

St Michael's CE High School

A Church of England Academy



RE Policy

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ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF OUR CHRISTIAN VISION

Our motto is '**Therefore choose [life]**' from Deuteronomy.



We understand this to mean growing in **body, mind and spirit**, so that all who learn and work here may flourish, experiencing the joy and hope of **'Life in all its fullness'**.

This is further explained in our Mission Statement,

*'As a vibrant learning community
we choose to serve God,
pursue excellence
and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual.'*

POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our school vision is 'Therefore choose [life]' from Deuteronomy. We understand this to mean growing in body, mind and spirit, so that all who learn and work here may flourish, experiencing the joy and hope of 'Life in all its fullness'. This is further explained in our Mission Statement, 'As a vibrant learning community we choose to serve God, pursue excellence and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual.'



Our theologically rooted Christian Vision for RE at St Michael's

RE which reflects our school's Christian distinctiveness

RE at St Michael's is central to our deeply Christian character. It supports the way in which the school offers 'life in all its fullness' through growth in body, mind and spirit. It aims to embody our Mission Statement. We study religion within a Christian context, reflecting the Anglican tradition of our school. We aim for the highest standards of excellence. We provide a safe space for each unique individual to flourish and explore their beliefs, values, worldview whatever those beliefs might be.

We aim to provide pupils with a mature understanding of the Christian faith alongside promoting love and understanding for people of other faiths and non. Our pupils gain understanding of Christian values through their study of RE. Their academic studies help them to understand why values such as love, forgiveness, compassion and justice are important and deepens their Christian theological thinking about these values. We hope that pupils will also be presented with challenges to some of the values that are current in modern materialistic society.

Behaviour is managed in line with our behaviour for learning policy. It is founded on the need for each individual to treat others with dignity and respect and make informed choices about behaviour as expressed by our theologically rooted Christian vision "Therefore Choose..." from Deuteronomy 30:19.

RE which is inclusive of all

RE at St Michael's supports our commitment to meeting the needs of each unique individual. It is inclusive of all. We encourage pupils to share with us in a journey as they search for the truth. Our foundation statement is 'Other foundation can no man lay,

than that which is laid which is Christ Jesus.’ This demonstrates that, as a Christian school, our theologically rooted Christian vision is rooted in Jesus Christ. We are committed to nurturing pupils who have a faith commitment and non as they develop their theological thinking. We respect the differing views represented in our school and we are aware that we may all start and end our search for truth in different places. RE classrooms are spaces for thinking where all, including the teacher, are engaged on a journey. We start and finish the journey in different places respecting the worldviews and beliefs of all who share the journey. We encourage pupils to wrestle with challenging questions in depth about spirituality, God, faith and our world. We are committed to being inclusive as Jesus was inclusive, prompting questioning as Jesus prompted questioning and challenging pupils to evaluate issues for themselves.

RE which develops religious literacy

In RE we seek to pursue academic excellence, supporting growth in body, mind and spirit. Our ambitious curriculum is progressive and builds skills and attitudes for religious literacy across all years. These include:

- Knowledge and understanding of diverse religious practice and belief
- Interpreting sacred texts
- Disciplinary knowledge/ways of knowing including: Theological, human and social science, philosophical strands/lenses
- Critical thinking skills
- Attitudes of respect for diverse beliefs, faiths and cultures
- A safe space for spiritual development; personal and moral development; faith development for pupils of faith

RE which develops skills for learning and critical thinking

Our commitment to supporting the pursuit of academic excellence means that we seek to develop the skills pupils need for learning and which will equip them to lead a full life. We aim to provide a variety of learning activities which meet the needs of pupils for learners to express their ideas we take account of multiple intelligences. Our teaching builds on whole school strategies regarding learning processes and refers to work undertaken in ‘Character for life’ lessons. We provide opportunities for pupils to become resilient, resourceful, responsible, reasoned and reflective learners. Pupils use ICT in some lessons and homelearnings to support their learning.

We support pupils in developing the personal learning and thinking skills identified by an earlier national curriculum (2009): independent enquirers; creative thinkers; reflective learners; team workers; self-managers; effective participators. Examples of learning activities which develop these skills are identified within the schemes of learning. We encourage pupils to use generic skills developed in RE in other curriculum areas and approach learning from a multi-disciplinary ‘permeable walls’ standpoint.

Programme of Study

As a Church of England academy, in accordance with our funding agreement, we develop our own schemes of learning which are approved by the governors. Our vision and

curriculum fulfil the Statement of Entitlement for RE issued by the Church of England Education Office (2019). They are rooted in diocesan development of this in the DBS Framework for RE (2022). We have drawn on material from *Understanding Christianity, Illuminating Pathways* and the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus. Approximately 70% of time is devoted to the study of Christianity. Islam and Hinduism are studied in depth in year 7 and 8. Judaism is studied alongside Christianity for the GCSE course. We teach non-religious world views in some key stage 3 and 4 units where appropriate.

The vision is for a coherently sequenced curriculum which develops the concepts and skills for religious literacy across all years.

