



Religious Education Policy

St Mark's CofE Primary School



Introduction

At St Mark's, we are ambitious for our children to be academically strong and believe that in order to achieve this, we must put character before qualification so that we develop each and every child. Our real hope is that in all that we do, we are able to put in firm foundations for our children, thereby making a difference to themselves, to their friends and family, and to the wide community- both now and in the future. We want our children to positively impact our world. How do we do all of this? We grow and learn together in God's love.

We believe that RE is a key part of realising our vision. RE gives the opportunity to learn and to reflect: to understand ourselves and others, to be challenged with the big questions of life, to become tolerant, to think critically, and to evaluate and to learn about other faiths. It is a very special subject at St. Mark's and has a high status in our school.

In addition, this policy document follows guidance from the Hampshire County advisor for religious education and the Diocese education team, as well as the guidance provided by the locally agreed syllabus, *Living Difference IV*.

Further, the planning and delivery of Christianity within RE lessons is complemented with resources from the Church of England's *Understanding Christianity* publication, allowing for children to understand the big story of the Christian Bible and to explore life's big questions, considering the part the children can make to our world.

The legal requirements of Religious Education

We are a Church of England school. In line with the schools trust deeds, the terms of Union with the National Society state with regard to religious education that: *The Head teacher and the governing body will ensure that religious education is given at least five per cent of curriculum time and that such religious education is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church.*

The Education Act 1996 requires that; *religious education should be taught to all pupils other than those in nursery classes and except for those withdrawn at the wish of their parents. Teachers' rights are safeguarded, should they wish to withdraw from the teaching of religious education.*

We follow, under the advice provided by Winchester Diocese, the syllabus "Living Difference IV" which *reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions in Great Britain* (quoting from the syllabus and Education Act). With regard to the law Religious Education *must not be designed to convert pupils, or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils*, whether that of a secular agenda or of a particular religion.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (now DfE) guidance, religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, states that:

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school, except for those withdrawn by their parents in accordance with Schedule 19 to the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. The key document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally agreed syllabus within the LA concerned. ... Schools designated as having a religious character are free to make their own decisions in preparing their syllabuses.



Our aims for Religious Education and the contribution of Religious Education

We believe RE makes a significant contribution to the development of our pupils, and strongly support the aims and vision of St Mark's.

Developing viewpoints A key aim of RE is to draw on pupils' own independent potentially small interpretive points of view and develop these to appreciate a wider and broader viewpoint.

Celebrating difference We know that our community is made up of staff, pupils, and families who originate from differing nationalities, cultures and faith groups. Being mindful of the Christian character of the school, we should be celebrating diversity and offering a welcoming and inclusive environment for all our pupils, including new arrivals and those for whom English is an additional language.

Developing values and principles The purpose of RE is to support pupils in developing their own coherent patterns of values and principles, and to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This entails encouragement of each pupil to interpret and respond to a variety of concepts, beliefs and practices within religions and to their own and others' cultural and life experiences. It is important that students progressively develop the capacities to interpret, evaluate and respond to differing values and beliefs. This can be achieved through extending their thinking and analytical skills and their creative, imaginative and emotional development.

Mutual understanding A further purpose of RE is to foster mutual understanding between pupils of differing religious and cultural backgrounds. This promotes tolerance, a key British value.

Parental right of withdrawal from Religious Education lessons

Parents are informed in the school prospectus that they have the right to withdraw their pupils from parts of or all religious education. Parents who choose to withdraw their children from religious education lessons are requested to discuss the issue with the Head Teacher. Those children who are withdrawn from RE lessons will be provided with alternative activities and fully supervised.

Planning the RE curriculum

It is recommended that a minimum of 36 hours in Reception/KS1 and 45 hours in KS2 per school year should be devoted to religious education, and the programmes of study in *Living Difference* IV have been designed with these time recommendations in mind. In practical terms, this is 6 hours for Reception/KS1 and 7.5 hours for KS2 per half-term. RE is taught in blocked units, either across a week, or a number of days, according to the arrangements of each class timetable.

