St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Diocesan Multi Academy Trust

Policy for RE in the Diocesan MAT

Date Approved and Minuted	**MAT Board**	4 May 2023
Date of Next Review	**MAT Board**	May 2026

St Mary's C of E Primary School, Hadleigh

Policy for RE in the Diocesan MAT

A MAT vision for RE

All our schools should be beacons of outstanding practice in Religious Education, enabling pupils, staff and governors to speak about religious ideas confidently and in an informed way.

Our RE curricula should be vibrant, relevant and challenging, with pupils achieving the very best standards, and finding enjoyment and fulfilment in their lessons.

Our RE subject leaders should be encouragers, mentoring others both inside and outside the MAT, and looking to be involved in the wider RE community.

Our schools should be engaged with the RE Quality Mark programme, actively seeking excellence.

Policy pointers: The following paragraphs indicate the expectations for RE in the Trust's schools. It is for each school to take these expectations and personalise them into their own clear policy statement. The Principal / Headteacher of each school and its LGB are responsible for its implementation and review.

Provision

All schools and academies in England are obliged by statute to provide Religious Education. It is seen to be a key element of a child's education, a contributor to SMSC and a support to the understanding of British Values. Religious Education is a curriculum area; it not the same as Collective Worship or a school's ethos.

Religious Education in all Church of England schools and academies is seen as having equal standing with the core subjects.

- ***All schools in the MAT should fulfil the relevant requirements of the 'Statement of Entitlement' for RE as published by the Church of England Education Office in 2019. Provision should be guided by this document.***

At Sy Mary's C of E Primary School, the Church of England's 'Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education 2019' underpins our provision and informs this policy. We provide a religious education curriculum which is rich and varied and which enables learners to acquire both a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, and to find out about a broad range of other faiths and world-views.

The content, teaching, learning and attainment of RE in a church school are inspected as part of the SIAMS framework. In some schools this leads to a specific

judgement as part of the report. As a former VA school, there will be an emphasis on RE in the SIAMS report for St Mary's C of E Primary School.

- ***All schools in the MAT should be familiar with what is asked about RE when schools are inspected. See the SIAMS Evaluation schedule:*** https://www.churchofengland.org/education/church-schools-schools/siams-school-inspections.aspx

Aims

The broad aims of RE are set out in the Statement of Entitlement and the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE. The primary aim of the subject may be described simply as promoting religious literacy.

Vision

Our approach to teaching and learning in RE is informed by the school's Christian vision.

"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 3:34

Unconditional love underpins all we do at St Mary's Church of England Primary School. We value and embrace the individuality of every child as they discover, learn and flourish in a place of security and love.

***L**ove – We show love and care for everyone.*

***O**pportunity – Our inclusive love ensures that all children have opportunities to live life to the full.*

***V**alues – Our Christian values give children the character and strength to live well and make a difference.*

***E**xcellence –Through our inclusive, loving care, all children flourish.*

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, our core purpose is to promote the best interests of the child, enabling them to flourish through a better understanding of their world and the people around them. In the context of this policy, the school's Christian vision promotes love, respect, tolerance, compassion and inclusion for all. This relates, particularly, to the study of a range of faiths and worldviews. It also allows for pupils to explore and discuss their own ideas, opinions and beliefs as individuals.

Leadership and Management

RE in all church schools should be well-led and managed. Positive support from senior management and governance are expected and key to achieving excellence in the subject. Continuity in leadership helps ensure ongoing progress.

All MAT schools should:

- ***appoint an RE subject leader, and, where possible, a 'shadow' leader. In small schools, pairing subject leaders across schools is advised. The subject leader will develop the subject, support and mentor staff, and monitor pupil progress and perceptions***
- ***appoint a governor for religious education to support the subject leader (s) and monitor the subject***
- ***offer subject leaders appropriate training, support and a good level of resourcing to do their job***
- ***discuss progress in RE at least annually at staff / governing body meetings***.

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, the Parish Priest is the governor appointed to monitor and support the subject on behalf of the governing body. A team, including the Headteacher and at least two governors works together as a SIAMS working group to ensure that development planning, monitoring and evaluation take place. The RE leader in school is a member of the teaching staff, supported by the Headteacher as required. Subject leaders collaborate in teams to provide mutual support; the RE leader is supported by the humanities leader. The RE leader is released to access annual subject leader updates and other training as required.

Staffing

Teachers are entitled to professional support and development in their careers. Few staff have access to RE as part of their initial training. In church schools, priority is given to staff expertise and qualifications in religious education, so pupils receive high quality experiences.

- ***All MAT staff are offered appropriate and ongoing professional development in religious education.***
- ***All MAT schools ensure that where HLTAs are used to cover RE, this is normally a part of a rotation of subjects to ensure broad professional development for both teacher and HLTA.***
- ***All ECTs, and teachers new to the MAT, receive suitable RE training.***

All teachers teach at least one RE unit per year.

The curriculum

Religious Education in church schools should contribute to the school's Christian character and teaching about Christianity, rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is at its heart. As inclusive communities, church schools encourage learning about and learning from other religions and foster respect for different world views.

All children are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum and steps should be taken to ensure a range of teaching styles, groupings and resources to allow all children to make progress in RE.

