

The Minster Nursery and Infant School - R.E. Policy 2025

Our Vision and Values

Our vision, 'Let all that you do be done in love' *1 Corinthians 16:14* is a golden thread that runs through everything we do. In R.E. we aim for it to enhance the development of our pupils into reflective and confident learners who want to become caring global citizens.

Our core 'Fruits of the Spirit' ethos and Christian values will be referenced to where appropriate in Religious Education lessons. 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. 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, 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.

Religious Education Curriculum

At The Minster Nursery and Infant School, we follow the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education 2024 primary syllabus for RE. The syllabus comprises units of study, exploring religious concepts, for the teaching of Christianity at EYFS, KS1 and KS2 and the study of other principal world religions, specifically beginning from KS1. It clearly identifies opportunities for pupils to both learn about religion and learn from religion. This meets the requirement of a priority study of Christianity, whilst exploring the principal other world faiths.

Pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, developing their understanding and their ability to handle questions of religion and belief. The teaching and learning approach also has three disciplinary lenses or 'ways of knowing' (believing, thinking, living), which are woven together as golden threads to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs, underpinning the aims of RE. These elements set the context for open exploration of religion and belief. They offer a structure through which pupils can encounter diverse religious traditions alongside non-religious worldviews. The elements present a broad and flexible strategy that allows for different traditions to be treated with integrity. These elements offer a route through each unit while also allowing for a range of questions reflecting different approaches, for example, from religious studies, philosophy, sociology, ethics and theology.

The RE curriculum is broken into three interlinking elements (disciplinary lenses):

Element 1: Believing (theological)

Identifying and making sense of core religious and non-religious beliefs and concepts; understanding what these beliefs mean within their traditions; recognising how and why sources of authority (such as texts) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, and developing skills of interpretation.

Element 2: Thinking (philosophical)

Evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the beliefs and practices studied; allowing pupils to challenge ideas studied, and the ideas studied to challenge pupils' thinking; discerning possible connections between these and pupils' own lives and ways of understanding the world.

Element 3: Living (sociological)

Examining how and why people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, within their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world.

We enhance our Religious Education curriculum through the core concepts and resources from The Understanding Christianity Project.

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, it encourages pupils to explore core Bible texts, examine the impact for Christians and consider possible implications.

It covers a range of core themes including: Creation, Incarnation, Salvation, Gospel and God.

RE teaching is enriched by a range of trips and visits providing in depth perspectives and first hand experiences, including to local churches, Mosque and Synagogue.

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) - Reception

RE in Reception 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.

Inclusion

In delivering the RE curriculum, teachers will ensure lessons are inclusive through:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs, including the most able;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils through high-quality adaptive teaching;

- valuing the background and knowledge of the child and her/his 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. 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.

Resources and Classroom Environment

A range of RE artefacts and resources are available for teachers to use in an exciting and effective way. It is important that pupils are introduced to the sacred objects of the faiths. Pupils will be taught how to treat texts and objects with care, sensitivity and respect. There is a RE display in every classroom which reflects the current RE unit being taught. The emphasis of the display is to inform but also to be a learning wall – a record of current study, including specific vocabulary to support pupils' confident use of religious language. We aim for pupils to be proud and enthusiastic about the learning they produce in RE.

Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation

Monitoring will include:

- Pupil and staff voice
- Lesson observations
- Planning
- Learning walks
- Book scans
- Assessment data collection

Our school has a RE Subject Leader who is the key person with the responsibility for leading and developing the subject in the school. This person is well supported by the leadership of the school, and is appropriately trained and resourced to fulfil this role. We also have a Faith Group which oversees the implementation of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the RE provision in the school. Monitoring and assessment are integral parts of RE, the evaluation of them is used to inform future planning, teaching and learning to ensure all pupils make progress in their RE learning. During each unit of work, the class teacher will make formative assessments based on the quality of discussions, class activities and written work. The class teacher will record this for every unit of work throughout the year. At the end of the year, the class teacher will provide an overall assessment based on the end of key stage progression criteria, in line with the school's assessment policy. Parents will be informed of their child's progress in R.E. in the pupil's Annual Report sent out in July and, where necessary, at parents evenings.

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.

We use the Southwark Diocesan Religious Education Syllabus 2024 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 and learn from religion.

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 head teacher before making a final decision.