Class teacher's responsibilities

- To teach RE for around 6 hours (Reception/KS1) and 7.5 hours (KS2) each half-term, in a block of time
- To adapt medium term planning so that it is suitable for each class
- To ensure no less than 2 hours is spent on the contextualise part of the cycle before moving to evaluate
- To provide oral or written feedback on the success of each concept for the RE leaders
- To record pupils progress each half-term on the grid formats provided by the RE leaders

Subject Leader's Responsibilities

- Oversee & organise the long term RE planning
- Provide basic medium term planning each half-term to each year group's team leader for dissemination
- To monitor RE teaching and learning
- Provide sufficient provision of suitable resources
- To facilitate any training as necessary
- To update and disseminate latest developments in RE to all staff
- To organise assessment opportunities and track progression of all children across the school
- To moderate the judgements made about pupils' attainment and provide an overview of attainment in RE throughout the school

Assessment, recording & reporting arrangements for Religious Education

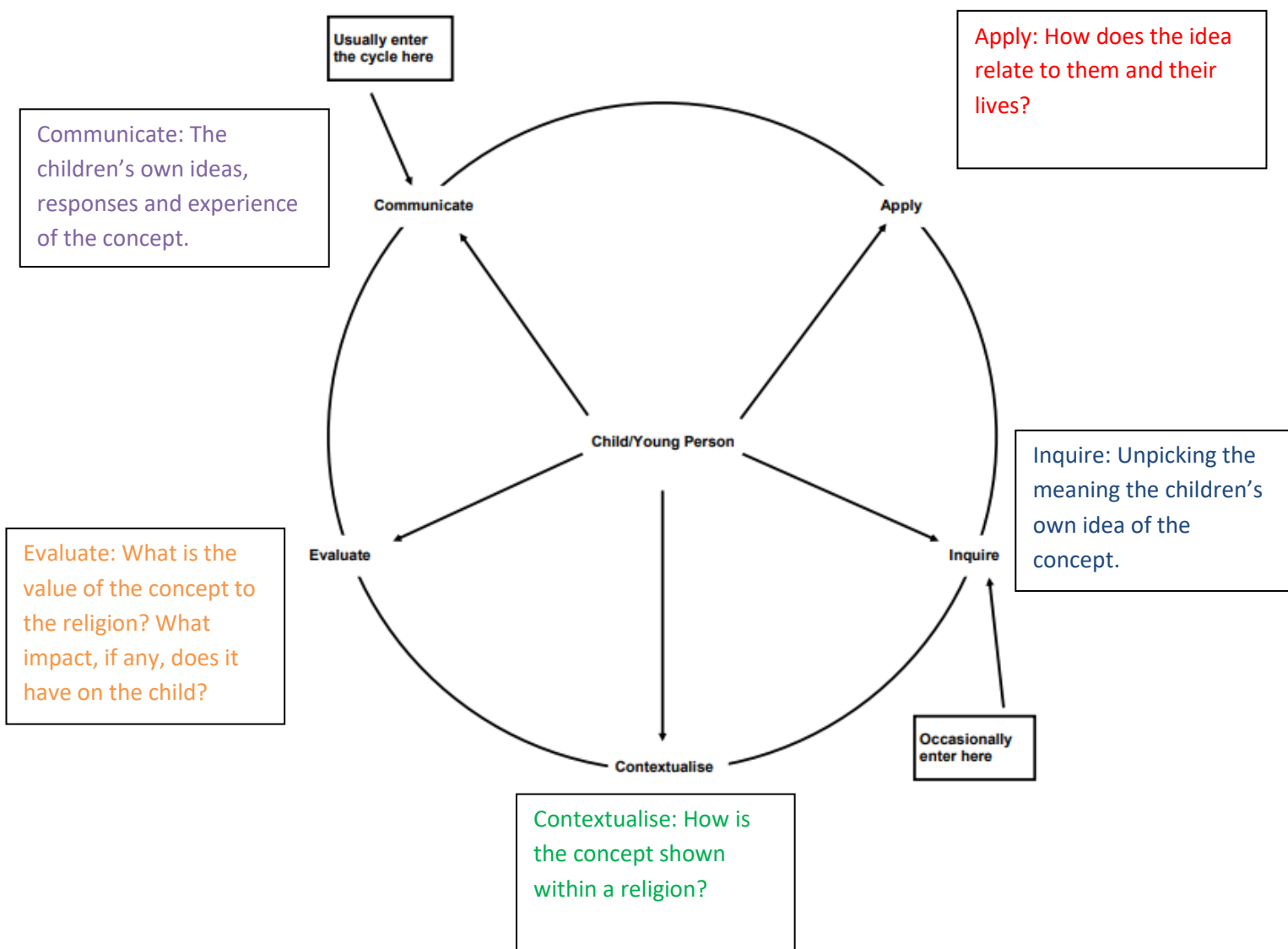
The attainment target for RE using the syllabus is to *interpret religion in relation to human experience* (page 78 of syllabus) which *interpret* can be understood as *making sense of* but pupils, especially in KS2, will also recognise that there may be a variety of interpretations of a concept, so interpret can mean *differentiating between*.

