

*'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.'*  
Matthew 7:12



## **Religious Education Policy**

### **St. Mark's Christian Vision**

St Mark's School believes that everyone is uniquely created by God. We provide opportunities to recognise our gifts that He has freely given to us.

Our caring, nurturing community fosters the growth of Christian values through following Jesus' Golden Rule.

**'So in everything, do to others as you would have them do to you' -Matthew 7:12**

Building on this firm foundation, allows us to flourish, support one another in reaching our individual potential and encourages us as life-long learners.

### **St. Mark's Ethos**

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values (love, peace, equality, responsibility, trust, forgiveness and generosity) through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

### **Importance of Religious Education**

Religious Education (RE) is an important subject in itself. RE enables pupils to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. Religion and belief inform our values and are reflected in what we say and how we behave. At St Mark's School we develop children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths and we provoke challenging fundamental questions such as what it means to be human.

RE also contributes to pupils' personal development and well-being and to community cohesion by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society. RE can also make important contributions to other parts of the school curriculum such as citizenship, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE education), geography and history. It offers opportunities for deep personal reflection and spiritual development, deepening the understanding of the significance of religion in the lives of others-individually, communally and cross-culturally.

At St Mark's we enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the faiths of children within our school. 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 and well as *about* religions.

**The curriculum for Religious Education aims to ensure that all pupils:**

- 1. Know about and understand a range of religious and worldviews, so that they can:**
  - describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
  - identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews; and
  - appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- 2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:**
  - explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;
  - express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues; and
  - appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview
- 3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:**
  - find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively;
  - enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all; and
  - articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

**The Legal Position of Religious Education**

Religious Education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools, except to those children withdrawn by their parents.

Religious Education is a component of the legally required Basic Curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools. Religious Education at St Mark's School is taught in accordance with the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus supplemented by the

Liverpool Diocese Religious Education Syllabus. The Lancashire Agreed Syllabus revised 2021 reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

There is a legal right of parental withdrawal from Religious Education. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child/children from part or the whole of the RE curriculum provided by the school. There is a legal right for teachers to withdraw from teaching Religious Education.

St Mark's School teaches open minded religious education, and is inclusive: all pupils develop their own beliefs and values through RE. So any parent considering exercising the right of withdrawal and removing their child from the subject is invited to make an appointment with staff to discuss the approach we take to RE.

### Teaching & Learning Style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principles 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, Diwali, Passover etc., to develop their religious thinking. We organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

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 rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in 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 way, 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 ability and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;

- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

### Curriculum Planning in Religious Education

At St Mark's School we plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus 2021 and supplemented by the Liverpool Diocese Religious Education Syllabus. The key question for teachers as they create opportunities for learning must constantly be 'how will this help my pupils in their search for meaning?' It secures the syllabus principles aim 'to support pupils' personal search for meaning' by engaging enquiry into the question 'what is it to be human?', exploring answers offered by religion and belief.

At the centre of the key question 'what does it mean to be human?' the exploration then requires the following four elements:

- 1 **Shared human experience** - the nature of human beings. This refers to those inclusive experiences, common to all human beings, which raise questions of meaning, purpose, identity, origins, destiny, value and authority. These experiences include love and loss, thankfulness and despair, community and solitude.
- 2 **Living religious tradition** - principal religious traditions encountered in the world. This refers to the ways in which people who are for example, Christians or Muslims, follow their religions and their ways of life today.
- 3 **Beliefs and values** - which lie at the heart of these traditions. This refers to the ways of life and religious practices of the faith studied.
- 4 **The search for personal meaning** - a life- long quest for understanding. This refers to the development of the sense of personal meaning for every pupil.

All RE planning and learning relates to the key question and the four elements (see Appendix).

We ensure that the units studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We provide opportunities for children of all ages and abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and ensure that planned progression is built into the scheme.

The long-term RE plan (see Appendix) ensures that the requirements of the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus are met and the curriculum is broad and balanced. Christianity is studied for a minimum of 50% of religious education curriculum time throughout each key stage. In the light of the nature of the population of the school, the nature of the community and census information, Islam is the focus of a progressed study throughout each key stage. In order to deliver the aims and expected standard of the syllabus, the Agreed Syllabus Conference strongly recommends a minimum of 5% allocation of curriculum time for RE.

Termly plans give details of each unit of work for each term or half-term. As all classes have mixed age groups, termly planning is on a yearly rotation cycle depending on the age groups of each class.

In order for our pupils to be aware of their role as global citizens, in addition to Christianity other principle religions represented in Great Britain such as Islam, Buddhism, Hindu Dharma, Judaism and Sikh Dharma are studied throughout the school.

In the Foundation Stage pupils have the opportunity to learn about Christianity and Islam.

In the Key Stage 1 pupils have the opportunity to learn about Christianity, Islam and at least one other principal religion.

In Key Stage 2, pupils have the opportunity to learn about Christianity, Islam and at least one other principal religion.

### **The Key Question in Early Years Foundation Stage will be:**

Why are somethings special?

### **The Key Questions in Key Stage 1 will be:**

What do people say about God?

How do we respond to the things that really matter?

### **The Key Questions in Key Stage 2 will be:**

Who should we follow?

How should we live our lives?

Where can we find guidance about how to live our lives?

Is life like a journey?

### **Assessment in Religious Education**

Children are assessed in RE on an annual basis. This ensures that the school's system of assessment in RE matches that already found in other curriculum areas. Children are assessed using the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus Expected Year Group standards in the different religions studied. Children will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of religions and world views and on their ability to express and communicate ideas related to religions and worldviews.

## **Resources**

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. We keep resources for religious education in a central store where there is a box of artefacts and resources for each principle religion to be studied. There are bibles for both key stages which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books to support the children's individual research.

## **Monitoring & Review of Religious Education**

The RE subject leader, Mrs Freeman is responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work, the quality of the teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress in religious education. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE subject leader presents the governors with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.

The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor the policy and practice of Religious Education.

The policy is reviewed biennially, or as legislation and/or guidance requires. This policy will be reviewed in September 2026