



THE MINSTER NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL

SCHOOL OF INSPIRATION

DETERMINATION HONOUR BELIEVE

PREPARING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE WITH INNOVATIVE AND EXCITING LEARNING

Religious Education Policy

Reviewed on: 02/06/2023

To be reviewed on or before: July 2025



WE ARE A VOLUNTARY AIDED (VA) SCHOOL WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK

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Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision to be a 'School of Inspiration' underpins all that we do as we strive to provide our children with innovative and exciting opportunities in preparing them for their own bright futures.

Our core values: determination, honour and believe are explicit will be referenced to where appropriate in Religious Education lessons, in collaboration with our embedded 'Fruits of the Spirit' ethos and Christian values. Together, these are central to every thought, decision and action made. This policy has been compiled mindful of these factors to ensure they develop and sustain all aspects of school life at The Minster Nursery and Infant School.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to outline the contribution that Religious Education (RE) provides in supporting the schools aim to provide an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice.

Aims & objectives

RE enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At The Minster Nursery & Infant School we aim to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other main world faiths represented in the United Kingdom. RE is seen as more than a subject within the school and is used to reinforce moral values and reflection and develop a wide range of skills. The RE provided enables the children to learn from religions as well as about religions and supports the children to:

- develop a strong foundation of the Christian faith through knowledge and understanding that includes Christian beliefs and values, The Bible, Old Testament Characters, the Life and Teachings of Jesus, Prayer and Worship, Saints, The Local Church, The Christian Community, Living out the Faith, Rites of Passage and Christian Festivals;
- apply an understanding of Christianity to make reasoned and informed responses to life issues and moral choices;
- develop knowledge and understanding of the other principal world faiths represented in the United Kingdom, applying an understanding of religion to develop respect, empathy and sensitivity to the views of others who hold different beliefs from their own;
- reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- develop personal skills in forming reasoned opinions based on evidence.

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that RE is taught throughout the school to all registered children, except those withdrawn by their parents, in accordance with the Education Reform Acts 1996 & 1998. It is part of the basic curriculum and has an equal standing and status alongside the core subjects of the National Curriculum.

The Faith Group is responsible for overseeing the implementation of and the monitoring of the RE provision in the school and we use the Southwark Diocesan Religious Education Syllabus 2016 as agreed by the governing body. The scheme comprises units of study for the teaching of Christianity and the other main world religions. It clearly identifies opportunities for children to both learn about religion (Attainment Target 1) and learn from religion (Attainment Target 2). Appropriate units of work from the Croydon agreed syllabus are also used to enhance the school's RE programme.



The Southwark Diocesan schemes of work require 5-10% of curriculum time for RE, which amounts to at least one hour a week at Key Stage 1 and in the EYFS. This is in addition to time for worship and as a Church school we make sure that this is fulfilled.

Withdrawal

Parents have the right by law to withdraw their children from the RE curriculum. Although, in applying for a place at The Minster Nursery & Infant School we would hope that parents/carers understand the school's distinctive Christian character and recognise that RE is central to the life of the school and will not feel it is

necessary to withdraw their child from RE. We would encourage any parent considering withdrawing a child from RE to discuss this with the headteacher before making a final decision.

Religious Education Curriculum

All staff are aware of the significance and importance of RE and how the quality of provision sets it apart from other schools. RE is taught as a discrete subject and also in a cross curricular way. A variety of strategies are used to enable the children to develop their knowledge and apply their learning about religion to their everyday lives.

Through our RE lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour, thus contributing to health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility, appreciating what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Planning is carefully and thoroughly undertaken, with lessons incorporating a variety of differentiated tasks ensuring success for all pupils. This provides opportunities for children to demonstrate their understanding in RE through a variety of responses.

We ensure that the topics studied in RE build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression, built into the scheme of work, offers the children an increasing challenge as they move throughout the school. The feedback teachers give to children is given a high priority to ensure that the marking is thorough and accurate. It highlights work that is good and provides children with clear advice about how to improve.

RE planning incorporates time for the children to reflect on the meaning of the activities and when focusing on other World faiths to see how it might relate to what they already understand of the Christian faith. This process carefully avoids any sense of adverse comparison. Instead, it enables and encourages children to discover and value common ground and common values shared by the different religious traditions.

