



St. Michael's CE Middle School

Religious Education Policy



School vision: **Each person, uniquely made in God's image, merits the best that we can give.** (from Genesis 1:27)

Religious education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect, encouraging all to live well together.

Introduction



At St. Michael's we believe that every person is unique and comes with their own unique set of beliefs and views about the world. In RE, our aim is to intellectually challenge pupils to enable them to be outward looking and to develop an understanding of different religions and worldviews so that they can flourish through personal enrichment and develop core values that include empathy and compassion. By understanding that we live in a diverse world and that each person is entitled to their own beliefs, we can be respectful of those different beliefs and views and can better interact with the world around us.

We encourage questioning and debate, in a way that shows respect but deepens our understanding that we each see things from different perspectives and that having a different opinion from others is natural.

We **aspire** to develop our understanding of the world and the people who live in it; we will embark on a journey to develop our own **beliefs** and views, whilst being respectful of others; and we are **creative** in the way we explore and endeavour to understand religions and worldviews.

Legal Status of RE



'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which: promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. All state schools ... must teach religious education'. (National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, DfE, September 2013, p.4)

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils in all Key Stages. However, although it has guidelines from the National Curriculum, it uses a local Agreed Syllabus which must be taught (unless parents request

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RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school). The law requires that the RE syllabus “must reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are mainly Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions in Great Britain”.

As a Church of England School, St Michael’s regards RE as a valued core subject where staff and pupils come from all faiths and none to explore, debate and discuss the views of others to help them better understand the world. In the Church of England’s Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, it makes clear that outcomes in RE relate to pupils’ theological understanding of Christianity, to develop and inform respectful attitudes towards religion and critical reflection on religion and belief.

In agreement with the Governors and in consultation with the Headteacher, we have adopted the Dorset and Bournemouth/Poole Agreed Syllabuses. These will provide pupils with a systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews to enable pupils ‘to become religiously literate so that they can engage meaningfully in life in modern Britain’.

Rationale



The weekly teaching of RE is not only a legal requirement but as a Church of England school, it is seen as an integral and significant part of the school’s curriculum at St Michael’s. Through RE, pupils are able to explore faiths across the world to gain a better and deeper understanding of beliefs and practices and how they are relevant to everyday life. The central beliefs and knowledge of the Christian faith and how to live a Christian life are examined and developed. Academic and practical skills needed for future learning in RE, continuing through Upper School and beyond, are developed through skills and knowledge gained throughout the four year journey at St Michael’s.

Our school’s Christian vision of **‘Each person, uniquely made in God’s image, merits the best that we can give.’** (from Genesis 1:27) is at the centre of our teaching of RE.

Aims



From the Dorset and Bournemouth/Poole Agreed Syllabuses and Understanding Christianity, are that all pupils at St. Michael’s should:

- Know and understand a range of religions and worldviews to recognise diversity which exists within and between religious traditions.
- Identify and investigate through enquiry, questions posed by religions and worldviews about what it means to be human.
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and world views.
- To explain reasonably their ideas about beliefs and practice and how it influences individuals and communities.
- RE should contribute to the school’s Prevent duty to combat extremism.

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- To express their own personal reflections and responses about identity, diversity and ethical issues.
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of the key features of Christianity both as a major world faith and in its impact on our local community, and on our society today.
- Grow in their spiritual development as they are given a safe space for reflection and debate and consider their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- Gain an increasing awareness of the spiritual dimension within themselves and others through reflection and discussion and develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery.
- Develop skills and attitudes, particular to RE, which will support their personal, moral, social and cultural development.
- Think about their own beliefs and values in light of the beliefs of others, both religious and nonreligious, and the School Values of St. Michael's.

Guidelines



- All views expressed in a lesson should be valued both by staff and peers, although it may be necessary to counter certain racist, sexist or other undesirable statements or stereotyping.
- Respect for cultural differences should be developed. There should always be an understanding attitude shown by adults towards the family background, culture and traditions of pupils.
- Strategies should be developed to maximise the possibility for all pupils to make worthwhile contributions in oral written and expressive situations.
- It is recognised that there are strong cross-curricular links between RE and History, Geography, Art, Science, English and Wellbeing.
- Teachers should be prepared to foster positive moral and ethical stances on contemporary issues.
- All pupils are entitled to equal rights to access the RE curriculum at an appropriate level regardless of their race, sex, state of health or ability.