The contribution of RE to the wider school

The contribution of RE to worship

Spiritual development is an important aspect of 'life in all its fullness'. Supporting spiritual development is an important part of our work. We offer to work with the leaders of collective worship. We take support special services at the end of terms. Members of the RE department lead collective worship. Sometimes work undertaken in RE, including pupils' reflections, art work or drama are used in collective worship.

The contribution of RE to spiritual development

RE lessons often include opportunities for pupils to acknowledge awe and wonder at the natural world or to reflect. We regularly make use of music and art to prompt reflection and for pupils to express their own personal response to an issue. We aim to use contemporary music or film whenever possible to enable pupils to see the relevance of their learning to their own lives. We work with other departments to enrich opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.

Links with the Arts Department

St Michael's has a strong arts department and many talented pupils. Art, music, drama and dance are skills which pupils sometimes choose to express their work. This is another important way in which pupils engage with spiritual development.

The contribution of RE to cultural development and community cohesion

We seek to serve God and our community by helping pupils to respect diversity and engage in dialogue with people of other faiths and cultures. We believe that promoting understanding of other faiths and cultures is part of our Christian calling to love our neighbour. Approximately 30% of curriculum time is spent considering other world faiths. Although pupils will encounter all the six major world faiths at some point during their RE course, we focus in depth on Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. We are committed to considering the impact of faith on believers in the contemporary world and to encouraging pupils to celebrate the diversity of cultural practices which enrich life in the UK. We encourage learners to challenge the assumptions and stereotypes about

different faiths often found in the media. We provide opportunities for pupils to visit local faith communities and to discuss issues of faith with local members of those communities. We encourage pupils to look at issues from a global perspective as they consider the Christian calling to be courageous advocates, work for justice, with a focus on the teaching of Amos, 'Let justice roll like a river'.

The contribution of RE to citizenship and Living Education (RSE)

Serving others is an important part of serving God and of 'life in all its fullness'. RE makes significant contributions to the way in which pupils develop as responsible citizens through opportunities for cultural development and inter-faith dialogue; also through consideration of moral issues and the responses to these of people of differing faith perspectives. In Year 8, the department delivers a Citizenship in RE unit of work on Conflict. This unit looks at varying perspectives on issues relating to conflict, including religious and secular responses. Opportunities to develop citizenship are identified in planning. British Values are embedded in our approach and underpinned by Christian teaching where appropriate.

The contribution of RE to developing Literacy and Reading

Assessment tasks require written responses and effectively support the development of pupils' writing skills. Speaking and listening skills play an important part in lessons. We involve pupils in articulating their views through work in pairs, small groups or whole class discussions. Because young people often discuss issues about which they feel passionate, RE provides a particularly powerful tool for developing literacy. We provide literacy targets for assessments and when giving. We encourage pupils to set their own literacy targets and make use of dedicated improvement and reflection time to review literacy targets improving their work. Pupils in year 7 and 8 use reading booklets which include articles and text; the department have a library where pupils can borrow books.

Careers and Gatsby benchmarks

RE supports careers education by referring to careers and study linked to the curriculum. Local colleges teach sessions in RE lessons once a month in year 10 to support 'next steps' and further study applications.

Assessment in RE

We apply the principles of 'assessment for learning' in our planning and teaching in order to ensure that pupils know what they need to do to make progress and why they have achieved. Following an assessment and some other pieces of work, pupils will be given dedicated improvement and reflection time (DIRT) and will often be asked to improve their work making use of the purple pen of progress. This may be individual or whole class feedback. We also make regular use of self and peer assessment and the use of visualisers to model "I do, we do, you do."

We have developed our own criteria for assessing pupils across all years. These assessment criteria support the assessment of the following skills

- Explanation
- Interpreting sacred texts
- Comparing and contrasting diverse beliefs and practices
- Evaluating and analysing

The assessment criteria draw on GCSE mark schemes for the 2017 GCSE specification and the non-statutory steps of attainment included in the Blackburn Diocese handbook (created by St Michael's). They aim to provide a structure for challenging pupils beyond the skill requirements of GCSE RE.

In years 9-11 pupils follow the AQA GCSE course Religious Studies Specification A. All pupils study RE to GCSE level in years 9-11.

Curriculum Time

In years 7-9, pupils study RE for two forty or forty-five minute periods each week (5.8% of curriculum time). In years 10 and 11, pupils study RE for three forty or forty-five minute periods each week (8.8% curriculum time). In addition, pupils spend time exploring RE themes on some foundation days. This provision is broadly in line with diocesan guidelines as expressed in the DBS Framework 2022 and the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement 2019. These suggest that RE should occupy a minimum of 5% curriculum time with an aspiration of reaching 10% curriculum time.

Resources

RE is taught by a team of five RE specialists. Staff enjoy support from advisors and other teachers, both from the diocese and the local authority. We work closely with our Christian Youth Worker and other school communities.

There are three designated RE teaching rooms, each equipped with audio-visual facilities. The department is well-resourced. Resources include a wide-ranging collection of books, DVDs and artefacts. We have collected films and music from popular culture through which we aim to make connections between learning in RE and the lives of pupils. We regularly share multi-media resources and other resources developed by individual members of the department.

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