



Policy: Religious Education

Philosophy

At St John's Meads we believe that Religious Education has a unique and vital role to play within Education. It informs and extends the children's understanding of Christian beliefs and principles and examines the beliefs and principles of other faiths. It is also instrumental in enabling the children to investigate and develop their spiritual understanding, from which may flow the development of their moral values.

The teaching of Religion at St John's Meads allows children to explore how people in different times and cultures have faced major questions concerning the world in which we live, the universe of which we are a part, the purpose of our existence, the problems of pain and suffering, and beauty and love.

We feel that the teaching of Religious Education should promote skills of reasoning, fair-minded enquiry, curiosity and wonder, and that these are skills which will prove invaluable throughout the children's school life, and beyond.

Aims

Through Religious Education we aim to:

- Give pupils knowledge and understanding of the basic beliefs and practices of Christianity
- Explore the question of belief and spirituality, and compare and contrast common features of other major world religions (Judaism, Islam) with Christianity
- Develop an open, positive and questioning attitude to various beliefs and values
- Foster feelings of tolerance, empathy and respect for others, and their beliefs and cultural traditions
- Recognise that for some, belief is not only acceptable, but important and meaningful
- Encourage feelings of self-worth and a positive attitude to one's own emotions through spiritual exploration
- Promote attitudes of awe, wonder and joy at the diversity of the natural world and human life

National Curriculum/Legal Requirement

The Religious Reform Act (1988) requires that:

1. Religious Education should be taught to all pupils in full-time education, except those withdrawn at the wish of their parents *[see DfE Circular 1/94, para. 44]*.
2. Religious Education in grant-maintained, county-maintained and voluntary-controlled schools should be taught in accordance with an agreed syllabus (except in the case of grant-maintained schools which were formerly voluntary aided *[see DfE Circular 1/94, para. 23]*).
3. As part of the curriculum, Religious Education should promote the "spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils".

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4. An agreed syllabus should “reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain”. [*Education Reform Act 1988, Section 8 (3)*]
5. The Education Act (1944) requires that an agreed syllabus “must not be designed to convert pupils, to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils”. [*Education Act 1944, Section 26 (2)*]

Parents do have a right to withdraw their children from Religious Education, although it is assumed that, as we are a Church School, parents have understood and accepted the importance of their child's involvement in this aspect of the school curriculum.

Links with the Parish Church

St John's Meads School has strong links with the local Parish Church. This provides the school with opportunities to show the children the integral role of the 'Parish' church in the community. Children's knowledge and understanding of the church-school ethos is further developed through sharing in worship together and creating links with the local religious community. The sacraments of baptism and communion will be examined along with their relevance to the Christian faith.

The children will be shown the significance of the Lord's Prayer and the prayer of St. Richard as well as other prayers used in the Church of England.

On several occasions through the year the school will attend services at the Parish Church to celebrate festivals in the church calendar such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day and Education Sunday. Other main festivals such as Ash Wednesday, Lent and Pentecost will be included in teaching. The church itself will be used as a resource to teach the children about its function and place within the community as well as cross-curricular areas such as history, art and geography.

Curriculum, teaching and learning strategies.

The programme of RE in St. John's Meads is laid out in a framework linked to year groups, taken from the Guildford Diocese Syllabus. The work is generally, but not exclusively, cross-curricular, in order to fit with topics covered and to highlight the religious aspect of them. This may include literacy, art, geography, history, citizenship, science, DT and ICT. Certain parts of the programme are more exclusively 'religious'. The programme has been planned to ensure continuity and progression, so that aspects that are to be taught in several year groups will build upon and extend previous learning. A considerable amount of RE is implicit in the daily life of the school, and is taught by example.

Schemes of work and planning for the subject will meet criteria agreed by the school and teachers will endeavour to ensure that effective teaching and learning is based on the following:

- A focus on both learning *about* and learning *from* religion.
- Pupils are given opportunities to gain knowledge as well as to reflect and respond.
- Use of a variety of approaches to learning, interesting, challenging and engaging. They include different styles of written tasks, oral and drawn responses, drama and dance.
- Constructive use of a range of resources including artefacts, books, audio-visual materials and ICT.



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- Regular use of first-hand experiences including visits to places of worship and visitors to the school.
- Emphasis on child-centred key questions based on children's experiences, enabling spiritual development opportunities.

Continuity and progression

This is built into the scheme of work and progress is characterised by the children's acquisition of wider knowledge of religious beliefs and practices, deepening understanding and meaning of stories, symbols, events and practices. They should have fluent use of religious vocabulary and language, increased levels in skills when responding to questions of identity, meaning, purpose, values and commitment.

At the foundation stage pupils should:

- be respectful of their own cultures and beliefs and those of others.
- able to react to significant experiences
- show a range of feelings including awe and wonder, joy and sorrow.
- understand the difference between right and wrong and that the beliefs of others should be treated with respect.

At end of KS1 pupils should:

- be able to retell religious stories and know that some are characteristic of more than one religion.
- suggest meanings in religious symbols, language and stories and respond sensitively to the experiences and feelings of others including those with a faith and to other people's values and concerns in relation to matters of right and wrong.
- realise that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer.

