St Michael's C of E Primary School

Religious Education Policy



'Growing & Learning Together'

The parable of the mustard seed is a key passage that reflects our school vision 'Growing and learning together'. Matthew 13: 31-32. The friendships that are formed and the trust that builds enable each and every child to flourish within the community. The love of learning is at the heart of everything we do. Each of our children grow in our school like a mustard seed, blossoming in readiness for the next chapter in their lives.

At St Michael's CE Primary School 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 whilst travelling on their spiritual journey. Our curriculum is designed in line with the national statement of entitlement ad reflects the vision of the Church of England that clearly states:

'Religious education in a Church school 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.'

Our Christian vision has driven us to create an inspiring curriculum for our pupils that pursues the acquisition of wisdom, knowledge and skills alongside educating for aspiration, understanding, and respect. It is also our intention to nurture a sense of community, so that all members of our school develop a deep sense of belonging, both locally and within the wider world. We believe that these attributes will support our pupils to live well together and flourish, as they move on to High School and venture out into a world outside of St Michael's. We believe that our vision is part of The Golden Rule prominent across many religious and non-religious belief systems. Through our ambitious curriculum we can demonstrate what that looks like for many people of faith, and those without faith and help them to feel a sense of connection and compassion towards others.

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Our approach to the curriculum offer is therefore divided into three focus areas: Small steps, express, shine':

Small steps- Teachers carefully select content and plan learning to provide knowledge and skills free from stereotyping whilst providing opportunities for our pupils to be curious and aspirational. This also incorporates small steps towards speaking out for those who do not have a voice.

Express-We want all our pupils to have a growth mindset, developing resilience, and enabling them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in an environment of high challenge, low threat as outlined in our approach to implementation.

Shine- Our children demonstrate how to 'grow and learn together', developing a greater awareness of the challenge's others face in life and how we can make a difference in our school community, local community and further afield. Through the curriculum we develop pupils understanding of challenges locally and globally and we teach pupils to listen with respect. Our curriculum offer gives our pupils the tools to shine in both our local community and further afield. Through the curriculum we develop pupils understanding of challenges locally and globally and we teach pupils to listen with respect. Our curriculum offer give pupils the tools to shine in both our local context and the world beyond St Michael's.

Intent

Our primary aim within RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religions and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

Religious Education has a significant role for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It promotes respect and open-mindedness towards others with different faiths and beliefs and encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging through self- awareness and reflection. The principle aim of RE is to engage pupils in an enquiry approach where they can develop an understanding and appreciation for the expression of beliefs, cultural practices and influence of principle religions and worldviews in the local, national and wider global community.

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Implementation

The religious education in our school will contribute dynamically to children and young people's education in school by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. We will do this by offering the following experiences and enrichment activities:

*handling artefacts

*exploring sacred texts

*using imaginative play or drama to express feelings and ideas

*responding to images, games, stories, art, music and dance

*meeting visitors from local religious communities

*making visits to religious places of worship where possible, and where not, making use of videos and the internet

*taking part in whole school events (multi-faiths days, Harvest festival, school performances)

*participating in moments of quiet reflection

*participating in a range of worship both actively and reflectively

*using ICT to further explore religion and belief globally

*comparing religions and worldviews through discussion

*debating and communicating religious belief, worldviews and philosophical ideas and answering and asking ultimate questions posed by these

*children will produce artwork in response to their learning as well as inferring what can be learnt and understood from a range of pictures and images.

Impact

We strive for our RE curriculum to impact the children in the following ways:

Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews so that they can:

*describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals

*identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews

*appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning,

Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews so they can:

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*explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities

*express with increasingly discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues.

*appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religions, appreciating and being curious about the diversity within them.

Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews so that they can:

*find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively

*enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectively for the wellbeing of all

*articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives

*flourish spirituality and grow in awe and wonder for the world they live in

By the time our children leave St Michael's CE Primary School we want them to have the skills and knowledge to be able to not only express their views and beliefs but to be able to respect and understand the views of other people locally and worldwide. We want them to have an interest and desire to learn more about the religions and world beliefs in the local, national and wider global community and flourish in life beyond St Michael's,

Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-2025

At St Michael's CE Primary School, we believe that a carefully sequenced curriculum can empower our pupils and reduce social inequity, whilst providing the knowledge they need for the next stage of their education and beyond. We view our curriculum as a spiral: the mapped-out journey of concept building leading to a change in long term memory and an increase in knowledge. Through progressive concepts throughout the curriculum, the children will develop a deep and rich understanding, meaning that the knowledge and skills that are acquired are more likely to be remembered. Our curriculum sets out WHAT will be learned and WHEN it will be learned.

Teaching and learning approach: There is a clear teaching and learning approach at the heart of the 2020 syllabus, whereby all units enable children to **'make sense'** of the religions and beliefs studied, **'understand the impact'** of those beliefs in people's lives, and to **'make connections'** in their learning and their wider experience of the world.

Coherent understanding: There is an increased emphasis on helping children to develop a coherent understanding of several religions, by studying one religion at a time (systematic study) and bringing together and comparing different traditions (thematic study). The thematic study allows children to

draw together their learning each year, and it is for this reason we have chosen to mostly place these units at the end of an academic year.

Core concepts: Clarity about identifiable core concepts of religions and beliefs helps teachers and children to understand how beliefs and practices connect, so that children are able to build effectively on prior learning as they progress through the school.

This syllabus incorporates the **Understanding Christianity** approach, the key purpose is to help all teachers support children in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it.

We aim to see children leave the school with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice. Pupils explore the significant theological concepts within Christianity as part of developing their wider religious, theological and cultural literacy. This equates to at least 50% of our RE curriculum. The other part is designed with systematic units exploring other religious and non-religious world beliefs as well as carefully selected thematic units.

Purpose: The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all children **make sense** of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs so that they can:

*identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using appropriate vocabulary

*explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities

*recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teaching, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation.

It aims to ensure that all children **understand the impact** and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:

*examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways

*recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world

*appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

It ensures that pupils **make connections** between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:

*evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses

*challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response

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*discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding

*flourish on their journey of spirituality and develop a sense of awe and wonder for the world outside of St Michael's.

Monitoring-We have a rigorous schedule of monitoring which includes:

- Pupil voice
- Staff voice
- Parent voice
- Shared reflections of work
- Learning Walks by RE Co-ordinator, SLT. STG, DHMAT
- Moderation with DHMAT schools

The insight from these and other monitoring activities gives the RE Co-ordinator a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop within RE. From this analysis, it can be ensured that nay professional development is closely matched to teachers' needs and allow the RE Co-ordinator to reflect on how effective the curriculum is and whether there are further opportunities to extend the curriculum offering , design or delivery.

Signed by T Westlake/M Lewis/J Hughes

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