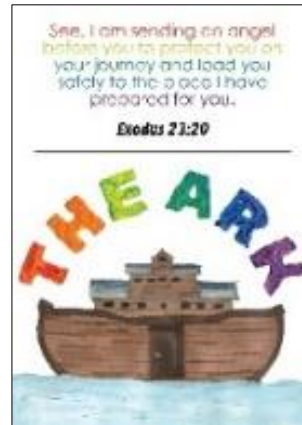


St Michael's CE (A)



Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

*The Lord says, 'For I know the plans for you...plans to give you hope and a future.'*

**Jeremiah 29 verse 11**

Date Approved: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Review date: September 2024

Signed: **Sarah Douglas** (Chair of Governors)



## **Rationale for RE at St. Michael's CE (Aided) Primary School**

Religious Education (RE) plays an important role in defining the school's distinctive Christian character. The SIAMS schedule 2018 (Strand 7) makes it clear that RE should reflect the school's Christian vision:

***The Lord says, 'For I know the plans I have for you .... plans to give you hope and a future.' Jeremiah 29 verse 11***

As an inclusive Christian school, St Michael's Church of England (Aided) Primary School values everyone as a child of God and rejoices in its diversity. Our vision is to provide a happy, loving and nurturing environment where all have the confidence to make outstanding progress and so expand and fulfil their hopes and aspirations. Our inspiring, enriched curriculum promotes a thirst for knowledge and develops wisdom.

The subject of Religious Education (RE) 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 (February 2019), see link below and Appendix A:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/RE%20Statement%20of%20Entitlement%20for%20Church%20Schools.pdf>

Christianity will, therefore, be no less than two thirds 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 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. The school bases it on the decision made by the governing body. In addition, the school uses the Lichfield Diocesan RE Guidelines, Understanding Christianity resources and other appropriate materials to enhance teaching and learning. A 'Progression for Learning' document has been written to aid teaching and learning and identifies the key questions and outcomes for each RE topic from Reception to Year 6.

At least 5% 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 two thirds 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 understand Christian understanding of the significance of Jesus Christ
- 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, and persons (eg Jesus Christ, Mohammad, Guru Nanak)
- 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 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.
<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 citizenship education (PSHCE) 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 September 2022).

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

The RE subject leader is responsible for:

- producing a scheme of work/'progression for learning' document for the school
- supporting colleagues in the detailed planning and delivery of RE provision
- ensuring Religious Education has high 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 there are rigorous and effective systems that enable teachers to know how and what pupils are learning in RE (SIAMS September 2022)
- creating the RE Improvement Plan and ensuring its regular review
- accountability for RE standards in the school
- meeting with members of the Diocesan RE advisory team when possible

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

At St. Michael's CE (Aided) Primary School 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 wishing to exercise this right are asked to write to the headteacher who will then invite the parents 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 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 which will seek to further their knowledge and understanding of their parents' beliefs and values.

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

Within our policy we include a Christian Distinctiveness action plan which is used to identify current needs and address next steps within the RE curriculum. This is based on reviewing current practice and outcomes. Class teachers deliver the RE curriculum in school and are responsible for the planning, differentiation for all pupils including SEND, PP and the more able. From the school's assessment proforma for each subject, teachers make a final judgement for each topic taught as to whether the children are below the expected standard (BLW), working towards the expected standard (WTS), at the expected standard (EXS) or working at greater depth (GDS) which is then reported to the RE leader who analyses these outcomes, in line with school assessment procedures. Regular monitoring of RE takes many forms which includes the monitoring of lessons, books and pupil voice by the Headteacher/RE leader where both written and verbal feedback is given which focuses on strengths seen and areas for development. Following the award of the Silver RE Quality Mark (February 2022) we are committed to achieving excellent in our next SIAMS inspection.

### **Review**

The policy will be reviewed annually.

## **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 withdraws 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 to not hamper their responsibilities to ensure equality for all and the promotion of British Values.

