



DUNMOW ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
Enjoy and Achieve



POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
September 2020

'Enjoy Working together to achieve our best'

"Religious Education in a Church School should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live together. Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person".

(Taken from the Statement of Entitlement – Church of England Education Office 2019).

Our aims

At Dunmow St. Mary's Primary school, we will enable pupils to:

- Enjoy, Achieve and progress in an environment based on Christian values.
- Explore the spiritual dimension of experience and reflect upon their inner feelings, questions, thoughts and experiences.
- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and practices with particular reference to Christianity and other world faiths.

In R.E. we seek to nurture the following attitudes and personal qualities:

- Appreciation and respect
- Critical openness
- Curiosity and questioning
- Perception and insight
- Self-esteem
- Sensitivity and spiritual awareness
- Christian values of: Friendship & Respect, Peace & Justice, Wisdom, Conscience and Honesty, Forgiveness and Compassion, Perseverance and Responsibility, Courage and Hope.

First hand experience is highly valued in our school. Children will find out about R.E. by visiting local churches and where possible, the places of worship associated with the religions they study. Visitors are invited into school to talk about their own faiths and experiences. Religious traditions of the children and their families at our school, are highly valued and when appropriate specific religious festivals are acknowledged and celebrated e.g. Divali. We deepen children's understanding through artefacts, displays, drama and creative arts.

Our special status as a church school means that our philosophy is underpinned by our strong links with St. Mary's Church. We understand that RE is different in nature to both Worship and Assembly. The aims and objectives of RE are different and distinct from those of Collective Worship – see Collective Worship Policy.

Learning and Teaching

We recognise the value of high quality RE teaching throughout the school and understand that lessons will look different in each year group. Teaching is appropriate and meaningful at each Key Stage, allowing children to talk about and develop deeper thinking. As a school in Essex, we follow the [Norfolk Agreed Syllabus](#), that clearly sets out what should be taught in each year group. The scheme gives schools licence to plan and deliver their own 'progressive, coherent and balanced curriculum' that meets the needs of the individual school. It suggests that RE encompasses three key disciplines or disciplinary fields; *theology*, *philosophy* and the *human/social sciences*. Teachers encourage children to ask questions from a theological perspective (what would a 'believer' ask), a philosophical perspective (what would a 'thinker' ask), or through the eyes of a social scientist.

Teaching methods will include a balance of discussion, drama, writing, drawing, art and music. Children will be taught and encouraged to use appropriate religious language and vocabulary. Opportunities to mix the teaching of implicit and explicit R.E, will be used wherever appropriate e.g. to discuss moral and family obligations whilst studying the story of Joseph. Links will be drawn with other subjects to deepen understanding.

Language development is supported by discussion of religious ideas and themes. There are opportunities for sharing ideas, discussing specialist words or names, asking questions and reasoning. Children are introduced to philosophy through discussion. Appreciation and respect for the natural world is linked with topics based on the environment.

Due to the nature of our curriculum, teachers design units of work around a 'theme' or 'topic'. To support them with planning units on Christianity, there is a scheme available for them to use and they are encouraged to do so. [Understanding Christianity](#) offers a set of progressive resources for each year group that ensures themes are taught appropriately and learning is effectively built upon each year. The nature of Understanding Christianity allows content to be covered multiple times and embedded, whilst 'digging deeper' to challenge the children's understanding (particularly in Year 2, 4 and 6).

Early Years Foundation Stage

We relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals. Our 'in the moment' approach to planning enables children to learn through their own interests and learning is based on what is important to them. Adults encourage children to ask questions in relation to this about themselves and others:

- What is important to me?

- Why do people do things differently? Why does my family/community celebrate events like this and your family/community celebrate events differently or not at all? Which is the 'right' way?
- What do I believe? Why do people have different opinions and views to me?
- What happens to people when they die?
- Where was I before I was born?
- What is right and what is wrong?

The EYFS refers to spiritual well being, acknowledging the fact that children have experiences beyond the purely emotional. Their spiritual wellbeing is enhanced by recognising that children develop spiritually by exploring answers to their questions, developing their sense of place in the world and beyond.

KS1

In KS1 and KS2 the time allocated to R.E. is 39 hours a year. When planning, teachers understand that the 39 hours can be distributed as appropriate, for example, a small project could be completed across two afternoons (4hrs) meaning the learning is not interrupted or hindered. Through explicit R.E. we seek to develop empathetic understanding of what it means to have a faith and appreciation of the implications of religious belief. This is achieved through learning about Christianity and other religions.

Throughout Year 1 and 2, RE lessons allow children to begin to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. We develop the children's basic understanding of what a religion is and aim to lay the foundations for further exploration later in KS2, KS3 and beyond.

KS2

Throughout KS2, children will engage in immersive, in-depth studies of religions through a cross-curricular, topic based approach. Throughout KS2, each major religion is explored in relation to a theme and then touched upon or revisited in other year groups.

In KS2, children are given the opportunity to visit places of worship, make and sample foods linked to religions and gain as much hands-on experience as possible within a religion's practices. Studies of faiths other than Christianity will develop children's feelings of respect for different traditions which will help to combat prejudice and increase understanding. Teachers will always ensure that following a visit to a place of worship, or the input of a visitor, there is a full discussion on what has been seen and heard and what it means. As a result, learning about other faiths will give children a greater understanding of the commitment needed to believe in any faith and an appreciation of the world-wide importance of religion.

We aim to give children a clear understanding of religious concepts and associated symbolism. We teach the significance of the artefacts used in ceremonies and about the emotions engendered by religious and spiritual

matters. Children will explore questions about the nature and mystery of God, what faith is; and the influence of great religious teachers (Jesus, Buddha, Hindu philosophy) and people of faith (St. Christopher, Mother Teresa, Ghandi, Martin Luther King).

Teachers work together in year groups planning the areas for study within the topic framework. If RE is not the major focus of the topic e.g St. Mary's Church or Judaism through the story of Moses then it will be taught discretely e.g stories about creation, or the parables of Jesus.

Assessment

Teachers assess RE every half term against our RE skills map. They ensure that all the skills and content for their year group is covered then through either formative or summative assessment they decide if children are working towards the expected standard for the year group, are working at the expected standard for their year group or are working at greater depth standards for the year group.