central to R.E. teaching. There is also a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, the school also provides sequenced learning about religious and worldwide views, fostering respect for others. We set high standards and expectations for all learners that are inclusive and nurturing, developing their enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluative and reflective skills. There is a high level of trust which helps to educate for dignity and respect, encouraging all to explore fairness when living well together.

The SIAMS schedule 2018 (Strand 7) makes it clear that RE should reflect the school's Christian vision. The subject is regarded as a core subject within the school's curriculum. It has a vital role in developing religious literacy and deepening pupils understanding of Christianity, in all its forms, and fostering appreciation and understanding of other faith traditions. RE is non-confessional and should be treated as an academic subject in its own right.

As the Church of England document, '**Making a difference? A review of Religious Education in Church of England schools 2014**' recommends that the RE curriculum in all schools should,

*".....ensure it provides a more coherent, progressive and challenging approach to the teaching of Christianity within the context of the wider exploration of the diversity of religion and belief in the modern world"*

*".....explore ways of extending pupils' ability to think theologically and engage in theological enquiry as part of their learning in RE"*

## **RE Statement of Entitlement**

RE teaching at this school will be in line with the recommendations of the **Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools**, published by the Church of England Education Office (Feb 2019), see link below:

<http://smartfile.s3.amazonaws.com/d57a4d93b010f2ac6f24bc8cee2d789e/uploads/2019/02/NEW-RE-Statement-of-Entitlement-for-Church-schools.pdf>

Christianity will, therefore, be at least 50% of RE curriculum time. The teaching of Christianity is core to the teaching of RE in this Church of England school. However as a Church school we have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and worldviews. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are

growing up. They will also learn to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own ideas and beliefs. These outcomes must contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice and discrimination.

### **The RE curriculum**

RE teaching also follows the legal requirements of the **Education Reform Act (1988)**, which places RE as part of the basic curriculum; a statutory subject which is an entitlement for all pupils. St Thomas' bases its R.E. provision on the 'Understanding Christianity' documents and the Diocese of Lichfield Religious Education Guidance 2017 which has been agreed by the Local Governing Body and the Three Spires Trust. In addition, the school uses the Lichfield Diocesan RE Guidelines and other appropriate materials to enhance teaching and learning.

At least 5% (closer to 10%) of curriculum time will be dedicated to meeting explicitly RE objectives, although the subject may be taught across the curriculum when appropriate. Within this teaching allocation at least 50% of subject content will be allocated to an exploration of the Christian faith, and the concepts, beliefs, teachings and practices that lie at its heart.

### **The aims of Religious Education in our school are:**

- To help pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through the exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with text.
- To help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide.
- To enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and world views and their impact on society and culture.
- To give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- To help pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of religious texts and teachings and understanding their impact on the lives of believers.
- To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief, of themselves, the world and human experience.
- To develop an understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth, and so to consider important human questions, values and concerns.
- To nurture understanding, respect and open-mindedness and inspire lifelong engagement with the study of religions and beliefs.

### **The outcomes for pupils at the end of their time in our school are that they are able to:**

- Compare and contrast the key beliefs and practices of the religions studied and show how they are connected to believers' lives
- Describe different aspects of belonging to a religion – symbol, story, festival, belief, faith in action, ritual, worship
- Express religious beliefs and ideas with the appropriate language, vocabulary and terminology and describe what they mean
- Ask questions sensitively about the lives of believers and suggest appropriate answers
- Reflect on the decisions people make – including believers – and suggest possible outcomes
- Compare their own experience and identity with others – including believers
- Reflect and empathise with the big questions of life, suggesting some answers / insights
- Be confident to explore their own spirituality and search for truth
- Value the religious journey of faith
- Develop pupils' ability to interpret and appreciate religious imagery and expression

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)**

In addition the subject contributes to other areas of education and human experience and plays an important part of the wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

<b>Spiritual</b>	Widening pupils' vision of themselves and their own experience, within the context of a growing awareness and understanding of God. In R.E. and the wider curriculum, staff will use the Windows, Mirrors and Doors approach to develop pupils spiritually.
<b>Moral</b>	Helping each pupil develop their own informed values
<b>Social</b>	Helping pupils understand some major forces shaping the values of our society
<b>Cultural</b>	Aiding pupils in exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage, and developing positive attitudes towards diversity.

