

St. Michael at Bowes
Church of England
Junior School



Religious Education
Policy

Date: March 2024

*'An inclusive Christian community
building on firm foundations for
successful lives.'*

St. Michael at Bowes Curriculum Policy

Statement

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Introduction

At St Michael at Bowes we believe that our vision underpins everything we do and as such we strive for our children to 'build on firm foundations' in order for them to lead successful lives.

The purpose of Religious Education at St. Michael at Bowes is to develop secure religious literacy and to nurture the spiritual and moral development in our children through an exploration of Christianity, World faiths and viewpoints. As our school is a Church of England school, the curriculum reflects the rites, practices and beliefs of the Church of England, though the curriculum is consciously designed to be accessible to, and nurturing of, children of all faiths, ideas and worldviews. By creating 'An inclusive Christian community', we believe that R.E fosters respect and tolerance and enables our pupils to build an understanding of the beliefs and ideas of others, whilst also developing and deepening their own faith and ideas. Thereby enabling them to hold informed conversations with their peers today and in the next stages of their education and beyond. We believe a true sense of respect and tolerance relies on quality education and understanding, creating firm foundations for successful relationships.

The governing body is responsible for the selection of the curriculum and the delivery of R.E. in the school. This is delegated to the Head Teacher and the Religious Education subject leader on a daily basis. Following the Diocese of London Guidelines for Religious Education, two thirds of the curriculum will be based on the Christian faith, with the remaining third focusing on major world religions represented in our school community.

Religious Education will be allocated between 10% and 5% of the timetable. In Key Stage 2 this translates as 1.5 hours per week, totalling 45 hours over the year. At St. Michael at Bowes School, our curriculum map closely follows the suggestions of the LDBS agreed curriculum with adaptations made for our unique setting. Units are progressive and planned to ensure knowledge and understanding build, enquiry skills are developed and pupils can make connections between religions, beliefs and practices. The incorporation of World Faiths encourages and highlights the importance of our vision statement, thus creating well-rounded individuals with the ability to find comparisons and similarities between all religions. Additional RE and Reflection Days throughout the year provide enrichment to our curriculum and greater opportunity to explore religious concepts or compare beliefs and ideas in a creative manner.

Withdrawals

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from acts of worship or lessons. In this event, after discussion with the Head Teacher, the school will undertake responsibility for the supervision of withdrawn pupils with regard to health and safety. On consultation with the Head Teacher and the parents, alternative work will be provided.

Aims

The purpose of teaching Religious Education in school is to:

- Provide staff and children with the knowledge, understanding and awareness of Christianity as a diverse global living faith, and its relevance to their daily lives.

- Facilitate spiritual knowledge and growth among staff and children through fostering a climate reflection and respect for differing cultural and religious traditions.
- Extend the ability of staff and children to reflect upon themselves as holistic beings, experiencing life through body, mind and soul.
- Give both staff and children the tools with which to communicate with God through prayer and scripture, if they so wish.
- Enable all to explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

Objectives

Through our teaching we will:

- Provide a course of Religious Education within the framework of the London Diocese Board of Schools appropriate to the educational needs of the children in our school.
- Plan and deliver 1.5 hours of quality Religious Education per week, This time does not include time spent in collective worship or in daily acts of prayer.
- Give prominence to classroom R.E. displays which can be linked to the unit being studied and changed each half term to reflect a new unit. The background of the displays will match the liturgical colour of the current Church season.
- Use the ladder of skills model to provide effective scaffolding, challenge, assessment and enquiry skills-based objectives as appropriate to the age and ability of the children.
- Provide engaging and reflective tasks for children to answer key questions within lessons.
- Assist and encourage experience of Christian life and worship.
- Through the study of major world religions, encourage understanding and appreciation of the rich diversity of religious belief, practices and world views that are present within our community.

Entitlement

The children's entitlement is based on the London Diocese Board of Schools Primary Scheme of Work: Every Child Matters to God, together with the R.E. Today 'I Can...' statements based on the guidance of DfE and QCDA. The curriculum follows six enquiry strands and pupils progress alongside the RE skills ladder from retelling to explaining and justifying views.

At St. Michael at Bowes Religious Education is considered a 'core' subject and will be often taught as a discrete subject, although the approach may vary. Cross curricular links are encouraged and are often linked into Humanities topics. Wherever possible, all children learn from primary source material as well as through the use of outside speakers with relevant experience and school visits to places of worship. The curriculum is balanced in approach and children learn about and respond to religion through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences.

Monitoring

The R.E. lead will monitor work through observations, collection of samples of work for a school portfolio, book and planning monitoring. In addition, children's attainment and progress is assessed on a termly basis and will be recorded on Target Tracker in order to monitor pupils' progress over the year – this is supported by both written and verbal contributions from the pupils. Moderation of assessment will take place to ensure all members of the school community are confident and pro-active in finding new ways to assess both summatively and formatively.

At St. Michael at Bowes we believe that academic rigour is as necessary in R.E. as in any other subject, though this should not negate spiritual and emotional growth, which are not always possible to assess using formal methods. Assessment is largely informed by pupils' response to unit Big Questions at the end of a unit of work as well as their verbal responses throughout.

