

ST. MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) POLICY

Our Vision:

Our Christian vision is for all our children and community to flourish together and enable others to do the same, using their talents and gifts to serve and support others, encouraging a sense of care and responsibility to others and the world.



1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with our vision, Religious Education (RE) at St Mary's enables children and our community to flourish together. RE explores how individuals and communities make meaning and sense of their lives through the major world religions and non-religious worldviews. It enables pupils to know about, understand, and respond to the ultimate questions of life.

Statutory Compliance (September 2026 Regulations):

- This policy reflects the updated statutory context for Religion and Worldviews in Church of England schools, the *Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education*, the *Curriculum Framework for Religion and Worldviews*, and the DfE's updated guidance on the national curriculum and British Values.
- As a Church of England Voluntary Aided (VA), the provision of RE is in accordance with the school's Trust Deed and reflects the Anglican foundation, while providing a broad, balanced exploration of world religions and non-religious worldviews.
- RE is taught to inspire pupils to explore, develop, and affirm their own beliefs and values while showing deep respect for the faiths, beliefs, and worldviews of others. It is strictly non-confessional; it is not the practice of this school to preach or seek to convert children.
- **Pedagogical Principle:** A key principle of our teaching pedagogy in RE is to “*wait, watch, and wonder*”—providing children with quiet space to pause, observe, explore, reflect, and question to foster lifelong curiosity.

2. AIMS OF THE RE CURRICULUM

At St Mary's, RE supports and strengthens the vision, ethos, and Christian values at the heart of school life. The overall aims are to:

- Develop a deep knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices, recognizing the importance of the Bible, the role of the Church, and how faith shapes interpretation of life's meaning.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, practices, and living traditions of principal world religions (Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism) and non-religious worldviews represented in modern Britain.
- Understand how personal belief and worldviews impact culture, relationships, values, and daily lifestyle choices.
- Explore how belief is expressed through diverse media including art, music, drama, dance, ritual, and cultural celebration.
- Support pupils in their own personal search for meaning, purpose, awe, wonder, and mystery in life, exploring fundamental concepts such as love, forgiveness, and sacrifice.

- Develop crucial disciplinary skills: reflection, empathy, analysis, investigation, evaluation, and synthesis.
- Promote attitudes of mutual respect, sensitivity, open-mindedness, and self-esteem.

3. INCLUSION, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & PARENTAL RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

- **Inclusion & British Values:** Every child is entitled to high-quality RE teaching regardless of age, culture, gender, background, special educational needs, or disability. RE promotes a cohesive, multi-cultural perspective without compromising any pupil's individual faith or background. Staff adhere to British Values and PREVENT guidelines in all RE planning and delivery.
- **Parental Right of Withdrawal:** Parents have a statutory legal right to withdraw their children from RE lessons. However, because RE is central to the Christian foundation, life, and inclusive identity of St Mary's School, we invite parents wishing to exercise this right to discuss their reasons with the Headteacher first so that an informed, supportive arrangement can be agreed.

4. EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Visits to places of worship and interactions with faith communities form an essential part of experiential learning in RE. Prior to any visit:

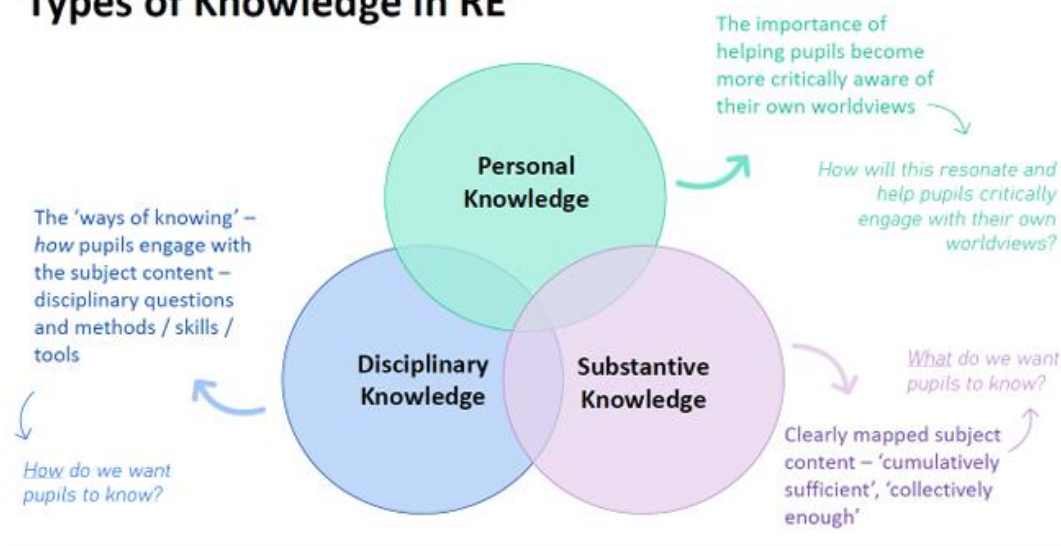
- Formal risk assessments are completed in line with off-site visit guidelines.
- Staff ensure that context and activities present a clear knowledge base about a faith or worldview and do not undermine any child's personal beliefs.
- Parental permission is obtained prior to off-site visits, and sensitive reassurance is provided to encourage full pupil participation.

5. TEACHING, LEARNING & CURRICULUM ALLOCATION

Curriculum Model: We follow the BlackburnDiocesan Scheme of Work and dedicated school Faith Days across EYFS, KS1, and KS2.

- **Time Allocation:** RE is allocated a minimum of **5% of curriculum time** (1 hour per week in EYFS and Key Stage 1; 75 minutes per week in Key Stage 2).
- **Balance of Attainment/Disciplines:** Lessons maintain a balance between *Substantive Knowledge* (learning about religions and worldviews) and *Ways of Knowing / Personal Knowledge* (learning from religions, reflecting on personal responses and evaluation).

Types of Knowledge in RE



Ways of Knowing:

Theology	Human / Social Sciences	Philosophy
The study of things that people believe	A range of academic disciplines that explore the ways in which people live their lives	Interested in what we know and how we know it
Exploring where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how different beliefs/concepts connect to each other within an overarching worldview and how different people understand and engage with their beliefs differently.	Asking questions about how people live and why they live in the ways that they do. Interested in how context affects ways of living.	Asking questions about how people think or reason about the world around them, and how we can know what is true or real.
A key method used by theologians is hermeneutics (textual interpretation).	Key methods used by human and social scientists include surveys, interviews, ethnographic study and analysis of data.	Key methods used by philosophers include thought experiments, debate, critical thinking and processes of reasoning.

- **Pedagogical Approach (Rosenshine's Principles):**
 - *Daily/Weekly Reviews:* Reactivating prior knowledge to build long-term memory schema.

- *Small Steps & Scaffolding*: Presenting new theological concepts in manageable steps with clear models.
- *Rich First-Hand Experiences*: Utilizing virtual reality, drama, music, artefacts, and visitors to consolidate understanding.
- *Thinking Maps*: Supporting pupils to compare, contrast, and make deep connections between worldviews.

How do we know that people are flourishing in RE?

We want children to engage meaningfully in dialogue and we also have a scaffold within our school to support this, we **agree, build on and challenge on another**.



THE PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

TAKEN FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATION

This poster is from the work of Barak Rosenshine who based these ten principles of instruction and suggested classroom practices on:

- research on how the brain acquires and uses new information
- research on the classroom practices of those teachers whose students show the highest gains
- findings from studies that taught learning strategies to students



Thematic concepts
to enhance
prototype
acquisition and
create schema



Rich, first hand
experiences for
consolidation



01 DAILY REVIEW



Daily review is an important component of instruction. It helps strengthen the connections of the material learned. Automatic recall frees working memory for problem solving and creativity.