At the end of KS2 pupils should:

- be able to describe key beliefs and teachings of the religions studied, connecting them accurately with other features and making some comparisons between religions.
- show understanding of what belonging to religion involves and how such beliefs, ideas and feelings can be expressed in a variety of forms, giving meanings for some symbols, stories and language, using technical terminology.
- ask questions about the significant experiences of key figures, puzzling aspects of life and moral religious issues and suggest answers from their own experience,
- make reference to the teaching of religions and show understanding of why certain things are held to be right and wrong.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (see also separate SMSC policy)

It is hoped that values taught in RE will influence the child's moral development; that their spiritual and cultural development will be enhanced by the consideration of others' beliefs and the awareness that Great Britain is a multicultural society. Other curriculum areas and aspects of school life will also influence this development.

Spiritual Development

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful.
Psalm 139.13-14



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Spiritual development enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'innermost being' and of the wonder of the environment.

Through spiritual development, pupils can be enabled to:

- think about themselves, how they relate to other people, to the wider world in which they live, and to God;
- reflect beyond and within themselves on God's creation and the precious nature of human existence;
- develop greater self-awareness and self-esteem;
- encounter a sense of awe, wonder and mystery: and,
- experience opportunities for creativity, curiosity, freedom, imagination and response.

Moral Development

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12.2

Moral development is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives.

The pupils' moral development will be concerned with questions of intention, motive and attitude. Pupils should learn to distinguish 'right' from 'wrong', to develop a sense of personal identity and be encouraged to have an awareness of the moral traditions of others. Pupils can be enabled to:

- make decisions
- reflect on and change personal behaviour
- resist peer pressure
- show love, respect, caring and concern for self and others and the environment
- challenge behaviour such as dishonesty, injustice, discrimination and the misuse of power

Social Development

As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.

John 13.34-35

Social development helps to develop pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice.

Pupils' social development involves them acquiring an understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities – local, national and global – and an ability to relate to others, and to work with others for the common good. They display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes that they need to make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities. Pupils can be enabled to:

- relate positively to others and respect differing viewpoints and ideas
- participate fully and take responsibility in the classroom and around the school
- use appropriate behaviour in a range of situations

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- engage successfully in partnership with others
- exercise personal responsibility and initiative
- understand that, as individuals, we depend on family, school, church and society

Cultural Development

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3.28

Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

The cultural development of children and young people is primarily concerned with the exploration of the whole world, which engenders an understanding and tolerance of different cultural perspectives and enriches the meaning and purpose of life. It relates to the development of attitudes, beliefs, feelings and emotions, which enable pupils to share what they have in common and to celebrate their differences in a culturally diverse world. Pupils can be enabled to:

- think about themselves, how they relate to other people and the wider world in which they live
- gain a knowledge and understanding of their own culture and traditions
- experience opportunities for exploring beyond their own cultural traditions and broadening their cultural horizons and aspirations
- reflect beyond and within themselves on God's creation and the diverse nature of humanity
- recognise the importance of love and understanding in the Christian faith and of developing attitudes which challenge intolerance, prejudice and injustice

Organisation

The RE coordinator will be responsible for policy, overview of curriculum, support and advice to staff, resources, monitoring progress and teaching and keeping up to date with recent developments and training needs of all staff.

The RE curriculum will be differentiated by:

- Individual time to explain particular principles involved
- Differentiation of tasks
- Extra time to complete work
- More adult input
- Different approaches to activities e.g. tape recording and pictures rather than written text
- Opportunities to extend and challenge thinking

Assessment and recording

Assessment will assist the learning of the pupil and the teacher in evaluating and planning. In order to make a fair and broad assessment it will be necessary to draw on a range of evidence such as:

- Discussions to identify development in the understanding of key issues and feeling
- Written evidence of factual information and reporting of Biblical stories
- Tape recordings and video clips

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Assessment is achieved by using the statements of attainment (*learning from religion, learning about religion*) and six children (2 high ability, 2 average ability, 2 lower ability children) are chosen and rigorously monitored for progress in each class. This is used to inform the teacher about progress made and impact future planning. Individual lessons are also assessed against the Guildford Diocese Scheme objectives. At the end of the year each child is graded in effort and attainment, which is communicated to parents in the annual report.

Monitoring

RE will be monitored by the RE coordinator when RE is a focus in the School Plan.

Equal Opportunities and Differentiation

All children at St John's Meads are expected and encouraged to participate in RE. The children are given many opportunities to explore and investigate religious, spiritual and moral ideas, with an aim of extending their knowledge and developing their own codes of belief and morals, each to his/her own potential. Equality and justice for all people form a central part of religious education. RE will ensure an understanding of the following:

- People have different lifestyles, beliefs and values but share common humanity and are independent.
- All people have a right to their own beliefs.
- Respect should be shown to those of faith and those of no faith.
- The diversity of roles of both women and men in religions should be explored.
- No one should be discriminated against because of his or her dress code, diet or religious observance.
- A multicultural perspective is necessary, as the experiences of one family community may be different from another.
- Faith and culture are not one and the same and should be explained as separate concepts.
- Within any faith community there are different traditions, customs and practices.
- Stereotypes should be challenged and material explored.
- The language used is not sexist or racist.
- Good practice in religious education will challenge discrimination and prejudice.

Resources

- Reference books for teachers are located in the PPA room
- Resource packs will be stored in the PPA room