Additional links will be found across the curriculum especially with **personal, social, health and relationship education** and **British values**. RE can also make a positive contribution to enhancing creativity and enjoyment and ensure the well-being of all pupils.

### **The management of RE**

RE is given equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. Pupil achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects. Teachers should share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development (SIAMS 2018).

As a church school we recognise that it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in RE.

The RE subject lead is responsible for:

- ensuring there is a progressive curriculum that builds sequentially across school
- supporting colleagues in the detailed planning and delivery of RE provision
- ensuring Religious Education has status within the school
- keeping in touch with subject developments and disseminating information as appropriate
- auditing and recording current resources, supplementing resource provision when money is available and disseminating this information to staff
- undertaking personal development and subject training and ensuring provision for staff INSET
- monitoring RE provision, practice and outcomes
- ensuring rigorous systems of assessment are in place (SIAMS 2018) and are in line with the Local Agreed Syllabus
- creating the RE action plan and ensuring its regular review
- work closely with the senior leadership team to ensure the profile of RE remains high across the school
- meet with member of the Diocesan RE advisory team when possible

### **RE outcomes for pupils**

The following are suggested outcomes for pupils at the end of their primary education in church schools.

#### **In RE pupils will be encouraged / have opportunities to:**

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
  - To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

### **Right to withdrawal - see appendix**

At St Thomas CofE Primary Academy, we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship on the grounds of conscience, without giving a reason. Parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are asked to write to the head teacher / Principal who will then

invite the parents/carers into school to discuss their concerns, clarify the nature of the RE and worship provided by the school and set out the options open to the parents/carers as set out in education law. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects. Where a pupil is withdrawn from RE and do not take part in alternative religious education they will be supervised by an appropriate member of staff whilst doing work set by their parents/carers which will seek to further their knowledge and understanding of their parents' /carers' beliefs and values.

### **Current RE practice and principles:**

- At St Thomas' RE is a core subject studied weekly and taught by a teaching member of staff. There are opportunities to develop RE knowledge further in other curriculum subjects and themed days.
- The RE subject lead will complete an action plan linked to the Academy Development Plan (ADP) and the SEF. This incorporates the SIAMS expectations and is a key document used across the school.
- High quality RE lessons are taught whole-class in half-termly blocks with scaffolding and adult support used to differentiate the provision. Pupils working significantly below age-related expectations will still access whole-class teaching but complete differentiated tasks. More able pupils are extended by open-ended tasks and high-level questioning to enable further viewpoints to be discussed and reflected upon.
- Pupil progress is assessed at the end of each block through high-quality assessment tasks. Pupils demonstrate knowledge gained over the block and this is measured against the 'Understanding Christianity' and 'Religious Guidance 2017' assessment documents.
- There is a half-termly monitoring schedule which enables the subject lead to monitor current standards in RE. This includes talking to staff and pupils to ensure that knowledge has been gained and there is clear progression across the school. The monitoring is based on the 'Pupil Book Study' by Alex Bedford.

### **Other things to note**

- The long-term RE plan is included in appendix 2.
- **Section 48 SIAMS** inspections will give a judgment on the progress, achievement, teaching, learning and overall effectiveness of RE in aided schools. Refer to Strand 7 of the SIAMS schedule 2018. However in all schools the contribution of RE to the school's distinctive Christian character will be assessed as will the impact of RE on SMSC and the way in which the subject is meeting the needs of learners and moving them forward in their personal spiritual journey.

### **Approved and signed off by**

Principal: Louise Fry

Chair of Governors:

## Appendix 1

### **Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education March 2017**

#### **Religious Education**

The government guidance *Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010* states that:

***Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those who withdraw by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over)***

In voluntary controlled schools and academies, religious education must be provided in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus provided by the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) of the local authority in which the school is situated.

In voluntary aided schools and academies, the decision on the content of religious education rests with the Governing Body, and should be in line with the Trust Deeds of the school.