Pupil Entitlement and Timetabling Arrangements



All pupils are expected to attend one RE lesson a week of approximately one hour unless their parents have withdrawn them.

RE and Differentiation



Higher order questioning, debate and examination of original sources in a critical way are natural ways that pupils are stretched in RE. Pupils are challenged to make links between religions and worldviews to enhance their understanding of why people believe what they believe.

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Those with special needs, who have difficulty in accessing the full curriculum, should also be encouraged to work to their highest level. Some simpler texts are available and scaffolded to support access to activities. Scaffolded support during assessments is provided and the class teacher's judgement will assist whether verbal submissions may be recorded with the help of a TA. Computers are available also for this purpose. It is important to liaise with the SENDCO and TAs when planning work for these children.

Each pupil is viewed as an individual and set challenging targets and encouraged to reach their full potential. RE is a subject that encourages pupils to develop their skills of empathy and understanding, which is an essential aspect of being able to understand the world we live in.

The Teaching of RE



Content:

We follow a coherent and systematic study of Christianity (Understanding Christianity Course). We introduce pupils to other principal religions represented in the UK, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam across both Key Stages. We also study the worldview of Humanism as a non-religious belief.

Approach:

A variety of teaching methods including discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, art, music as appropriate in order to make religious education a lively, active subject. Pupils have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship and visits from members of local faith communities to the school. We have regular visits from Christian leaders to lead lessons and workshops. All Year 5 pupils visit Wimborne Minster for our Carol Service (along with participating musicians from other year groups), Year 5 attend Easter Experience and Experience Church and selected pupils from Year 8 attend a Holocaust Memorial talk by a Holocaust survivor (and feed this back to Year 8 classes in school). All pupils, through their RE lessons participate in special lessons during Inter Faith Week.

Every Child Matters and RE



RE helps to deliver many of the aspects of ECM, including:

- Emotional health: Through exploring themes such as loss, suffering, death and commitment.
- Discrimination: Through appreciation of a variety of religions, cultures and worldviews, promoting understanding.
- Achieving: Through engaging with challenging questions of meaning and truth.
- Personal confidence: Through discussion and the valuing of opinions.
- Positive role models: Through the study of key people of faith.

Assessment and Monitoring of RE



The approach to the assessment of RE has been developed to incorporate retrieval tasks at the start of each lesson, extension questions that are linked to weekly lessons as well as incorporating end of unit assessment tasks.

Targets for each pupil are highlighted so that pupils are able ascertain where they are at the end of a unit. Both the teachers and the pupils can conclude whether or not a child is working at the age related standard or whether they have exceeded this or are working towards age related expectations as outlined in Understanding Christianity or the Agreed Syllabus.

Moderation of work takes place across a year group on assessment completion; the RE co-ordinator will use the data presented to challenge or support as necessary.

Each teacher is responsible for regular assessment of pupil outcomes through assessment for learning strategies every lesson, classwork and end of unit assessments in line with school policies for monitoring and assessment.

Key assessment tasks are completed at least three times a year when pupils complete a variety of quizzing tasks, written or verbal assessments. Attainment is recorded so that pupil progress can be tracked by teachers.

Attainment and progress data is monitored by the Subject Coordinator to ensure that pupils are set work that is appropriately challenging. Further monitoring of RE is conducted through pupil voice, book scrutinies, lesson observations and conversations with teachers.

The Right of Withdrawal from RE



At St. Michael's, we wish to be an inclusive community and to highlight the importance of learning about a variety of religions and worldviews to help pupils better understand the world that they live in, but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher, before withdrawing their child, to discuss any concerns or anxieties they may have about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at our school.

Revised by Anna Thompson-Brown, RE Subject Leader June 2025
Date of Next Policy Review July 2026