

Welwyn St Mary's Primary School

Believe and Achieve

We encourage all our pupils to have confidence to believe in their own ability, and that of others, and to challenge themselves so they may achieve their best



Religious Education Policy

Frequency of review (unless there are changes to legislation or LA policy)	Every 4 years
Reviewed by staff	March 2024
Approved by Governors	March 2024 (C&S Committee)
Date of next review	March 2028

WELWYN ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Our Vision – Believe and Achieve (Matthew 19)

At Welwyn St Mary's our school vision is 'Believe and Achieve' taken from St Matthew's gospel (chapter 19, verses 16-18). By this, we believe in the teaching of Jesus so that all members of our community may flourish and be the best version of themselves. We also believe in others to enable their success and build up self-belief so that all can achieve.

Intent

Welwyn St Mary's Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School and, as such, its R.E. curriculum is required by law to be determined by the Governing Body in accordance with the Trust Deed. This states that religious instruction shall be given, in accordance with the doctrines, rites and practices of the Church of England.

Within this, we embrace all faiths and none, and encourage a diverse, accepting and tolerant view of a range of world views. We are committed to challenging any discrimination and being fair to all, irrespective of their nationality, race, religion, class, age, gender, academic status or disability. This commitment is evident in the school SEN policy and our resources and teaching strategies for Religious Education are founded on the school equality scheme. For example, texts show positive images of characters from a range of diverse backgrounds.

'Educating for life in all its fullness' is the goal of the Church of England Vision for Education – educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills; for hope and aspiration; educating for community and living well together, and educating for dignity and respect. Our aim is to embrace this vision in our teaching.

At Welwyn St Mary's School, the governors and staff support the views expressed in the document "Christianity in Church of England Schools" (Diocese of St Albans), which states that:

"An aided school should positively set standards of behaviour and morality which are formed by Christ's teachings and not merely accept or reflect existing social and moral standards".

At Welwyn St Mary's School, there are pupils from practising Christian families; those who are from religions other than Christianity, and some families that have no faith at all.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the teaching of R.E. (Education Reform Act 1988). Any parent who wishes this may consult the headteacher.

Implementation

Values and Aims

We are proud of our church school heritage and the deep connection to our community and parish. Our curriculum vision, framed by the statement 'Believe and Achieve', is centred on the development of the whole child; head, heart and hand. We value our strong and close association with St Mary's Church and hold several services each year in the church building. The Rector and other members of the Church team lead weekly

collective worship and support and contribute to the life of the school in many ways, including through the governing body.

Attitudes and Skills

R.E. has an important role to play in developing the attitudes and values, which are explicit in the organisation, curriculum and ethos of our school. Many attitudes we wish the children to develop are seen in the life and teachings of Jesus and these are related to the children's own experiences through RE, collective worship and our ethos.

Children's learning and understanding of the 'big story' of Christianity is developed through:

- reflection
- investigation
- questioning
- empathy
- expressing feelings

R.E. in the Curriculum

Our R.E. curriculum reflects our caring Christian ethos and the value we place on the development of the whole child: spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually – 'head, heart, hand'.

Specifically, R.E. at Welwyn St Mary's enables children of whatever ability and level of development to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and major world faiths, and to appreciate their influence in society
- be supported in their personal search for meaning and find their own spirituality
- be encouraged to question, reflect, wonder and to consider the 'big questions' of life
- recognise and be sensitive to people, who hold different beliefs in the community

Some teaching of R.E. will develop naturally out of topics already being studied by the class. However, most of the R.E. curriculum will be taught separately.

At Welwyn St Mary's C of E Primary School, as a Voluntary Aided school, R.E. is not required to be taught in accordance with the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education. However, the Agreed Syllabus provides useful teaching support and guidance.