In all forms of church school, the religious education provided should contribute to the Christian character of the school, and this is in aspect of the school's work which is subject to the ***Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)***, whether VC, VA or academy.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, ***the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship. (Non-statutory Guidance 2010)***

Any parent considering withdrawal must contact the Headteacher / Principal to discuss any concerns relating to the policy, provision and practice of religious education at the school.

## **Managing the Right of Withdrawal**

It is important that the school makes clear on its website and through other forms of communication, the RE syllabus being taught in school. There needs to be a clear understanding of the relevance of the RE curriculum and how it respects pupils own beliefs. It is good practice to review requests to withdraw from RE and collective worship annually.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Whether the parents wish their children to be withdrawn from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it.
- Parents can withdraw their child from a specific activity, such as a visit to a place of worship, and not withdraw their child from the remainder of the RE.
- Where pupils are withdrawn from RE or collective worship, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or incur extra cost.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn from RE, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This could be provided at the school or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided. Outside arrangements are permitted providing the necessary safeguarding procedures are in place and the LA or Trust Board is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from withdrawal will only affect the start or end of a school session (***Non-statutory Guidance 2010***)

It is important that schools are fully aware of issues surrounding religion, race and culture and ensure that parental right to withdrawal requests do not hamper their responsibilities to ensure equality for all and the promotion of British Values.

### **Approved and signed off by:**

Principal: Louise Fry

Chair of Governors:



## Appendix 2

### RE Long-term Plan

RE Long Term Plan						
Year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery	<b>CREATION/GOD</b> What is so special about our wonderful world?	<b>INCARNATION</b> What is Christmas?	What can we learn from stories?	<b>SALVATION</b> What is Easter?	What makes places special?	What makes people special?
Reception	<b>CREATION/GOD</b> Why is the word God so important to Christians?	<b>INCARNATION</b> Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?	Why are some stories special? Explore stories about the lives and teachings	<b>SALVATION</b> Why do Christians put a cross in the Easter garden?	What happens in a church?	What makes every person special, unique and important?
Yr1/KS1	<b>GOD</b> What do Christians believe God is like?	<b>INCARNATION</b> Why does Christmas matter to Christians? (Core learning)	What do Muslims believe?	<b>SALVATION</b> Why does Easter matter to Christians? (Core learning)	<b>GOSPEL</b> What is the Good News that Jesus brings? (Core learning) 1.1	How can I make a difference in the world?
Yr2/KS1	<b>CREATION</b> Who made the world?	<b>INCARNATION</b> 1.2 Why does Christmas matter to Christians? (Digging deeper)	What do Jews believe?	<b>SALVATION</b> 1.5 Why does Easter matter to Christians? (Digging deeper)	<b>GOSPEL</b> 1.4 What is the Good News that Jesus brings? (Digging deeper)	What is faith and what difference does it make?
Yr3/LKS2	<b>INCARNATION/GOD</b> What is the Trinity? (Core learning - Baptism and the Grace)	What are the festivals of life?	What can we learn from a mosque?	<b>SALVATION</b> Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'?	<b>KINGDOM OF GOD</b> When Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost?	<b>PEOPLE OF GOD</b> What is it like to follow God? (Core learning)
Yr4/LKS2	<b>CREATION/FALL</b> What do Christians learn from the creation story?	<b>INCARNATION/GOD</b> What is the Trinity? – (Digging deeper – the Incarnation)	What can we learn from a synagogue?	Is life like a journey?	<b>KINGDOM OF GOD</b> When Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost?	<b>PEOPLE OF GOD</b> What is it like to follow God? (Digging deeper)
Yr5/UKS2	<b>GOD</b> What does it mean if God is holy and loving?	How do people express their faith through the arts?	What are the 5 pillars of Islam?	<b>SALVATION</b> What did Jesus do to save human beings?	<b>GOSPEL</b> 2b.5 What would Jesus do?	<b>KINGDOM OF GOD</b> What kind of king is Jesus?
Yr6/UKS2	<b>CREATION/FALL</b> 2b.2 Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?	<b>INCARNATION</b> 2b.4 Was Jesus the Messiah? Link to Judaism?	What does it mean to live as a Jew?	<b>SALVATION</b> What difference does the resurrection make for Christians?	What is the world wide church?	<b>PEOPLE OF GOD</b> How can following God bring freedom and justice?