Inclusion

In line with our vision, we believe that all children are entitled to equal access to the R.E. Curriculum and as such children with different educational needs will be facilitated in expressing themselves according to their abilities. This includes pupils on the SEND register, children with English as an Additional Language and those classified as working at greater depth. These children will work alongside other children in their group, but their needs will be met through differentiation in approach, language and expected outcome in every lesson. Activities and resources will be adapted to reflect the appropriate RE skills and ensure all pupils can access the core knowledge and vocabulary within a unit. In order to meet the entitlement of every child in our school, planning for R.E. will follow the expectations specified in the separate **Special Educational Needs and Disability school policy**. A choice of tasks, alongside a scaffolded task, are provided in all RE lessons to give pupils a sense of autonomy and independence as they respond to the different units.

Appendix to the R.E. Policy

Feast Days

At the beginning of each year Michaelmas (St. Michael's Day – 29th September) will be marked in whole school collective worship.

Christmas and Easter will both be marked by the presentation to the school of a performance held at St. Cuthbert's, Chitt's Hill.

Collective Worship

As a Church school, collective worship is at the heart of life at St. Michael at Bowes. It is, therefore, covered in a separate **Collective Worship** policy.

Prayer Life

Throughout their time at St. Michael at Bowes, there is an expectation that the children will become familiar with a variety of scripture and that every opportunity will be given for the children to express themselves through a variety of forms of prayer and reflection.

The expectation is that each day will be marked by 'morning' prayer as a school and 'evening' prayer at the end of the school day within classes. All children will be taught how to compose prayers through a Prayer Day in September, and each class is expected to keep and update Class Prayer book from which the children may read.

The children will also learn the School Prayer, which is in the Collective Worship Policy.

Examples of prayers to use in class are:

End of Day

O my God, I come to say:

Thank-you for your love today;

Thank-you for my family,

And all the friends you give to me.

Protect me in the dark of night,

And in the morning send your light.

Amen.

It is also good practice to make time for reflection at the end of the day. Some classes may choose to light a candle provided in their classroom to encourage children to reflect.

Guidance for end of the school day time for reflection

When you first start these sessions you will need to explain the purpose and importance of them to the children. The children need to know that you value what they have to say because you care about how they feel.

- Create the right ambiance; this needs to be a quiet prayerful and spiritual time for the children creating an environment of calm and trust.
- Children need to know that what is said in their classroom is for their class only and what individuals say must be respected by everyone and not talked about in the playground.

- Play some meditative music or some Tazié chants quietly in the background if you so wish.
- Light the RE table candle and turn off the classroom lights
- Younger children may sit on the carpet so that they can all see one another while older children may sit at their desks.
- Start with a prayer. It might be nice if every child has a copy which they will eventually get to memorise. Something like ...

Dear Lord Jesus,

We have come together to think about the school day that will soon be ending.

We thank you for the good times we have shared together today and for all the things we have learnt.

We remember the sad times during the day when we might have said or done hurtful things to others.

Help us to be truly sorry for any hurt we have caused and help us to forgive those who have hurt us.

We ask for your special blessing on our class so that we may grow in our friendship with others and continue to live as you would like us to.

Amen.

- Go over the day from your own perspective. Say what you have enjoyed about the day and what has disappointed you. Be prepared to make your own disclosures about hurt you may have caused and apologies you want to make
- Extend the invitation to the anyone in the class who feels they need to say sorry for any hurt and distress
- Encourage and support any apologies that have been made. It is essential that they are made with sincerity and with the right atmosphere this will happen
- At the end of the session thank the children for their contributions and remind them that as they have ended the day reconciled with one another they will start tomorrow as a new beginning.
- Set the Big Question for the week and its link to an a particular value or aspect of spirituality. Give space for quiet reflection and respectful discussion
- Finish the day with the class prayer.

Children are also encouraged to make use of the Reflection Zone and write prayers to place on the prayer tree or put in the prayer box. These prayer intentions are then kept in a school prayer book. A Big Question linked to a Biblical concept or story is also available for children to reflect on. If a child has a question for a member of the clergy, they can leave these in the Reflection Zone to be addressed in Collective Worship. By the end of the

Autumn Term, children in Year 3 are expected to be able to join in with the Lord's Prayer.

Visits

Each year group is required to arrange at least one visit to a place of worship representing the major faiths present in the school during World Faith Week. It is recommended that visits match the other faiths focus of the year group. This may be a visit to a place of worship, an exhibition or museum. These visits are part of the Curriculum and it is the school's expectation that they are attended by all children in the class.

Although a first visit to St. Michael at Bowes church is reserved for the new Year Three intake in the Autumn Term, Year 4 are encouraged to compare St. Michael at Bowes with other churches in the area in the Summer term.

Each half term a year group will visit St Cuthbert's church for a service.

Displays

Displays are expected to be changed half termly and reflect what is being taught in the class. These displays must reflect the liturgical colours used to demarcate the different seasons of the Church's year and will follow the shared Calendar. Reflections from prior lessons may be displayed to create a learning journey within the class.

The Big Book

Each class has a Big Book to document the learning in RE and other areas of the school curriculum. It serves as another way to capture thoughts and reflections from RE lessons when the lesson is more discussion based or has more practical outcomes as well as capture moments of wonder, curiosity and enjoyment from across the curriculum and wider experiences, as we facilitate the development of our pupils spirituality. It supports pupils to develop deeper and more rounded responses to the Big Questions in their RE units. It also serves as a way to record all pupils' reflections after whole school or year

group events, including but not limited to: visits and visitors, whole school focus days and weeks, national and international awareness events, charity and outreach work and 'special' collective worship (e.g. Harvest Festival). Throughout the year, children will reflect on questions linked to our school values and vision. The Big Books are also a place to capture spiritual moments and children are encouraged to use the door, window and mirror symbols to highlight where this may have taken place.