

St Matthew's C of E Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Our mission statement

We aim to provide a positive learning experience in a safe and respectful environment. We strive to teach an inspiring and inclusive curriculum that promotes a love of learning. As a Christian school, we endeavour to develop the spiritual and moral values of all members of the St. Matthew's family, and a meaningful, loving relationship with God. We want our children to be cheerful and independent individuals who reach their potential and are proud of their achievements. We hope to develop confident, caring citizens who are well prepared to enjoy happy and rewarding lives.

Our motto: Live, Love, Learn

Religious Education

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to the core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils. St Matthew's is a Church of England Aided School; therefore the provision of Religious Education (RE) must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. The Governors, in consultation with the Headteacher, have decided, following advice from the Diocese, to adopt the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE which fulfils all legal requirements and the RE Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office 2016. Although RE and Collective Worship naturally compliment and enrich one another, they are managed separately.

Aims of Religious Education:

- To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016

At St Matthew's Religious Education lies at the very heart of the curriculum, therefore:

- The Governors have adopted the Blackburn Diocese Board of Education Syllabus for RE which reflects Understanding Christianity and the national Framework for RE.
- At least 5% of dedicated curriculum time is devoted to RE.
- As appropriate to a Church school, knowledge and understanding of Christianity takes the central focus in the RE syllabus, encompassing between two thirds and three quarters of the dedicated teaching time.
- The appropriate teachings of other major world faiths and world views are also included.

Teaching World Faiths

RE should equip pupils to recognise the common search of all humanity for ultimate truth and relationship with the divine. Therefore, at St Matthew's we have respect for great world faiths. This respect is based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of world faiths which is consistent with the school's loyalty to its Christian foundation.

Religious Education at St Matthew's provides opportunities for pupils to:

- Make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity.
- Reflect critically on the truth of the claims of Christian belief.
- Think theologically and explore the great and ultimate questions of life, and death, meaning and purpose.
- Explore how the truth of Christianity is relevant today and face the challenge of Jesus' teaching in today's society.
- Develop the skills to handle the Bible text.
- Recognise that faith is not based on a positive balance of probabilities but on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world.
- Respond in terms of beliefs, commitments and ways of living.
- Develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious.
- Experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community.
- Engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions.
- Become active citizens, serving their neighbour.
- Find a reason for hope in a troubled world.
- Understand how a religious faith can sustain them in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

St Matthew's also provides a distinct content of Religious Education which includes:

- Opportunities to link with and contribute to the understanding of Christian and British Values.
- Opportunities to explore the Church's year.
- Opportunities to challenge cultural and religious stereotypes.
- Visits to places of worship, the local church and the Cathedral.
- Liaison with the local church to enable these links and visits to occur.
- A variety of Bibles in child-friendly language that is understood by the learners.
- The facility to listen to Christian psalms and songs from a wide variety of traditions.
- Access to Christian artefacts that are used with respect, care and confidence.
- A rich variety of resources and teaching approaches, including drama, artwork and Godly Play.
- Classroom spaces known as 'Prayer Corners' that may be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection.
- Visits to school from people of different faith backgrounds.
- Pupils from other faith backgrounds being encouraged in their faith.
- Pupils with no religious background gaining an insight into what it means to be a person of faith.
- Provision for children with SEN to engage with RE through differentiation.
- School artwork and displays that encourage thinking about God and His world.

The distinctive contribution of RE to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils

- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development in a church school is distinctive because these four aspects of the school curriculum are inextricably rooted in the reality of God the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The RE curriculum in a church school is the place where excellent and distinctive SMSC is seen most clearly.
- Cultural development in RE in a church school 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.

- RE also promotes an understanding of cultures and religions other than Christianity. Through the exploration of texts, beliefs, and practices lived out worldwide, pupils will develop respect and understanding. Cultural diversity should be recognised and celebrated as we remove barriers and build communities.

Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education 2017

PSHE

St Matthew's also promotes PSHE (Personal, Social, Health) through Religious Education. This helps to:

- Develop pupil knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding.
- Enable pupils to think about topical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, including the importance of resolving conflict fairly.
- Explore the rights and responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally.
- Enable pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events.
- Develop confidence and responsibility by learning about what is fair and unfair, right and wrong and are encouraged to share their opinions.
- Develop a safer and healthier lifestyle by learning about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships, learning about the purpose and value of religious beliefs and sensitivities in relation to Relationships and Health Education and enabling pupils to consider and express their own views.
- Develop good relationships and respecting the differences between people by learning about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings, considering the issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people whose beliefs, views and lifestyles are different from their own.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

Pupil knowledge and attainment in Religious Education at St Matthew's is assessed using a progressive Ladder of Expectation and Achievement in skills (BDBE 2017) which employs symbols to denote end of Key Stage expectations:

- At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to be achieving at ▲ (rung 2 of the ladder).
- At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to be achieving at ✦ (rung 4 of the ladder).
- Higher-attaining pupil's work may show evidence of achieving at ◆ (rung 5 of the ladder).

All BDBE syllabus units indicate expected knowledge and outcomes, and also use the above symbols, thereby aiding the planning and assessment process and making clear whether pupils are working at, towards or exceeding expectations of achievement. At the end of each syllabus unit, expectations are converted into 'I know' and 'I can' statements, in order that KS2 pupils may self-assess or peer assess. The RE Subject Leader monitors, assesses and records work in RE books and class RE 'scrapbooks' regularly, building a portfolio of evidence of RE across the school. The purpose of this portfolio is to monitor progression of knowledge and understanding in RE across school and to be a celebration of the distinctive quality of RE at St Matthew's.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RE WITHIN ST. MATTHEW'S

Teaching & Learning of RE:	Headteacher and Teachers
Monitoring & Assessment of RE:	RE Subject Leader
Collective Worship:	Headteacher

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNORS AT ST. MATTHEW'S

The governors of St Matthew's work with the Headteacher and staff in creating, inspiring and embodying the Christian ethos, securing its Mission Statement with all members of the school community and ensuring an environment for teaching and learning that empowers both staff and children to achieve their highest potential. The search for excellence in a church school is pursued through teaching and learning taking place in the context of the individual needs and aspirations of the pupils as God's children.

The governors ensure each teacher responsibly assists the Headteacher in the leadership of a faith community, for whom Jesus Christ is the model. In the management of staff, their unique contribution as individuals, valued and loved by God, should be recognised. There is a named governor with responsibility for Church School Distinctiveness. This governor meets with the school's RE Subject Leader on a termly basis and reports back to the governing body via the Achievement Committee.

The relationship between the school's vision, Mission Statement and the deployment of all staff, finance, resources, time and energy should reflect the Christian aims of the school community and the needs of all pupils.

RIGHTS OF PARENTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ST. MATTHEW'S

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education in any school. If such a request for withdrawal is made, the Headteacher will explore the reasons for the request. It may be that only some elements of Religious Education or Worship are objected to. However, as stated in the School Brochure, *'if you choose to send your child to St Matthew's School, it is on the understanding that you are happy for your child to take part in the religious life of the school.'*

Mrs W. Rowe, RE Subject Leader

Mr J. Rogers, Headteacher, Collective Worship Coordinator

Mrs H. Henderson, Church School Distinctiveness Governor

Policy Adopted	
Date	By Whom
15.01.2020	Achievement Committee
Date for next review: Jan 2023	
Signed by Chair of Governors	
Date of Signature	