

Bathwick St. Mary Church School

'Achieving excellence through the pursuit of good'



Religious Education Policy

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Our School Policies should be understood as part of the overall strategy of the School, and put into practice within the context of our Vision, Mission and Christian Values (**Love, Joyfulness, Respect, Forgiveness, Perseverance, Fairness**) as a Church School, with a particular focus on the promotion of equality.

Introduction

Bathwick St. Mary Church School's vision is built upon our Christian Values and complements and enhances our Mission. We aim to nurture every child to be the best they can be and by each member of our community striving to do their best, we all will be, '**Achieving excellence through the pursuit of good**'. Our school's vision has a clear Christian theological underpinning, based on the Biblical narrative underpinning our Christian Values. Further details can be found here: <http://bathwickstmary.org/vision-and-values/>

Aims

The Church of England vision for education is for all children to, 'Have life, life in all its fullness.' [John 10:10]. Bathwick St. Mary Church School's ethos is built upon our Christian Values, which support our children, staff and school community to experience and enjoy life in all its fullness. Bathwick St. Mary Church School has long held core inclusive Christian Values at the heart of what we do. Starting in early 2018, Governors, staff, the School Council and our children, refined, refreshed and developed a fresh expression of our school mission statement and our core Christian Values. These core Christian Values are absolutely embedded in the way we teach our Religious Education (RE) curriculum.

Prior to academy conversion on 31st March 2018 we were a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School. As such, the teaching of RE was and is given significant importance in line with the other academic and core subjects. Furthermore, the spiritual development of our children is viewed as a vital foundation for living; one that goes above and beyond academia but that has the real potential to help an individual flourish spiritually. This policy needs to be read in conjunction with our Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy.

This Religious Education policy is informed by current national guidance, including:

- The Church of England's Vision for Education 'Deeply Christian Serving the Common Good', 2016
- A Statement of Entitlement, Church of England, 2016
- A Curriculum Framework for RE in England, RE Council for England and Wales (REC), 2013
- RE: realising the potential, Ofsted, 2013
- RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance, 2010

How we approach the teaching of Religion Education

As an Academy School we have flexibility to adopt any RE curriculum deemed appropriate but one that reflects the religious traditions of Great Britain which are in the main Christian, but taking in account other principal religious traditions. However, mindful of our Trust Deed and as a school with a strong Christian foundation and heritage, and upholding Diocesan advice, we use a rich combination of both the 'Understanding Christianity' resource from the Church of England and 'Awareness, Mystery, Value' (AMV) which is the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Bath and North East Somerset. (This should not be confused with Somerset's 'Awareness, Mystery *and* Value'.) This has been our practice since the introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource in 2016.

RE accounts for around 10% of the curriculum timetable, in line with its status as an academic subject. Understanding Christianity is used as the basis to teach Christian elements of the curriculum; it is rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christianity is the focus for around 70% of RE lessons. Other major world religions (Judaism, Hinduism and Islam) are taught as stand-alone units based upon the AMV resources, and there are opportunities within the curriculum for children to explore broader ideas around spirituality, identity and life experiences. All learning in RE is designed to develop children's theological literacy.

RE at Bathwick St. Mary Church School is enquiry-led, creative and conceptually organised. We aim to raise children's religious literacy by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to engage confidently and respectfully with the diverse religious beliefs and practices present in their wider communities.

Teaching and learning seeks to ensure children develop a secure knowledge and understanding of some of the core beliefs, texts and rituals of major world religions, and to make links with their own beliefs, experiences and the world around them.

The resources are used to teach and lead creative and innovative learning in each class, from Reception to Year Six. Children explore deeper questions about life and to learn about Christianity alongside a wide range of other faiths and cultures. We approach the teaching of RE creatively, using an enquiry based 'Big Question' model which successfully entwines subjects such as art, dance, drama, music, the use of the indoor and outdoor and through trips, pilgrimages and visitors. From Year 1, each child has their own book specifically to record learning in RE. These are books that reflect the importance of RE within the school. In Early Years, a class book is used to record whole class learning.

We approach RE in a way that will not only introduce children to an understanding of the nature of Christian beliefs and practices but will provide a foundation for lifelong Christian learning. Children will be encouraged in their exploration of the spiritual and philosophical dimension of life and the environment will be set for them to experience an awareness of God. Further opportunities will be given for children to learn about other world faiths, not merely to compare but to enhance their understanding of faith.

RE has a particular contribution to make towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of each pupil. It involves 'Learning about Religion' i.e. understanding what religious people believe and do, and how they express themselves; and also 'Learning from Religion' i.e. making sense of who we are, of life, and of right and wrong. Lessons are planned to help children develop a wide range of key enquiry skills, including careful analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection to deepen their understanding and appreciation of Christianity, and other world regions and their impact on society.

Monitoring, Reporting and Assessment

Formative assessment is an ongoing teacher and child led process that influences on teaching and learning to bring about depth and further understanding. Summative assessment follows the 'AMV Learning Outcomes' to determine the umbrella assessment framework for each term. This is based on the AMV six areas of enquiry, but incorporates the learning outcomes given in Understanding Christianity to help determine our key questions and shape the learning and tasks against which we assess for Christianity units.

Learning outcomes for each unit build upon prior learning, and move children towards end of phase expectations. The curriculum is organised around key questions and areas of enquiry from the AMV syllabus. Children work towards answering key questions through enquiry-based learning; exploring religious texts, artefacts, core beliefs, and the impact these have on how people of faith live out their lives.

The children's knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts, in addition to their ability to demonstrate skills such as investigation, interpretation and evaluation, are assessed through on-going formative processes in addition to specific summative tasks that provide pupils with the opportunity to demonstrate their learning and answer the unit's key questions.

We use the advised three-tier model of assessment requiring teachers to make effective judgements about whether pupils were working at developing, expected or greater depth levels of knowledge and understanding at the end of each of the three terms. This is in line with our assessment procedures for English and Maths.

In addition, we recognise the importance of and assess children's attitudes in RE, such as respect, care and concern, in line with our core Christian Values, through on-going formative assessment of pupil's participation in RE lessons.

Pupil's learning and development in RE is reported to parents at the end of each Summer Term as part of the end of year reporting arrangements.

Monitoring of RE

In line with core subjects, each teacher is formally observed once annually in RE (as well as English and Maths) by the Headteacher. Informal 'drop ins' are part of an additional ongoing process. After each formal observation the teacher and teacher will engage in a professional learning conversation, and together identify areas of strength and 'next steps'. A 'grade' is not given; observations are designed to be a professionally supportive process that lead to improved teaching and learning. If there are significant concerns (ones that require swift remedial action), the Headteacher will formulate a package of support, involving the teacher concerned and other members of the Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.

The RE lead is part of the local RE network and as such attends training and provides support to other teachers and schools through discussion at these events. The school has begun the application process for the Silver and Gold RE Quality Mark.

The legal position of Religious Education

RE is compulsory for all children registered at the school, but parents may choose to withdraw their child from RE if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school's governors (not Multi Academy Trust Board). It is hoped that the aims of R.E. are understood by the whole school community, such that RE is seen as relevant for all pupils in the school.