

# Policy for Religious Education 2024 - 2025

## St Matthias CE Primary School



This policy is reviewed and updated by **Lydia O'Connor, RE Lead** at St Matthias CE Primary School. It is approved annually by the Local Governing Body.

**This policy has been written in conjunction with Guidance from the Worcestershire Diocesan Board of Education.**

Date: January 2025

Ratified: **28<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Next Review: January 2026

In collaboration with



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## Introduction

This policy has been written in the light of the [Church of England's Vision for Education](#) (Autumn 2016), [Valuing all God's Children](#) (Summer 2019) and through reflection on the 2023 [SIAMS Evaluation Framework](#) for schools.

<b>Name of School: St Matthias CE Primary School</b>
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## Legal Position of Religious Education in School

Religious Education (RE) is unique in the curriculum as it is neither a core or foundation subject. The 1988 Education Act states 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all pupils'.

St Matthias CE Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School, therefore the provision of Religious Education must be in accordance with the school's Trust Deed. The Governors, in accordance with the Headteacher, have decided to adopt the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020 – 2025

## The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement

The Church of England's [Statement of Entitlement](#) (February 2019) outlines the aims and expectations for RE in Church of England schools and guides this school's approach to RE. It begins by stating: '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 to educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together'. Quoting from the Church of England's *Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*, it continues: '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'.

## Religious Education and the school's Christian Vision

### **The School's Vision:**

Our school family values us all as unique individuals and children of God. We **aspire** to be the best version of ourselves; **believing** that through the gifts God has given us, we can make a positive contribution, flourish and **achieve** together to make a difference in our ever-changing world.'

Building on these themes, RE in this school contributes to the outworking of our vision by enabling children to have rich and informed discussions about religions and non-religious worldviews in a safe space so they can explore and develop their understanding of people, cultures, faiths and relationships.

Our Christian vision is the heartbeat of our daily lives at school and embedded within our curriculum. Our Religious Education lessons are interactive and engaging curriculum using a variety of creative techniques such as dance, drama, music, art, poetry and Godly Play. We endeavour to increase children's cultural capital through guest speakers, visits and workshops at St Matthias Church thus providing an enriching RE curriculum for all.

### Religious Education Intent

The intent of Religious Education at St Matthias CE Primary School is to encourage children to **aspire** to demonstrate the best version of themselves by respecting others and valuing their opinions and beliefs.

We, as a school family, **believe** that we all have distinctive gifts to enable us to contribute, flourish and grow as a unique individuals and children of God. Religious Education lessons provide a context of trust where children and adults learn together, listen to each other and show mutual respect.

Religious Education lessons at St Matthias, guide our school community to **achieve** their goals through engaging in lessons, working collaboratively with peers and have opportunities to explore the big questions of life, make connections in their learning about world faiths so they can make positive contributions, listen carefully to others and respond with respect, passion and knowledgeable opinions.

### School Approach to Religious Education

In-line with all church schools, this school has duty to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and world views.

A wide range of imaginative teaching methods and pupil groupings ensure effective RE sessions. We appreciate the positive impact that local faith communities can have on pupils' experience in RE. Therefore, this school encourages visits to places of worship and welcomes visitors from different faith communities. We recognise it is vitally important that teachers demonstrate respectful attitudes towards all faiths, modelling the attitudes and responses we would expect from our pupils.

As identified in the *Statement of Entitlement*, teaching and learning in RE in this school will provide:

- a challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework
- an assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts
- a curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide

- a pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place
- the opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.

RE that makes a positive contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development.

### Organisation & Time Allocation

In accordance with the structure of Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus:

- in the Foundation Stage pupils will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it. They will be introduced to a range of faith traditions and will be taught RE for 36 hours over the year
- at Key Stage 1 pupils study Christianity and Judaism or Islam - RE will be taught for at least for 36 hours over the year
- at Key Stage 2 pupils study Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and also consider non-religious worldviews - RE will be taught for at least for 45 hours over the year.

### Assessment / Recording & Reporting

The Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-2025 sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the expected end of Key Stage learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus.

As a school we track progress in RE through regular learning walks, book looks, pupil voice, staff voice, live marking and retrieval practice. Pupils receive feedback and are encouraged to 'dig deeper' by responding to challenge questions. Monitoring by SLT and Governor is conducted regularly.

School reports are sent home in the Summer term of each year and the RE report is written with reference to assessment records as well as pupils' individual work

### Responsibilities for RE in School

The Headteacher has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the legal framework for RE is carried out and that the teaching of RE fits within the school's distinctively Christian vision. At St Matthias CE Primary School some of the responsibilities for RE may be delegated to other members of staff.

The **Subject Leader** is responsible for:

- ensuring personal subject knowledge and expertise are kept up-to-date by participating in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for RE and share good practice
- attending RE clusters / hub meetings
- providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary

- ensuring the staff are familiar with the syllabus and supporting resources such as *Understanding Christianity*
- supporting and clarifying approach to planning, delivery and assessment being clear about the subject's intent, implementation and impact
- acquiring and organising appropriate resources, managing a budget when necessary
- monitoring the teaching and learning of RE through regular lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks, analysis of data and pupil voice and being able to discuss impact and standards, all in conjunction with the Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team
- contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process, including, but not limited to Inspection Question 6 and 7.

The **Headteacher and Governors** must ensure:

- RE has a high profile within the curriculum
- that the legal framework for RE is upheld within the school
- that all pupils make progress in achieving the learning outcomes of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have effective and regular opportunities for CPD
- teachers newly-appointed to church schools are provided with support offered by the diocese to enable them to become effective teachers of RE
- that clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils make good progress
- appropriate support is in place to ensure the effective provision of RE.
- regularly monitor the impact of RE across the school.

### **The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education**

At St Matthias CE Primary School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history and citizenship. Where parents make a request to withdraw their child(ren) from the teaching of RE, the school will, as a matter of courtesy, ensure that the parents are aware of the following:

- The learning objectives covered in RE so that parents can make an informed decision.
- What supervision arrangements will be in place for child(ren).

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of RE at our school.

## Review

This policy will be subject to the normal cycle of policy review and will be reviewed and ratified by the governing body every three years. Furthermore, there may be occasions where this policy is reviewed outside the normal review cycle, including but not limited to:

- Change in Agreed Syllabus
- Change in legal position framework for RE