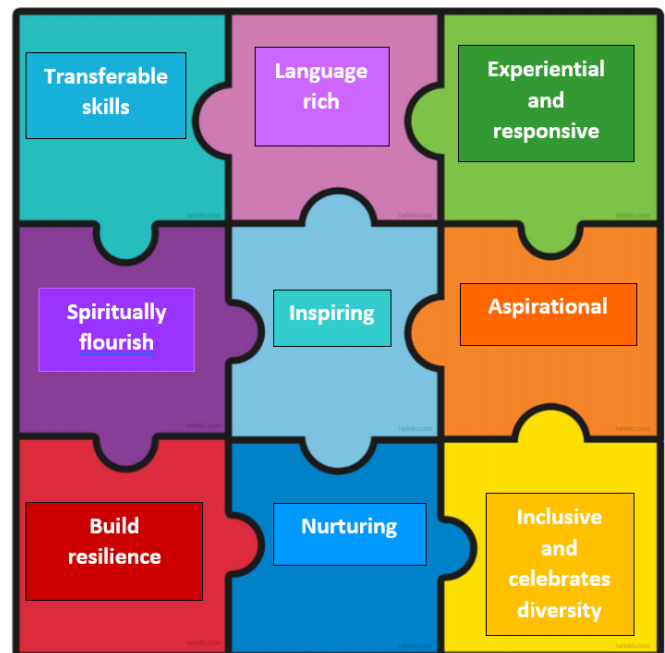
# An Overview of the Religious Education Curriculum at St Michael's



*The Lord says, 'For I know the plans I have for you .... plans to give you hope and a future.'*  
*Jeremiah 29 verse 11*

At St Michael's, we want all children to enjoy R.E and take the opportunity to reflect upon various religious faiths, developing a thirst for knowledge and wisdom. We want all children to understand the core importance of RE in our curriculum and the way it helps each one of us to value and respect the diverse cultures and faiths represented by our school and wider community.

The core concepts of Christianity and other major world faiths are taught in order to build respect and tolerance of various beliefs and encourage respectful dialogue between children and children, adults and children and adults and adults. We aim for all children to learn how to disagree well and talk about their own, and other, beliefs in a respectful and appropriate way. We want children to be able to reflect on their own experiences and develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life.



In particular, for Christianity, the RE curriculum enables children to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith, by exploring core theological concepts. It enables children to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians. It develops children's abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief (particularly Christianity). And as such, enables all to:

- develop an ability to communicate and express and understand feelings,
- develop transferrable skills that can be used in the future to embrace new opportunities,
- experience opportunities that will support the development of cultural capital,
- develop positive healthy relationships and promote well-being,
- develop and grow resilience and the ability to problem-solve so that all are prepared to take their place in society.

The school follows the Understanding Christianity syllabus which ensures that as the children move up the school they learn about new key concepts and also go into previously learnt concepts in greater depth. Three strands run through all Understanding Christianity units: Making sense of the text, understanding the impact, and making connections. Making sense looks at the Bible and helps children to understand the text; understanding the impact looks at how the text impacts Christians' beliefs and actions; and making connections encourages children to discern possible connections between the concepts studied and their own lives.

All year groups also learn about other major world faiths following schemes of work provided by the diocese and R.E today.

The school has adapted the assessment frameworks of Undertaking Christianity and the other world faith units to embrace an inquiry-based learning approach. Each assessment grid for each unit has questions which drive the learning forward and help develop understanding and reflective skills. All the questions contribute to the overarching key question for the unit.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through assessment for learning opportunities, work scrutiny, pupil voice feedback, data analysis and learning observations. Through these forms of continuous and robust assessment, the particular talents, gifts, interests and curiosity of individuals are identified and nurtured to ensure personal motivations and ambitions are encouraged and fostered.

We believe RE is impactful when children are excited and value the learning opportunities that they are given, reflecting on various religious beliefs and discerning what they may be able to learn from those beliefs.

When the children leave St Michael's at the end of Year 6, most children have a good understanding of the core concepts of the Christian faith and how they link together. Additionally, they have developed a good understanding of the core concepts of other major world faiths.

The children at St Michael's have respect for everyone regardless of beliefs and know how to voice disagreements in a respectful, appropriate way using sources to reinforce their opinions.