

# St David's Church in Wales Primary School



## Religious Education Policy



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## INTRODUCTION

St David's School is a Voluntary Aided Church in Wales primary school and differs from a county school in the matter of religious education. A church school such as ours starts from a different basis: it is a Christian foundation and believes that only with an understanding of Christianity can a pupil learn to see things from a Christian point of view and learn Christian truth.

This policy hopefully shows how the staff at St. David's aim to maintain a Christian ethos in terms of the quality of education they provide and their interaction with the community.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Through the teaching of Religious Education at St. David's we aim to improve the quality of education received by all pupils. The special contribution of Religious Education is that it seeks to encourage and develop an awareness of the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions of life and to help children in their quest for meaning purpose in life. At St. David's we believe Religious Education to be an essential part of the school's curriculum in that it contributes to a pupil's overall development, both individual and social. The main aim of Religious Education is to help our pupils gain knowledge and an understanding of religious experiences and spiritual beliefs and practices. To achieve these aims at St. David's, Religious Education should seek:

- To enable children to explore and to enrich their own and other people's experiences and so grow in understanding of what life, and therefore religion, is about.
- To enable children to develop good relations with and a caring attitude towards other children and people.
- To enable children to respect and cherish their environment and their heritage.
- To make children aware of the events of the Church year.
- To familiarise the children with the life and the teachings of Christ.
- To introduce children to other major world faiths through Festivals and Sacred Writings. Furthermore to promote an understanding of, and a respect for, other faiths.
- To provide situations, real and imaginary, in which children can discover for themselves the meaning of religious experience in terms of love, forgiveness, awe, etc.
- To develop pupils' self-awareness and an appreciation of order and sequence in the world.
- To thank God in prayer and worship for all the wonderful things we have.
- To develop pupils' skills of reflecting, celebrating, puzzling and questioning.
- To develop a sense of belonging within the school.
- To develop a sense of community beyond the school and having some experience of a worshipping community.
- To lay a firm foundation on which children can build their lives. They will hopefully be prepared to face the outside world, both in moral and educational terms.

## AREAS OF STUDY

The 1993 Education Act reinforced the requirement of the 1944 Act in that Religious Education should remain a compulsory part of the curriculum. Religious Education therefore holds a unique status as being the sole basic subject designated in the National Curriculum.

Religious Education is therefore an important element of the basic curriculum entitlement of all pupils between the ages of 4 and 18. *'A Bright Future: Getting the best for every pupil at school in Wales'* asks each school to include, in its development plan, specific objectives for improved performance in all subjects of the curriculum including religious education.

However, Religious education differs from the core and foundation subjects as it has no nationally prescribed attainment targets or programmes of study. Also there are no nationally prescribed systems of assessment for Religious Education.

Every local Education Authority is required by law to establish a Standard Advisory Council on Religious Education (S.A.C.R.E or WASACRE in Wales). The duty of the S.A.C.R.E. is to advise the Authority on such matters connected with Religious Worship in County Schools and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus.

As a Voluntary Aided School, St. David's is exempt from this requirement. However, by law, all new syllabuses should, *'...reflect the fact that the Religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst taking account of the teaching practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'*.

It is therefore important that we accept that the area in which we live is being influenced by other faiths and that at St. David's we raise the children's awareness of the beliefs and traditions of other religions. However, the principal religion to be taught at St. David's in the Foundation Phase will be Christianity. In the Foundation Phase Judaism will also be taught. This will be extended in Key Stage 2 with the addition of Islam in Year 5.

## PROVISION AND ORGANISATION

The R.E Scheme ensures progression and development **from the Foundation Phase through to Key Stage 2**. There are six areas of study:

**Bible, Jesus, Church, Christian Life and Values, Festivals, Other Faiths.**

"Understanding Christianity" resources will be used to support the delivery of the scheme of work, which covers:

### **Foundation Phase - Reception Class**

These learning areas provide an essential continuity for work in the Foundation Phase:

**Bible** – Pupils should begin to become familiar with the Bible in various forms as a source of stories and teachings. Bible stories should be age appropriate.

**Jesus** – Pupils should begin to be familiar with the sort of person Jesus was and to learn from his example.

**Church** – Pupils should be given an opportunity to look at and visit a church building; **if possible twice during the academic year**. They should start to consider the different activities that happen in and around the church.