A range of different activities are used to stimulate thinking about and understanding of the RE topics. Children are encouraged to reflect upon and develop their own beliefs, values and attitudes through an exploration of shared human experiences, and learn of the significance of religion in the world around them. Careful planning and differentiation ensures children are provided with opportunities to come up with a variety of responses to RE including music, drama, dance and art. Open enquiry and first hand experiences also play an important role and we use Philosophy for Children (P4C) to support our children's development in Religious Education.

Visits from parents from other world religions give personal insight into their beliefs and traditions. Through initiatives such as Many Cultures One Family, we encourage cohesion by celebrating the children's different cultural heritages and promoting peace and harmony as we work alongside each other in school and in the wider community.

Children are nurtured in a way which allows them to feel secure in expressing their ideas and beliefs, whilst also developing resilience in tackling difficult questions around personal response.

Key Stage 1



RE in KS1 is covered through teaching the units of work from the Southwark Diocesan Syllabus. The majority of the RE is taught weekly but occasionally it may be blocked to allow for a more in depth focus to be developed.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

RE in the Foundation Stage is covered through teaching the units of work from the Southwark Diocesan Syllabus and the aspects covered align to all areas of learning in the EYFS framework. The focus of the learning is around the children gaining an understanding of religion in its widest sense by covering concepts

that apply to both human experience, which is the starting point for RE in the Foundation Stage, and to the world of religion. The units covered lay a foundation for the teaching of Christianity and for being a pupil in our Church School as well as promoting an understanding of people from different faith backgrounds and none.

Nursery

Religious Education in the Nursery is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. Planning is based on the 'Development Matters' and 'Early Years Foundation Stage' documents. We relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the Curriculum.

The Understanding Christianity Project

At The Minster Nursery and Infant School we enhance our Religious Education curriculum through the core concepts and resources from The Understanding Christianity Project.

The Understanding Christianity materials are intended to support teachers in all schools (including Church of England schools, community schools, other denominational schools, academies and free schools) in teaching about Christianity in Religious Education. It offers a coherent and comprehensive (but not exhaustive) resource, including:

- a theological and conceptual basis, taking seriously Christian accounts of the 'big story' of salvation and the relationship of the reader/pupil to these texts
- a clear outline of core knowledge 'building blocks' in relation to Christianity, to enable teachers to see what pupils should know, understand and be able to do
- support for teachers who have little or no theological training, through straightforward essential background information for the teacher about Christian concepts, theology and practice;
- a teaching and learning approach to enable pupils to move from an understanding of the biblical text and how to handle it, to an understanding of what this means for Christians within the Church and in Christian living, including opportunities for pupils to examine and evaluate connections between these ideas and the wider world
- flexible opportunities for assessment: these use both knowledge building blocks (suitable for 'mastery' models of assessment) and end of phase/key stage outcomes (which incorporate knowledge and the skills with which to handle, integrate and apply this knowledge). These allow pupils to make progress from surface learning to deeper learning at all ages.

Understanding Christianity's approach to teaching about Christianity builds up pupils' encounters with biblical concepts through texts, placing them within the wider Bible story.

By addressing key questions, Understanding Christianity encourages pupils to explore core Bible texts, examine the impact for Christians and consider possible implications. Each unit incorporates the three elements:

- Making sense of the text – Developing skills of reading and interpretation; understanding how Christians interpret, handle and use biblical texts; making sense of the meanings of texts for Christian



- Understanding the impact – Examining ways in which Christians respond to biblical texts and teachings, and how they put their beliefs into action in diverse ways within the Christian community and in the world
- Making connections – Evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the texts and concepts studied, and discerning possible connections between these and pupils’ own lives and ways of understanding the world.

Each unit begins with a ‘way in’ and then offers teaching and learning ideas for each element. The teacher chooses how to weave together the elements, from making sense of the text, through looking at the impact on the world of the Christian, and helping to make connections with the world of the pupil, in order to achieve the outcomes.

The core themes covered in each year group, to enhance our curriculum is as follows:

Reception	Year One	Year Two
Creation	Incarnation	Incarnation
Incarnation	Gospel	Salvation
Salvation	Salvation	Creation
		God

The Understanding Christianity approach is not just getting pupils to learn what Christians think. Instead, it is about developing skills to help them ‘think theologically’ alongside learning lots of knowledge about the Bible, Christian belief and practice. It also shows that these three elements do not represent rigid, distinct steps, but that pupils can ‘make connections’ whilst ‘making sense of the text’, for example.

