



St Mark's C of E Junior School

Growing together, becoming all we are created to be

Religious Education Policy

Living our Vision

The **FACE** of St Mark's: **F**orgive, **A**spire, **C**ompassion, **E**ngage

*We, at Mark's C of E Junior School, are a community of learners. We show **aspiration** in every aspect of our learning: aiming high to achieve the very best we can and actively encouraging others to do the same. Learning more about ourselves, others and our world is seen as a joy and a huge privilege.*

*Through our learning, we deepen our relationships with one another, showing our Christian Values, and specifically **compassion** and **forgiveness**, in all that we do.*

*We **engage** in our learning as we embrace challenges, learn from and with each other and celebrate the success of others which leads to the mutual flourishing of all.*

Our Teaching and Learning approach at St Mark's is inspired by the 'Learning Rainforest' metaphor (*The Learning Rainforest, Tom Sherrington*), and this 'tree analogy' below is a direct reference back to our logo: the school's willow tree and the school's Vision. At St Mark's, we recognise that we all need each other to learn and **grow together** as we aim high and reach out. This is rationale is explained below:

Each tree in a forest has three interconnected components that are necessary for its existence:

The Roots: Establishing Conditions - tapping into a nutrient-rich soil providing the conditions for healthy growth; the nurturing environment in which each individual feels they belong and has their basic needs met

The Trunk and Branches: Building the Knowledge Structure - providing the structure that allows the tree to reach great heights before branching off; this represents knowledge in all its forms

The Canopy: Exploring Possibilities - this springs out in different directions, responding to the motivational stimulus of sunlight; the range of ambitions and learning possibilities

Fundamentally, as is the case in a 'Learning Rainforest', each one of us at St Mark's supports each other. None exists without the others and strength in one allows strength in the others.

This approach is the foundation of our practice at St Mark's. As we begin to implement this whole school approach (September 2020), the expectation and aspiration is that this model will be increasingly evident across all aspects of our teaching and learning.



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Vision for RE:

Religious Education at St Mark's is led by 3 main drivers:

1. The spiritual and moral needs and development of the children and the manner in which these contribute to their social and cultural development:
2. The nature of the whole curriculum which is underpinned by our Teaching and Learning approach as outlined above
3. The requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for Gloucestershire

At the heart of RE is the schools' concern to make children aware of the spiritual aspects of life, the ways they may respond to these in a personal sense, and how formal religious and cultural groups have responded to the world as they see it. As a Church of England school the Christian religion will be central. This will be the case in the school's acts of collective worship, the values which run throughout all aspects of school life, and the regular celebrations of the Christian year celebrated in church and in school. A main aim of RE in the school is that children will leave St Mark's having enjoyed their Religious Education; been stimulated by it; and look forward to building upon their knowledge and experience in their next school.

We believe that quality RE in Church of England schools makes space for pupils to explore question and makes the resources of the Christian tradition available to them. Quality RE takes the personal worth of every child and the family culture of each seriously, seeking to explore religious ideas and emotions in ways that are authentic and have integrity. It offers opportunities to children to think for themselves, and be broad minded and open-hearted in their encounters with faith.

The teaching of RE is focused through RE days, weekly sessions, daily acts of Collective Worship, services in Church and visits to places of worship of other faiths.

It is the rationale of RE in the school that children's learning is related to enjoyment, discovery and experience. When the children leave the school they will be familiar with the essential beliefs and practices of the Church of England and have been introduced to the major world religions as documented in the Agreed Syllabus through our rolling programme. *For further detail, see 'Aims'.*



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***“RE helps pupils to develop their own understanding of the world and how to live, in the light of their learning...It makes a significant contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as important opportunities for exploring British Values.”
(Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus 2017-22)***

Aims:

“The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.” (Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus 2017-22)

- To develop pupils’ knowledge, understanding and awareness of Christianity as the predominant religion in Great Britain, and the other principal religions at Key Stage 2; Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, as well as non-religious world views, such as Humanism.
- To know and understand religious beliefs, values, practices and lifestyles, and the part religion has played in the lives of individuals, societies, communities and cultures in order that pupils’ own spiritual and moral development is promoted.
- To learn to articulate clearly and coherently their own developing beliefs, identities, values and quest for meaning as they consider their own commitment in the light of other peoples’ which should continually challenge their own thinking.
- To encourage pupils to foster positive relationships and attitudes, such as tolerance and sensitivity, towards others with beliefs different from their own as they express and explore their views openly and honestly and encourage pupils to be willing to listen to opinions which they may not share.
- To aim to avoid stereotypes wherever possible, ‘understanding that beliefs are understood in different ways and by individuals and within communities as people put their beliefs into action in different ways.’ (AS p14)
- To promote British Values ‘mutual tolerance’ by promoting respect and celebrating diversity, ‘respectful attitudes’ by recognising diversity and being broad-minded and open-hearted, ‘democracy’ by debating and respecting a range of perspectives as well as sharing a responsibility to use our voice and influence for the well-being of others. ‘The rule of law’ to appreciate good/evil, right/wrong and the relationship between the citizens and state, ‘individual liberty’ learning what it means to live a life free from constraints. (AS p151)