**Christian life and values** – Pupils should begin to learn basic moral and spiritual values, starting with awareness that they are special to God.

**Festivals** – Pupils should begin to look at the main Christian festivals and see them as celebrations in which they can participate.

**Other Faiths** – Pupils should learn about the life of Moses and some of his main beliefs. (*see also below*).

### **In years 1 & 2 of the Foundation Phase, these areas should be studied in greater depth as below:**

**Bible** – Pupils should begin to become familiar with the Bible as a source of stories and teaching that encourages a variety of responses. They should be taught Bible stories appropriate to their own age as well as being made aware of the biblical teaching about the natural world (caring for the environment and animals).

**Jesus** – Pupils should become familiar with the sort of person Jesus was, when he lived, what he taught and did and why he was important.

**Church** – Pupils should learn about church buildings and what they are for; what happens in them and what they mean to us. They should appreciate the elements of a church service and learn that the word church refers to the caring family of God.

**Festivals** – Pupils should be introduced to the main universally celebrated Christian festivals and learn to see them as celebrations in which they can contribute. They should also begin to appreciate Christian and ceremonial music.

**Other Faiths** – Pupils should learn about the life of Moses and some of his main beliefs. (*see also below*)

### **Provision and Organisation in the Foundation Phase**

The Foundation Phase Profile and Foundation Phase Outcomes currently define the seven areas of learning:

- Creative Development,
- Physical Development,
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World,
- Welsh Language Development,
- Mathematical Development,
- Language Literacy and Communication Skills,
- Personal and Social Development, Well Being and Cultural Diversity.

The seven areas form a key part of the core skills curriculum. The school is also working towards the New Curriculum in Wales based upon Successful Futures. (*see below*)

The core skills of Spiritual Development, Curriculum Cymreig, Communication, Thinking and Problem Solving and Personal and Social Wellbeing are taught through the main themes of the diocesan curriculum, as listed in bold print above.

### **Provision and Organisation at Key Stage Two**

At this stage pupils may reflect on the implicit element of a theme, but will more readily relate to material of an explicit nature – experiences such as festivals, celebration, symbols, beliefs and buildings. Teachers need to select the materials that are best for their pupils age range and ability.

Children at this age begin to build upon the foundations laid during the Foundation Phase and attempt to meet the challenging questions, which often arise.

“Understanding Christianity” resources will be used to support the delivery of the scheme of work, which covers:

**Bible** – Pupils should be taught Bible stories and helped to respond to them in a variety of moral and spiritual ways. They should also become aware of the range of biblical literature and its figurative and non-figurative aspects. In their application of biblical events, they should begin to understand dating conventions describing historical events. They should begin to grow in awareness of the process by which the Bible was written and transmitted to us and begin to grasp its historical and cultural value and relevance for today.

**Jesus** – Pupils should be taught about Jesus so they can see the impact he had on many kinds of people in his own day. They should begin to appreciate the purposeful shape of his ministry and to see what he taught in relation to Judaism, the church and to God. Pupils should begin to understand the theological meaning and saving purpose of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

**Church** – Pupils should be learning about the architectural, cultural and religious value of church buildings and begin to appreciate the structure and purpose of church services. As in the Foundation Phase, classes should aim to visit St Michael’s Church twice during the year. They should begin to see that the church exists outside the building and that a variety of denominational expressions of Christian life are found. The beginning of a perspective on church history should be introduced, starting with the work of St Paul and St David.

**Christian Life and Values** - Pupils should begin to work out how beliefs about other people and about how right and wrong are linked with behaviour. They should realise that rules; of behaviour and moral values are expressed in the life of communities and in human relationships and in our concerns for other people and in our treatment of the natural world.

**Festivals** – Pupils should begin to grasp the annual pattern of Christian festivals and their purpose in keeping the life of Christ and the work of God constantly before the church. They should begin to associate Christian festivals with words, music and representational art. They should be given the opportunity to take part in Christian festivals.

**Other Faiths** – Pupils should begin to appreciate the function of Mosaic Law and the development of Judaism and its impact on Jewish believers. They should begin to appreciate the shape of Muhammad’s life, the Muslim community and the Qur’an. They should also learn about the distance in historical time and geographical situations between Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. (see also below).

