



‘With God nothing is impossible’
‘You are the light of the world’

Religious Education Policy

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Approved by/when:	Governing Body Every three years
Date of last approval:	2024-2027

1. 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 Matthew's C.E. Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School and therefore follows the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022

2. 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 St Matthew's 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**':

- To recognize the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

3. Religious Education and St Matthew's Christian Vision

Our theologically-rooted Christian Vision:

At St. Matthew's our vision is for our children, staff and community to have "Courage, Attainment and Pride" in all that we do. We have translated this vision into CAP, which in Latin is 'Gere Pilium Cum Dignitate' – wear your CAP with dignity.

Our key bible verses (our mottos) which underpin this are:

'With God, nothing is impossible.' Luke 1:37

'You are the light of the world.' Matthew 5:14

These bible verses epitomise our school community perfectly. We give our children a sense of hope in the promise that God is faithful to those who ask, as His promises

never fail. We teach our children, that through an awareness of their own spiritual selves – through the phrase ‘windows, mirrors and doors’, God’s promises can be revealed in their lives and in the lives of others. We also teach our children that their ‘light’ is not to be hidden. In fact, it is our duty to ‘shine’, as individuals and as a school community, through our continuous acts. As Matthew 5:16 states, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven’. **Within this though, humility and an awareness of the needs of others, is an important part of our daily school life, collective worship and wider curriculum.**

At St Matthews, religious education is a vital part of the curriculum, enabling each pupil to flourish. It connects with our Christian vision, whilst being an academic subject that is non-confessional in nature. As with all Church schools, the study of Christianity, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church, is central. At St Matthew’s, want our pupils to gain a rich knowledge of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse. As an inclusive and diverse community, we study a range of religions and worldviews, fostering respect for the right of all people to hold beliefs.

The aims of the subject are for our pupils:

- **To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith, through the exploration of core beliefs, using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.**
- **To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.**
- **To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.**

4. Religious Education Intent

The intent of Religious Education at St Matthew’s is taken closely linked to Dioceses’ intended outcome for pupils in Birmingham church schools.

They should be able to:

- Talk about ideas about God and discuss deep questions that face human beings.
- State important aspects of Christian belief, and explain why they are important for Christians.
- Appreciate the importance of the person of Jesus Christ for Christians.
- Develop the skills to explore Bible text and to apply it to life.
- Provide examples of Christian practice from different denominations and different nations.
- Begin to make a thoughtful response to Christianity.

- Recognise the significance of faith in God as a way of living, and make links between faith and faithful living.
- Respect the faith of others, and value the journey of faith.
- Notice areas of similarities between faiths.
- Enrich and expand their understanding of truth.
- Speak comfortably about their understandings of faith and life choices.

5. School Approach to Religious Education

It is our duty to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews. A wide range of teaching pedagogies are used, to ensure **RE sessions are taught effectively and children learn and remember.**

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 worldviews as lived by believers.
- A positive contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

6. Organisation & Time Allocation

In accordance with the structure of Birmingham 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 all the religions identified in the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus - RE will be taught for at least for 36 hours over the year
- At Key Stage 2 pupils study pupils will continue to study the range of religions encountered at KS1 and **deepen then understanding through the knowledge-rich**

narratives of the Opening World Curriculum - RE will be taught for at least for 45 hours over the year.

7. Assessment / Recording & Reporting

The Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 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. **At St Matthew's we enhance this expectation, through the use of the Opening World RE Curriculum.**

School reports are sent home in the summer.

8. 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 fits within the school's distinctively Christian vision. At St Matthew's, some of the responsibilities for RE may be delegated to the Curriculum Lead/other member of staff.

The **Subject Lead** is responsible for:

- Ensuring personal subject knowledge and expertise are kept up-to-date by participating in Professional Development (PD) for RE and share good practice
- Providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary
- Ensuring the staff are familiar with the syllabus and supporting resources such as ***Opening Worlds and Understanding Christianity***
- Supporting and clarifying our 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: work scrutiny, learning walks, and pupil voice/pupil book study 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.

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.

9. The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

At St Matthew's, we are an inclusive and diverse 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 PSHE. 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.

10. 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

This policy should be used in conjunction with:

- The Collective Worship Policy
- Spirituality Policy