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- To develop skills of observation, inquiry, interpretation, reflection and evaluation, as well as to recall and describe, and to encourage attitudes of sensitivity, empathy, reflection and response to promote spiritual development.
- To contribute towards children's full potential; spiritually, morally, socially and culturally within the ethos of the whole school.
- 'Every child should be revered and respected as a member of a community where all are known and loved by God and each person in all their unique differences should be able to thrive.' (All God's Children p5/11)
- We 'educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well and together.' (RE Statement of Entitlement)

Entitlement

RE is an entitlement for all pupils and in CE schools has equal standing with core subjects, however parents have the right to withdraw children wholly or partly for RE.

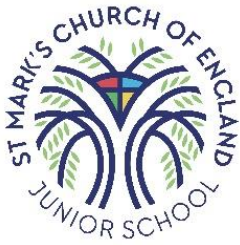
This school uses the Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2017-22).

The syllabus has three core elements which set the context for exploration of religion and belief; It ensures that all pupils '**make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs, understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs and make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts and practices and ideas studied.**' (AS p8/p55)

It requires that all pupils develop an understanding of Christianity and this is taught for at least 50% of the teaching time. In addition, pupils develop an understanding of the principal religions represented in the UK. At KS2 they learn about Muslims, Hindus and Jews. Furthermore, non-religious world views are a focus in some units.

The expectation is that a minimum of 5% curriculum time is spent on RE which equals 45 hours a year. This could be 1 hour a week or a series of RE days or weeks amounting to this time.

Each pupil will receive an individual RE comment on their annual report which describes their progress and achievement. (AS p125)



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Organisation

As a Voluntary Aided school, RE is taught in accordance with the trust deeds and the Governors determine the nature of R.E.

The scheme of work 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 as well as other worldwide views, including, for example, Humanism. Reference may be made to other faiths at the teacher's discretion. In lessons when Christianity is taught they should make reference to the Anglican tradition where relevant.

Each unit theme begins with a focus key question to enable the principal aim for RE in Gloucestershire, 'to engage pupils in questions arising from the study of religion and beliefs to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.'

Systematic teaching of each faith separately emphasises the integrity of each religion to develop a coherent understanding of several religions. Different traditions, including non-religious worldviews are compared and contrasted in some of the thematic units which allows pupils to draw together their learning. Core concepts and beliefs are taught allowing pupils to make these connections about their practices.

In the Christian units Understanding Christianity is used and 'Digging deeper' allows a more in-depth approach as a VA CE school. Pupils will regularly engage with biblical text and theological ideas through the use of this resource.

Christian values and teaching are reflected in a cycle of themes on which our daily acts of worship are based. This is not part of the specific teaching time for RE. (See separate Collective Worship policy.)

We have close links with St Mark Church and visit for 'Experience...' sessions on a 2-year rolling programme, in addition to Easter, Harvest and Christmas services being held there.

Teachers use a variety of teaching and learning styles in whole class, group and individual activities. The syllabus offers open, enquiring, exploratory RE including creative classroom practice. RE is encouraged to be used as a stimulus in cross-curricular activities; extended writing, art, drama etc. Where this occurs the RE objectives are made clear.



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Resources:

- Each member of staff has been provided with the study unit planners from the Glos Agreed Syllabus.
- 'Understanding Christianity' supports the teaching of Christian topics.
- The RE resources are located in the lower school PPA room.
- We encourage visitors to enhance pupils' learning by coming in to share their faith, to educate but not evangelise.
- The RE Co-ordinator attends the local RE Hub meetings when convenient.

Assessment:

Assessment should be made through a variety of means; teacher's professional judgement, observation, listening, questioning, setting tasks which require the use of key RE skills, higher order thinking skills, written tasks, discussion, self and peer assessment activities, in order to record whether a pupil is working towards, on track or exceeding expectations.

Standards in RE should be equal to, or above other core subjects.

Each unit is assessed using our Insight whole school assessment package. The learning outcomes for each unit are expressed in relation to the three elements of the teaching and learning approach (making sense of belief, understanding the impact, making connections).

An objective from each element is assessed per unit.

As a church school we will be assessed by SIAMs on our RE.

Role of the Co-ordinator:

- Named member of staff is responsible for RE
- To monitor the teaching and learning of RE
- Produce the RE Policy
- Keep up to date with current practice and CPD
- Mentor and support other teachers

Safeguarding Statement

St Mark's C.E. Junior School is committed to delivering good outcomes for children and young people by providing an outstanding safe learning environment that promotes their welfare and helps them develop socially and emotionally so that they can make the most of their life chances



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Date: Autumn 2021

Responsibility: RE Co-ordinator and Ethos Committee

Review Date: Autumn 2022

Signed:  **Headteacher**

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