02 NEW MATERIAL IN SMALL STEPS



Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Avoid to overload — present new material in small steps and proceed only when first steps are mastered.

03 ASK QUESTIONS



The most successful teachers spend more than half the class time lecturing, demonstrating and asking questions. Questions allow the teacher to determine how well the material is learned.

04 PROVIDE MODELS



Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems. Modeling, worked examples and teacher thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps required.

05 GUIDE STUDENT PRACTICE



Students need additional time to repeat, elaborate and summarize new material in order to store it in their long-term memory. More successful teachers built in more time for this.

06 CHECK STUDENT UNDERSTANDING



Less successful teachers merely ask "Are there any questions?" No questions are asked to reveal no problems. False. By contrast, more successful teachers check on all students.

07 OBTAIN HIGH SUCCESS RATE



A success rate of around 80% has been found to be optimal, showing students are learning and also being challenged. Better teachers taught in small steps followed by practice.

08 SCAFFOLDS FOR DIFFICULT TASKS



Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They can include modeling, teacher thinking aloud, cue cards and checklists. Scaffolds are part of cognitive apprenticeship.

09 INDEPENDENT PRACTICE



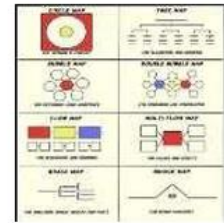
Independent practice produces "overlearning" — a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically. This ensures no overloading of students' working memory.

10 WEEKLY & MONTHLY REVIEW



The effort involved in recalling recently-learned material embeds it in long-term memory. And the more this happens, the easier it is to connect new material to such prior knowledge.

Thinking Maps to
make connections
and links and
extend thinking.



6. PROGRESSION OF RE DISCIPLINARY SKILLS

Pupils progress through a structured continuum of RE skills from EYFS/KS1 through to KS2:

Key Stage 1 Skills	Key Stage 2 Skills
● Name & Talk About: Identify key symbols, names, and stories. ● Retell & Describe: Narrative recall of religious stories and practices. ● Respond Sensitivey: Show care and awareness towards others' feelings and beliefs. ● Make Links: Compare basic similarities and differences across traditions.	● Explain & Show Understanding: Articulate reasons behind beliefs and actions. ● Account for & Interpret: Draw inferences from sacred texts and sources of authority. ● Analyse & Evaluate: Weigh arguments, assess impact, and justify ideas using evidence. ● Express Insight: Express nuanced, respectful views on ultimate questions.

7. ASSESSMENT, RECORDING & REPORTING

- Assessment in RE focuses on both factual acquisition and the development of disciplinary skills (e.g., interpretation, analysis, reflection).
- Teachers use a skills-based tracking framework aligned with Carlisle Diocesan guidance to assess pupil progress at the end of units.
- Evidence of learning is captured manageably through pupil work, photographic logs, class reflection books, and discussions.
- Pupil progress in RE is reported annually to parents in written reports.

8. SUBJECT LEADER ROLE & MONITORING

The RE Subject Leader is responsible for:

- Providing leadership, inspiration, training, and advice to teaching staff.
- Monitoring curriculum coverage, lesson quality, planning, and pupil outcomes across EYFS, KS1, and KS2.
- Maintaining and auditing physical and digital RE resources.

- Liaising with Diocesan advisors and attending statutory RE network updates.

9. APPENDIX: IMPLEMENTATION & USEFUL RESOURCES

Rosenshine's Principles in RE: Implemented through thematic concept mapping (God, Creation, Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation, Kingdom of God), daily reviews, structured scaffolding, and first-hand experiences.

Recommended RE Websites & Resources:

- [Carlisle Diocese RE Portal](#)
- [Understanding Christianity Resource](#)
- [RE:ONLINE \(Worldviews & Religions Portal\)](#)
- [NATRE \(National Association of Teachers of RE\)](#)
- [RE Today Services](#)

Approved by Headteacher & Governing Board

Headteacher Signature: _____

Date: September 2026