Minster Lights

The Children’s Faith Group the Minster Lights, help reflect on spirituality and monitor aspects of RE and faith. They also lead the school in fund raising activities such as The Bishop’s Lent Appeal. The Deputy Headteacher meets with the Minster Lights regularly and they also report to the Adult Faith Group.

Planning

The curriculum planning in RE is undertaken in three phases (long -term, medium-term and short-term). The long term provides an overview of the RE topics and units studied each term during each key stage. The Southwark Diocesan Syllabus ensures progression and continuity through the EYFS and Key Stage 1.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term and we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Southwark Diocesan Syllabus. The majority of the units in the scheme focus on one religion at a time, to avoid confusion and to do justice to the distinctiveness of each religion.

Short-term planning focuses on the development of distinctive RE skills, such as enquiring, questioning, analysing and interpreting, as well as responding and reflecting.

Assessment

Assessment is part of the teaching and learning process and planned into the RE curriculum and schemes of work. Assessment is carried out to monitor the attainment and progress in RE, in order to raise standards, accelerate progress and inform future planning. Attainment in RE is recorded by individual class teachers on class tracking grids each term and reported to the RE co-ordinator and Headteacher. Children’s attainment in RE is reported to parents annually and should be equal or better than comparable subjects.

The assessment procedures for RE follow the *Assessment and Marking and Feedback* policies of the school and also follow the RE guidance produced by the Southwark Diocese. Opportunities are provided at regular intervals for children to demonstrate what they have learnt about religions (AT1) and what they have learnt from a religion (AT2). This assessment can take place through questioning, observation, discussion or written work. In KS1 children have a dedicated RE book in which they can record and reflect on their work and all classes also have a class big book for RE that documents all aspects of the RE curriculum throughout the year.



Children's achievements and learning in RE are also celebrated in whole-school and class displays as appropriate.

The Croydon Minster

The Foundation of the Minster Nursery & Infant School is the Croydon Minster and there is a strong bond between the school that further enhances the RE curriculum. Regular visits from the clergy and visits to The Minster enrich the RE in school.

British Values

Schools are now expected to focus on, and be able to show how their work with pupils is effective in, embedding fundamental British Values. The government set out its definition of these in the 2011 Prevent Strategy – values of:

- tolerance
- mutual respect between those of different faiths and beliefs
- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty

As a school, we feel our Christian ethos compliments the government's requirement of ensuring that key British Values are taught.

In reflecting the Christian ethos of our school, we create a caring and secure atmosphere, encouraging our children to be unique, creative, independent individuals, open-minded and respectful of themselves and of others in our school.

Through initiatives such as Many Cultures One Family, we encourage cohesion by celebrating the children's different cultural heritages and promoting peace and harmony as we work alongside each other in school and in the wider community.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

RE makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children in our school. We believe that RE forms a distinctive element in the curriculum whilst helping to foster the total development of the child. It provides children with an awareness of the basis on which much of our culture has developed. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing; they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society.

Inclusion

All children whatever their ability, have an entitlement to RE. Careful planning, differentiated work and a variety of teaching methods and learning styles are all considered to ensure equal opportunities for achievement and success.

Resources

We use a comprehensive national resource from the Church of England, called 'Understanding Christianity: Text Impact Connections' which offers an approach to teaching and learning about Christianity, with units and supporting resources to supplement the Diocesan Syllabus for Religious Education. These also include access to electronic resources.

A wide range of resources are also available to support the schemes of work and enrich the RE curriculum, including books, artefacts, posters and DVD's. The school library and each classroom have a selection of RE



books about other faiths, religious stories or stories exploring a range of concepts.

Spending on new books and resources to teach all the units of work is reviewed each year and appropriate new resources are added out of the budget for RE.

Monitoring and review

All teachers are responsible for monitoring standards but the RE co-ordinator, under the direction of the Headteacher & Faith Group, takes the lead in this. The co-ordinator will:

- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject in school;
- support staff in the teaching of RE;
- be informed about current developments in the subject and requirements at a national and local level;
- undertake work scrutiny, lesson observations, pupil voice, discussion with teachers, subject audit and other monitoring activities that may be required;
- analyse RE data to evaluate the effectiveness of attainment, progress and how well gaps are narrowing for different groups of learners;
- liaise regularly with the Headteacher and Faith Group with action points following monitoring.

Review Date: July 2022