**As in the Foundation Phase, the 2014 curriculum aims to develop each of the areas above through skills based activities.**

## **SUCCESSFUL FUTURES**

We are aware of the recommendations contained within the Donaldson review and the national intention to develop a revised curriculum based upon the four key purposes contained within the ‘Successful Futures’ document, namely to develop children as:

- ambitious, capable learners,
- enterprising creative contributors,
- ethical, informed citizens
- healthy, confident individuals.

We are beginning to look at what this may mean for our pupils in the context of RE and how we may use them to shape learning experiences.

Currently, RE falls under the Humanities Area of Learning Experiences umbrella. It is recognised that cross-curricular pedagogy is of the greatest importance, particularly enabling pupils to make links in their learning.

## RE AND THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY FRAMEWORK (LNF)

At St. David's planning for history is in line with the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework and aims to embed literacy and numeracy in the learning and teaching of history. Teachers refer to the LNF when they plan opportunities for integrating literacy and numeracy in to their teaching. The seven areas covered under this framework are as follows:

- Oracy, Reading & Writing
- Numerical reasoning, Number skills, Measuring skills & Data skills

## KEY SKILLS AND DIGITAL COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

Besides the core RE skills, Religious Education provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **Developing thinking** - learners develop their thinking across the curriculum through the processes of **planning, developing** and **reflecting**. In RE, learners develop their thinking skills through reflection on difficult questions, ideas/viewpoints and interpretations. They are encouraged to identify bias and delve deeper for the reliability of sources.
- **Information technology / DCF** – learners develop their digital competency for a number of purposes. To research information about religions/non-religions and beliefs, their teaching and practices; to compare differing beliefs and cultures, information, ideas and data. Use their digital competency skills to represent their evidence, information, ideas and data in the most appropriate form, perhaps using spreadsheets and databases to handle and present data relevant to the study of religious education. They may use email (via Hwb) to communicate and analyse information. When using the internet, children will be expected to follow the 'Rules for responsible use' outlined in the Internet Access Policy.

INCERTS is used to record the LNF skills and DCF **taught** to individual pupils.

## BILINGUALISM AND CURRICULUM CYMREIG

Estyn's report, 'Aiming for Excellence in Religious Education' stated that 'Religious Education should introduce pupils to Christianity and the other main religious traditions found in Great Britain, as living faiths. If this is to be done effectively, teachers should make the fullest use of resources that are to be found in and relate to the local community. This in itself will ensure that religious education has a significant Welsh dimension.'

At St. David's very good provision is made for the Curriculum Cymreig as pupils develop an awareness of:

- Religion as it is practised in modern Wales.
- Religious celebrations in the local community that are peculiarly Welsh.
- Religious people and leaders in the local community.
- People who, today and in the past have contributed significantly to the religious life of Wales.
- Important places of specific religious interest in Wales.
- The significance of the Welsh language in the religious life of Wales.
- Specific religious links that Wales has with other parts of the World.
- Religious/ non-religious and ethical issues that relate to the local community, the environment and to Wales as a whole.

## **EQUALITY**

The content of R.E. in the school will be appropriate for all children, irrespective of religious/non-religious and cultural background. The teaching will encourage sensitivity towards and respect for the diversity of views and beliefs.

Our school is committed to eliminating any unlawful discrimination on grounds of Race, Gender, Transgender, Religion or Belief, Disability or Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy or Maternity Marriage or Civil Partnership by creating an environment where every individual, regardless of ability or background, is able to participate and is valued fully as a member of the school community. Being opposed to all forms of discrimination and prejudice, we promote a positive attitude towards differences and expect respect for people of all backgrounds.

## **ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS**

The teaching of R.E. will be suitable for children of all abilities and differentiation will be achieved by task and outcome. Pupils with special educational needs have the right of access to religious education and experience has shown that such needs often give pupils special insights into, or empathy with, religious characters and situations. Pupils with speech difficulties may be able to engage well with art, music, dance and drama and so connect directly with the core of religious vision of life.

Pupils identified as More Able and Talented are encouraged to lead presentations, Worship and model responses to learning to peers. Pupils of other faith/non-faith backgrounds will also be encouraged to share celebrations/festivals related to their own beliefs when these are other than Christian.

## **ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING**

Assessment is the process by which progress in R.E. is measured and communicated to pupils so that they and their teachers can take their learning forward. Initially this was done via the Llandaff Diocese digital tracking system/ but this has been replaced by INCERTS, which is linked to the revised curriculum, teachers should aim to update pupil records at the end of each term when a theme has been covered.