- ***All schools in the MAT follow the Emmanuel Project, a scheme of work for EYFS to Y6, which follows an enquiry-based approach looking at the key beliefs and concepts which are important in different faiths. The scheme matches the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus.***
- ***Additional Christianity units should be used in KS2 to raise the level of Christianity to the 2/3 required in those schools formerly VA, including St Mary's C of E Primary School.***
- ***All schools in the MAT enrich their RE curriculum with creative and varied teaching methods and a range of visits and visitors, and aim to build a good bank of resources.***
- ***All schools enrich their pupils learning in RE with additional whole school theme days on aspects of Christian Faith e.g. Pentecost, The Lord's Prayer***

Assessment

Assessment in RE is an important tool by which teachers know that children are making good progress and which enables them to plan future work. Assessment is based on pupils' mastery of knowledge and understanding related to the key questions addresses in the curriculum. Standards in RE should be equal to, or exceed, those of other curriculum subjects.

- ***All schools should ensure assessment tasks offer proper levels of challenge and assess children's progress in RE, rather than English.***
- ***Class teachers should assess the work of their pupils and ensuring that this is done in a variety of ways.***
- ***Pupils should use self-assessment to develop their own sense of progress and to evaluate their own knowledge and understanding.***
- ***The Emmanuel Project offers a range of tasks in each unit to ensure teachers can measure the progress of their pupils.***

Pupil achievement in RE at St Mary's C of E Primary School is expected to be equal or better than comparable subjects. We seek to maintain an assessment process that has rigour and demonstrates the children's progress in knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts.

Assessment is mainly through ongoing teacher assessment. We make informal judgments as we observe children during lessons and more formal judgements on completed work, commenting and marking in relation to RE goals. Much of the work in RE is discussion-based and relates to pupils' personal reflections. As is appropriate, feedback is often given through individual, group and whole-class dialogues and such feedback may not be visible in pupils' written work. Pupils access tasks in Emmanuel Project units that help teachers to assess their achievement and progress. We use an online tracking system to record whether pupils' attainment in RE meets age-appropriate expectations at least annually. Pupils' attainment in RE is reported to parents in annual reports.

We expect all year groups to keep a class scrap book of their learning which tells the 'story' of the work children have done; this may include photographic evidence, comments from children and observations from teachers and others visiting the class. In the Early Years and Key Stage 1, the scrap book is ongoing throughout the year. In Key Stage 2, a separate scrap book is created for each unit of work. The class RE book is a further opportunity for pupils and teachers to maintain a dialogue and feedback. We also expect regular displays of class work in RE. In Key Stage 2, pupils also record their learning in their own RE books, which are used by teachers to assess knowledge and understanding.

Monitoring, progress and standards

Subject leaders in all schools are responsible, alongside the Headteacher and LGB for monitoring the provision and standards in their subject area.

- ***The Headteacher will enable the RE subject leader to monitor provisions and standards on a regular cycle.***
- ***The RE subject leader will monitor provision and standards in RE through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum regularly with staff.***
- ***The subject leader will report annually to the LGB on progress and standards in RE and contribute to the school's self-evaluation, in readiness for SIAMS.***
- ***A member of the LGB will assist in monitoring the subject, for example, conducting pupil perceptions and learning walks.***

RE is included in the School Development Plan and in linked monitoring plans.

The withdrawal clause

In all schools, parents currently have the right in law to withdraw their children from the RE provided. This right does not extend to other areas of the curriculum where spontaneous questions may arise about religions or religious matters. Parents may arrange for their child to receive alternative religious education off-site as long as the Head is satisfied it only affects the start or end of a school session.

All MAT schools will:

- ***clarify for parents the educational nature of RE and ensure there is a clear procedure for requesting withdrawal***
- ***discuss with parents the management of their request for a child's withdrawal, noting whether it is complete or partial withdrawal***
- ***provide supervision for a withdrawn child remaining on the premises, but not additional teaching or materials which incur cost.***

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, we anticipate that all pupils will follow the RE Curriculum provided. During school tours, all prospective parents are made aware of

the school's distinctiveness as a Christian school and our approach to teaching RE. However, parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on grounds of conscience and any parents considering this, should contact the Headteacher to discuss this or any other concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at our school. Parents who choose to withdraw children from RE must provide them with alternative work; the school will provide a place for them to go.

As a church school, we do not shy away from discussion of religious issues when they arise in everyday discussion, believing this to be an important area of life to debate. The 'right of withdrawal' does not extend to occasions when questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or issues related to religion arise in other subjects, such as history.

The school will ensure that parents who are considering withdrawing children from RE are aware of the Statement of Entitlement to RE and, as appropriate, the Agreed Syllabus and the school scheme of work (the units to be covered from the Emmanuel Project). Principally, parents should understand that RE is a school subject and its purpose educational, that it is relevant to all pupils, and respects their own personal beliefs.

In any case when a parent has discussed, or formally requested, withdrawal from RE lessons, the school will seek advice from the diocese regarding the particular circumstances and the appropriate response.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given.

Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. The school may will wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.

Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be taken by parents to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is convenient.

If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend.

Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the diocese is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

Links with the Diocese, Cathedral and parish church

All schools are part of an Anglican parish and all children should have the opportunity to visit a local church as part of their RE. In Church of England schools, this entitlement should be broadened to include an interactive relationship with the local church, growing connections with the Cathedral through the Discovery Centre Team, and an awareness of some Diocesan events.

In MAT schools:

- ***all classes should visit the local parish church at least annually as part of RE***
- ***visits to the cathedral, or from the Discovery Centre Team, should take place for all children at least once during both KS1 and KS2***
- ***wider connections with the Diocese e.g. the annual schools' service, a visit from a Bishop or a Kagera Schools' Day, are encouraged.***