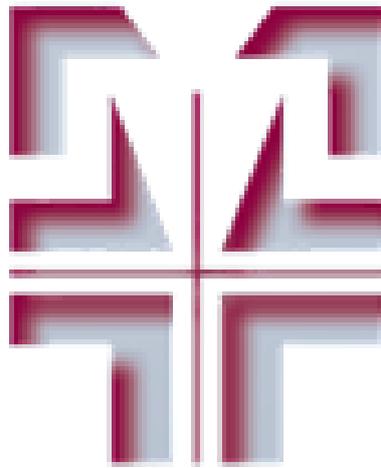


St Michael's CE High School

A Church of England Academy



**Therefore, choose
RE Policy**

Date of Policy:	April 2021
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ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

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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 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.'



Our 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 is a key way in which the school works towards '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 explore their beliefs, whatever those beliefs might be. The words of Lord Runcie, quoted in *The Way Ahead* (Archbishop's Council 2001), encapsulate our aims:

"Nourish those of the faith;
Encourage those of other faiths;
Challenge those who have no faith."

We aim to provide pupils with a mature understanding of the Christian faith alongside promoting love and understanding for people of other faiths. Young people gain understanding of Christian values through their study of RE. Their studies help them to understand why values such as love, forgiveness, compassion and justice are important and help them to understand Christian theological teaching 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 make informed choices about behaviour as expressed by our motto "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, we believe a search for the truth will lead to Jesus Christ. We are committed to nurturing pupils who have a faith commitment as they develop their theological thinking. However, we also 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 learning journey. We start and finish the journey in different places but respect the viewpoints and beliefs of all who share the journey. We encourage pupils to wrestle with challenging questions about 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 curriculum is progressive and builds skills and attitudes for religious literacy across all years. These include

- Knowledge and understanding of diverse religious practice
- Interpreting sacred texts
- Philosophical and critical thinking skills
- Attitudes of respect for diverse beliefs, faiths and cultures
- A safe space for 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 activities which meet the needs of pupils with different learning styles, including visual, audio and kinaesthetic learners. In providing opportunities for learners to express their ideas we take account of multiple intelligences. Our teaching builds on school-wide work on learning processes and refers to work undertaken on this in 'Learning to Learn' lessons. We provide opportunities for pupils to become resilient, resourceful, responsible, reasoning and reflective learners. Pupils use ICT regularly as part of 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 clearly identified within the schemes of work and we often review progress in these skills during plenaries. We encourage pupils to use generic skills developed in RE in other curriculum areas.

Programme of Study

As a Church of England academy, in accordance with our funding agreement, we develop our own schemes of work 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 (2018). We have drawn on material from *Understanding Christianity, Illuminating Pathways* and the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus. Approximately 70% overall 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.

The vision is for a coherent 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 a lead in developing special services at the end of term and at other times. Members of the RE department regularly lead collective worship. Sometimes work undertaken in RE, including pupils' reflections, art work or drama are used in collective worship. A member of the department leads the Discovery Club and has supported the Upper School Bible Study.

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 sit quietly and 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. The department leads foundation days which reflect the Christian character of the school.

Links with the Arts Department

St Michael's has a strong arts department and many talented pupils. Art, music and dance are skills which pupils sometimes choose to express their work. They have often

chosen RE themes for expressive arts projects and GCSE 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 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

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 feedback on GCSE written work. We make use of learning mats to support specific literacy tasks. We ensure that our teaching is in line with English department guidelines when using activities such as writing newspaper articles or letters. We encourage pupils to set their own literacy targets and make use of dedicated improvement and reflection time to review literacy targets or improve their work.

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.

We have developed our own criteria for assessing pupils across all years without the use of levels. These assessment criteria support the assessment of the following skills

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

These criteria make use of grades which are related to assessment at GCSE in line with whole school policy. The assessment criteria draw on GCSE mark schemes for the 2017 GCSE specification and the non-statutory levels of attainment included in the 2009 National Curriculum. 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 2018 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 four 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 who regularly makes contributions to RE lessons.

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 videos 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.

Mrs J. Palfrey
April 2021