The assessment of religious education will also help in the reporting to parents, through the two parents' evenings each year and the pupil's end of year written report, and show that the subject enjoys equal status with the other curriculum areas. Pupils are also actively encouraged to self assess enabling them to feel involved in their own learning and to develop a sense of responsibility.

## **ROLE OF THE CO-ORDINATOR - MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW**

The monitoring of the planning, delivery and evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum will take place in line with the school's policy. The class teacher will evaluate the teaching and learning opportunities in their own class using the weekly planning pro forma.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator will review planning, monitor a sample of books and keep records in the Curriculum Monitoring File. The link governor will be involved in this process.

The RE Co-ordinator will provide an evaluation for the whole school self evaluation report each year and priorities for improvement will be gained.

## **OTHER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To ensure each child has his/her legal entitlement to Religious Education.
- To draw up in conjunction with Mrs Penny Snowden, R.E. governor, a policy and scheme of work for R.E.
- To know the legal requirement for R.E. (5% of teaching time per week – approximately 1hr 15 mins a week).
- To have an in-depth knowledge of the area, including latest developments within the Church in Wales's syllabus.
- To support and advise other members of staff.
- To audit resources within the school.
- To order and organise resources in a way in which they are easy to use and accessible to all members of staff.
- To ensure that there is progression and continuity in R.E across both primary curriculum phases, through monitoring involving looking at lessons being taught, scrutiny of pupils' books, discussions with children.
- To meet with Mrs Penny Snowden at least once a year to provide an overview of R.E. teaching and learning within the school.
- To liaise effectively with the colleague responsible for Spirituality and Worship within school to ensure consistency of practice.
- To work alongside teachers to ensure that there is good practice, and to gain an overview of practice in both primary phases.
- To provide in-service training as and when required.
- To develop and implement a scheme of work.

## **NEW INITIATIVES/RESEARCH**

The SMT and R.E. Coordinator will ensure that the teaching in R.E. is in line with current pedagogy and practice reflects recommendations and guidance. The school is responding to the four purposes and 12 pedagogy principles outlined in Successful Futures. Any new initiatives will be carefully considered and adopted if the school feels these will benefit the teaching and learning.

## **STAFF CPD**

St David's Church in Wales Primary School is committed to training staff in R.E. with in-school training, the Diocese and other outside agencies if necessary. The staff is encouraged to identify areas of R.E, which they wish to develop and enhance. Every effort is made to meet individual training needs.

## **CYCLE FOR SIP**

Following the annual monitoring cycle at St. David's, the Coordinator will produce an annual subject coordinator's report. This report will feed into our annual self- evaluation report and from this priorities for school improvement will be agreed.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

It will be the responsibility of the Class Teacher or visit organiser:

- To carry out a risk assessment before any proposed off-site visit.
  - To ensure there are adequate adult helpers to accompany children on any proposed off site visit.
- (useful information regarding visits can be found in the R.E. Scheme of Work.)

## RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

St. David's is aware that some children and staff may belong to other Religious/ non-religious denominations and care is taken to ensure that all staff and children, whatever their religious conviction, are made to feel comfortable with Religious Education. It is therefore hoped that after viewing the curriculum and meeting with staff regularly to review activities, few parents will choose to withdraw their children Religious Education lessons. Parents are asked to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school will follow the recent WASACRE Guidance Managing the Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education 2017.

## RESOURCES

Resources for R.E. should be on a par with other subjects of the curriculum. Access to a variety of resources will inevitably enhance the quality of the curriculum delivered to the pupil. Careful selection of material can enrich the experiences of the children inside and outside the classroom. Contained within the scheme of work is a list of resources under the following heading: Children's books, Teachers' Reference Materials, Artefacts of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, DVD's, Useful websites. Resources may also be borrowed from the Llandaff Diocese office.

## PARENTAL SUPPORT AND LINKS WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The development of a strong home-school link is regarded as very important, enabling parents and teachers to work in an effective partnership to support pupils. Parents and members of the community are actively encouraged to attend the school Eucharist. School organised Family Services are held in each of the three parish churches and attended by parents and members of the community. Our links to our immediate and wider community is recognised under the umbrella of ESDGC. Parents have kindly attended school to share their own religious celebrations. We show our appreciation and responsibility towards God's wonderful through our Eco, Fairtrade and Healthy Schools committees.

<b>MONITORING AND REVIEW</b>	
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