For example, *different understandings of the concept of remembering in a unit of work on Passover* i.e. what remembering might mean, what remembering means for Jews when they think about Passover, what do they think of what remembering means for the Jew, what remembering means for the learner and how that can be applied to their own and others' lives.

The RE leaders are responsible for organising assessment criteria, and how this assessment will be recorded. The RE leaders will facilitate training on how to assess and record progress in RE. Each term the RE leader will monitor the recording of assessment in RE and annually will consider the implications following this assessment to monitor pupil progress in all areas of the cycle.

Teaching and Learning strategies used in Religious Education

In addition to the teaching and learning policy, it should be noted that unlike many other subjects, RE is a philosophical enquiry based upon the learners own perceptions and understandings of each concept. This should remain fluid and develop as the learners' progress through the cycle of learning (see diagram below for the learning cycle). The *Living Difference IV* syllabus is used to guide concept driven learning, encouraging children to begin from their own personal points of view and having opportunities to then hear about other people's points of view and how other religions would view these ideas. Throughout the cycle, learners will be interrogating the concept to develop their understanding of what it means; which should grow and develop as the cycle is followed round.

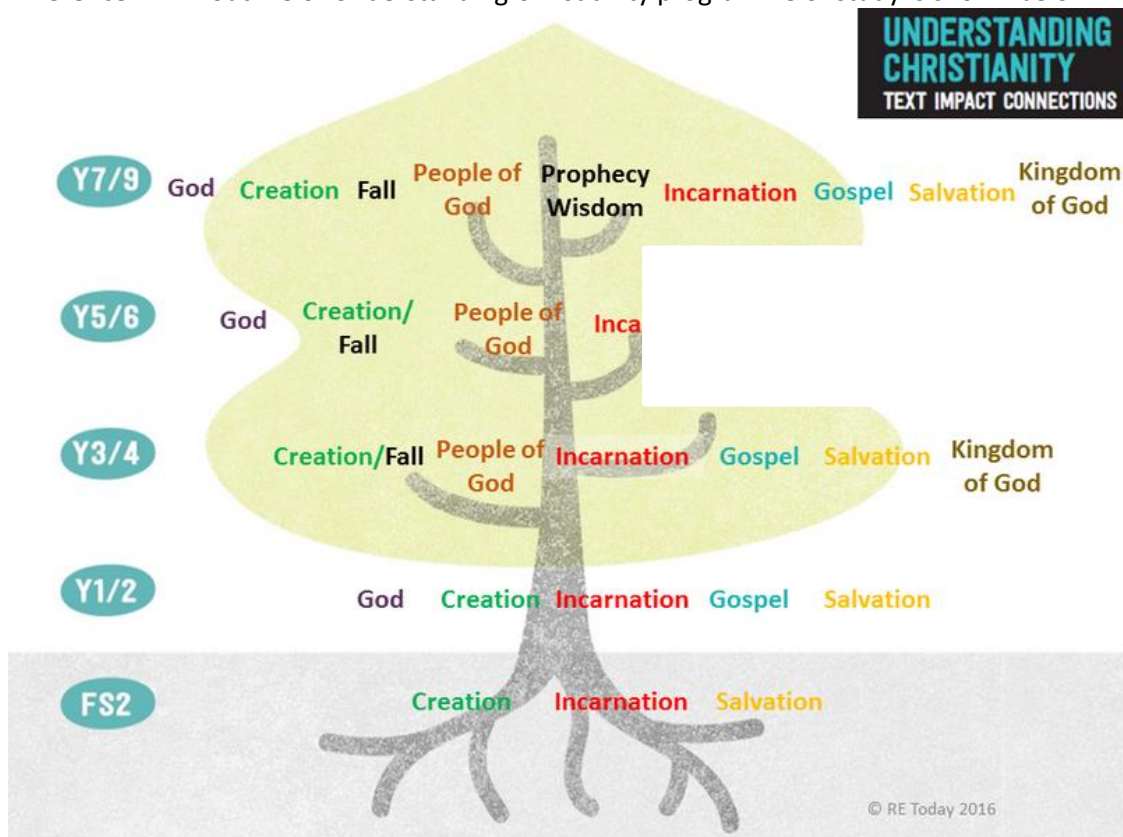


Golden Threads

Children will explore the concepts and will revisit golden threads throughout the key stages. These golden threads are: community, belonging, special and love. They are woven through the RE curriculum so that children experience them repeatedly and develop connections between the concepts that they explore. As well as this, children will experience increasing challenge as they journey through the school. They initially explore concepts that are common within and outside of religions (Concept A), and then as they move into Year 2 and beyond, experience concepts that are common to many religions (Concept B) and, in upper KS2, concepts that are unique to certain religions (Concept C).

Understanding Christianity

This is a substantial resource to support our teaching of Christianity in RE. The key purpose of UC is to help all teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it. As a church school, we aim to see pupils leave school with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice. The resource fully supports and dovetails in with Living Difference III. An outline of Understanding Christianity programme of study is shown below.



