

St Mary's CE Middle School, Puddletown

Subject - Religious Education / Theology & Ethics

Subject leader - Julia Goy

Vision and Values

Our school vision of 'Inspire Today to Shape Tomorrow' is embodied in the RE, Theology and Ethics curriculum, encouraging our pupils to be active citizens in a rapidly changing world, to make it a better place for everyone. It is theologically underpinned by our school Bible verse from Romans chapter 12 verse 2: 'Do not conform yourselves to be like the people of this world but be changed to a new way of thinking.' Our seven core values are woven throughout every RE unit of work.

Curriculum Intent

Religious Education at St Mary's is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. The intention of the RE curriculum is for pupils to be educated about different religious and non-religious worldviews and the way people live according to their beliefs. RE stands in the curriculum as a set of ideas and practices which have shaped, and continue to shape, our world. Pupils explore the influence of religions and beliefs on individuals, culture, behaviour and national life. The carefully sequenced curriculum develops religious literacy in pupils, so that they can hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief. Pupils will also form their own beliefs by developing their ability to question, challenge and discuss, and by listening to the ideas of others. It is also the intention of the curriculum to provide opportunities for creative learning and thinking, where pupils can learn and express ideas through, for example, art, drama, dance, poetry, and discussion, as well as writing. Pupils are also given opportunities for courageous advocacy, actively applying ideas from religious philosophies to make a difference to people and the world around them.

Curriculum Design and Implementation

Pupils receive one 55-minute lesson per week. As well as this, additional time is devoted to enriching the RE curriculum through inspiring visitors and activities. These enrichment activities increase the amount of time children spend studying this subject. Click [here](#) for our enrichment programme.

The curriculum is divided into three areas: believing (theology), living (human/social sciences) and thinking (philosophy). Each unit begins with a 'big question'. Pupils build three different forms of knowledge in RE. First, 'substantive' knowledge: knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions. Second, 'ways of knowing': pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion. Third, 'personal knowledge': pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study. They need to recognise the lens through which they see the world and that this lens affects how they see other beliefs. These three forms of knowledge are interconnected and sequenced within the RE curriculum.

Good quality provision is ensured by keeping as close as possible to the fundamental 'material' of the subject:

- sacred texts
- stories from faith traditions
- artifacts
- visitors and visits
- art and sacred music

Because St Mary's is a 'Church of England' school, Christianity is taught for approximately two thirds of the year; another religion is taught for one third of the year.

Year 5: Christianity and Sikhi

Year 6: Christianity and Islam

Year 7: Christianity and Sanatana Dharma (Formally referred to as Hinduism)

Year 8: Christianity and Buddhism

Puddletown and the surrounding area is mainly white British. Pupils at our school therefore need exposure to

the multi-ethnic, multicultural society that makes up the UK. The purpose of learning about different religious cultures is to enable pupils to live empathetically with others in our society.

Christianity is taught using the Dorset Agreed Syllabus and the 'Understanding Christianity' scheme which teaches the 'big story' of the Bible in the following units: God - Creation - Fall - People of God - Incarnation - Gospel - Salvation - Kingdom of God

Pupils in KS2 study these units: Creation; People of God; Incarnation; Gospel; Salvation and Kingdom of God.

Pupils in KS3 build on this learning in their units of study. As knowledge of the 'big story' of the Bible grows, units will focus more on 'deeper learning' rather than 'core knowledge'. The curriculum is coherently planned and well-sequenced, to prepare pupils for future topics, based on what they have learnt previously.

To ensure long-term learning in Christianity, the 'big frieze' (which tells the story of the Bible in picture form) is referred to at the start of new units; this enables pupils to understand how their learning fits into the story of the Bible and how their learning links to learning in previously taught RE units.

The religions of Sikhi, Islam, Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) and Buddhism are taught using the Dorset Agreed Syllabus, teacher research and ideas from Discovery RE (KS2), The Emmanuel Project, NATRE, RE Today and the 'Living Faiths' series by Oxford University Press (KS2 & KS3). We further enrich our programme of study with guest speakers from different faiths and organisations.

Ethics is introduced as a subject in KS3:

Year 7 – Refugees: How can religion cause people to become refugees?

- The Environment: Should Christians be greener than everyone else?
- Animal Welfare: Should animals have the same rights as humans?

Year 8 - The Holocaust: Why should we remember the Holocaust?

To ensure excellent implementation, the curriculum is continually revised to ensure that concepts which are complex and challenging are taught with contemporary evidence and examples.

The curriculum is in line with the two other local middle schools to ensure consistency. It has also been developed considering the RE taught at our main first school feeders and the Year 9 curriculum and GCSE syllabus taught at Thomas Hardy School.

Curriculum Impact

What does success in RE look like at the end of Year 8? What will pupils know (key knowledge) and what will they be able to do (key skills?)

Students will have a sound understanding of the similarities and differences between the Abrahamic and Dharmic faiths (or Dharmic 'way of living'). They will understand that, although religion might not be seen as relevant in an increasingly secular country like the UK, on the world stage it is incredibly powerful, both for good and bad. Our RE curriculum equips pupils to be effective citizens of the world. When pupils understand religion, they will see the world in full technicolour! (Most works of art and literature, for example, trace their origins to religious traditions.)

In RE, Theology and Ethics, skills are divided into three categories: Making sense of text and artefacts, making connections and understanding the impact. Skills are intended to help pupils to 'think theologically', alongside learning knowledge about religious texts, belief and practice.

Assessment

At St Mary's, assessment is meaningful and manageable. We assess learning for three key reasons: to check our curriculum design is appropriate; to check our teaching and learning is effective; and to check that all our pupils are making progress in the subject.

The following assessment methods are used:

- Targeted questioning
- Regular routine quizzes and exercises to ensure learning is embedded in long term memory.
- End of unit summative assessment. Please click [here](#) for Curriculum Overview and Assessment.

Knowledge Organisers are used to build recall and revision.

Rights of Withdrawal

RE is an inclusive subject where all pupils can access the curriculum and all ideas and thoughts are listened to with respect. As a church school, we hope that all children will participate in Religious Education, but we recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children. Parents who have concerns about our Religious Education Curriculum are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

CPD

The RE subject leader regularly attends courses run by Salisbury Diocese and by NATRE (National Association of Teachers of Religious Education). Material from the training course is then disseminated to others in the RE department.