We have enhanced our scheme of work by introducing the resource 'Understanding Christianity' – a resource produced by RE Today, in collaboration with the National Society. Understanding Christianity, its 'big story', living a life of faith here in Welwyn and around the world, Christian traditions and the church calendar underpin our rich curriculum. Children learn through story, art, celebration and first-hand experience with opportunities to question, reflect and explore belief and the impact of faith on people's lives. This scheme covers the central beliefs and teachings of Christianity, as well as moral issues within an overall Christian ethos.

From the earliest age, children learn about major world faiths, their customs and traditions and, during Key Stage 2, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam are studied in greater depth. Visitors to school and visits to places of worship significantly enrich the curriculum and the experiences of our pupils.

Understanding Christianity was introduced in 2019 and the scheme of work was reviewed by staff in 2023. The decision was made to continue to base the school's RE curriculum for Christianity on these resources, with another review set for 2027.

As a Church of England school, Christianity is the main foundation of R.E. at Welwyn St Mary's and forms two thirds of our R.E. curriculum. Other major world faiths are introduced as follows:

Year Group	Religion	Additional Major World Religion(s) Covered
Reception	Christianity	Festivals and stories from a range of religions
Year 1	Christianity	Major world faiths are introduced through festivals, stories, symbolism and artefacts, including Judaism and Islam
Year 2	Christianity	Major world faiths are introduced through festivals, stories, symbolism and artefacts, including Judaism and Islam
Year 3	Christianity	Hinduism
Year 4	Christianity	Sikhism
Year 5	Christianity	Islam
Year 6	Christianity	Judaism

Resources

Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism are each resourced with relevant books, videos and boxes of artefacts. Staff also encourage visitors of major world faiths to talk with the children about their beliefs and way of life. Visits to places of worship are encouraged – as an example, Year 4 experience a 'Faith Tour', visiting a Gurdwara, Mosque and Church, learning about a range of faiths.

Continuity and Progression

Our scheme of work aims to ensure continuity and progression through a thematic approach. The main strands spiral through the school's R.E. programme and will seek to develop knowledge and understanding, alongside appropriate skills and attitudes.

Adapting the curriculum and differentiation

Teachers assess the abilities of children in their classes and provide support and challenge for children, when and where appropriate. It is anticipated that the very large majority of the class should be able to access the year group's age-appropriate curriculum, with adaption and support to access, where necessary.

Teaching Methods

R.E. is taught by non-specialist teachers, who have an appreciation of the school's standing as a Church of England school, and who are sympathetic to the Christian ethos of the school. The RE Subject Leader(s) are able to offer ideas and guidance when required. Teaching methods are varied in order to stimulate interest and include class and group work, visits and visitors, poetry, story, drama, artefacts and the use of television and I.T. when appropriate. Discussion is a very important aspect of R.E. and is encouraged in order to draw out the moral and spiritual aspects and give an opportunity for pupils to ask questions and to express their own beliefs and values.

Impact

Objectives

To enable all pupils, through class themes and other work:

- to become increasingly aware of religious ideas and experiences through stories and acts of worship, which emphasise the Christian tradition
- to have an enquiring, reflective and respectful attitude to the natural world which develops an understanding of the relationship between God and His creation
- to gain an understanding of major world religions, beliefs, perspectives and ways of life
- to enable pupils to form a developing understanding of their own personal spirituality
- to develop sensitivity towards others and to form relationships based on love, sympathy, forgiveness, respect and consideration
- to acquire a coherent knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus
- to understand the basic structure of The Bible and become familiar with key personalities in The Bible stories
- to explore the nature of Christian worship and the use of signs and symbols in expressing feelings and belief

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Formative assessment strategies, based on the learning outcomes for units of work, are used by teachers to monitor progress and by pupils to reflect on their learning. Attainment for each pupil is summarised on the annual reports to parents. Tracking standards for all pupils in RE is shared annually with staff through the school assessment database.

Management and Subject Leadership

The R.E. Subject Leader(s) manage this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject leaders.

R.E. Subject Leaders: E Harrison/W Mather/S Whiteland

Reviewed: March 2024

Review date: March 2028