Governors' Role

Governors will ensure that the policy is adopted throughout the school. They will meet with the RE team to discuss implementation and progress in RE.

Policy Revised Summer 2022
Reviewed July 2023, July 2024

St Mark's Church of England Primary School

Founded 1 September 1996



Terms of Union with the National Society

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church at parish and diocesan level. The school aims to serve its community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all its pupils.

The governing body will ensure that the school is led by a headteacher who is committed, with the help of staff, to preserve and develop the Christian character of the school in its day to day activities and in the curriculum.

The governing body will endeavour to ensure that the staff of the school include teachers who are practising members of the Church or of Christian religious denominations with which the Church enjoys good relations and ecumenical co-operation.

The governing body will offer a school life that incorporates the values of the Christian faith.

The governing body will ensure that all pupils each day engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church.

The headteacher and the governing body will ensure that religious education is given at least five per cent of curriculum time and that such religious education is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church.

The school should observe the major Christian festivals and, where those of other faiths are present in the school, ensure that they are able and encouraged to mark their major festivals with integrity.

The school should maintain and develop an active and affirming relationship with the parish church of the parish in which the school is situated or a parish church of one of the parishes which the school serves.

The school should proclaim that it is a Church school on its external signboard and on its stationery and make appropriate use of Christian symbols inside and outside the school.

**Produced by the Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Board of Education
to mark the 200th anniversary of the National Society in 2011.**

References in these Terms of Union to "the Church" are to the Church of England in respect of schools situated in the Provinces of Canterbury or York.

The governing body and the trustees of the school must ensure that the school is designated by the Secretary of State under section 69 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (or any successor legislation) as having a religious character that is Church of England.

The instrument of government of the school should describe its ethos in the manner set out above or in words to the same effect.