



# Religious Education Policy (RED)

***“Believe, Succeed and Soar.”***

<b>Policy Updated</b>	November 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	November 2027
<b>Subject Leader</b>	Mrs Olivia Mumford

## **Our School Mission**

### ***We Believe, We Succeed and We Soar***

*Christ is at the centre of St. Mary's as we strive to nurture and care for our community and encourage them to Believe, Succeed and Soar. Through God's love, we support our pupils in recognising their God given gifts, strengthening their work as missionary disciples.*

*'Do little things with great love' St Therese of Lisieux*

The mission of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is that of Jesus Christ; to build a teaching and learning community where we show due regard for the development and understanding of the uniqueness and dignity of each person. At St Mary's, each child is valued as a unique individual, a child of God, made in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## **Our Gospel Values**

Our school values influence the whole school culture at St Mary's. They shape everything we do and every decision we make. They are the central thread, interwoven throughout our curriculum, our behaviour system and our pastoral support. Our pupils and staff endeavour to live these out every day.

### **With God's love we show:**

#### **Love**

**'My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you.' John 15:12**

We recognise God's unconditional love to be our source of love. A Christ-like love respects the talent of each person in our school.

#### **Respect**

**'In everything, then do to others as you would have them do to you.' Matthew 7:12**

We believe that, as children of God, we have a duty not only to respect our friends and teachers but also to show respect to our environment as we are stewards of the earth.

#### **Honesty**

**'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.' 1 John 3:18**

We show honesty in all we say and do, in the pursuit of justice and fairness.

#### **Forgiveness**

**'Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.' Luke 6:37**

We believe that mercy will be shown by the way we forgive others, finding God in all things.

#### **Generosity**

**'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Acts 20:35**

Just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, we have a role to serve our neighbours and the wider community. Through fundraising and prayer, we will strive to help the people in our world, our common home.

#### **Patience**

**'Jesus replied, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' John 13:7**

We remember to be patient and trust in God as we know he has a much greater plan for us. He allows us to be tested so that we learn to walk in his ways and trust in him.

## **Introduction**

At St Mary's, Religious Education is at the heart of the curriculum and central to our identity as a Catholic community. Inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ and rooted in the Catholic tradition, RE permeates every aspect of school life. It is not confined to the classroom but is lived out daily through our words, actions, relationships, and worship.

We recognise that the home, school, and parish work together in the religious formation of our children. Parents are the first educators in faith, and their partnership is vital in nurturing each child's spiritual development. Our school environment is intentionally shaped by a Catholic ethos that is tangible and life-giving, fostering a strong sense of community, reverence, and belonging.

Religious Education at our school is ultimately about seeking meaning and purpose in life. We teach that God is love and that this love is best understood through lived experience—through kindness, compassion, and service. We strive to create a school community where every child knows they are loved, valued, and called to grow in faith and friendship with God.

### **The Nature and Purpose of Religious Education**

At St Mary's, Religious Education is at the heart of the curriculum and central to our mission as a Catholic community. Rooted in the vision of the RED, RE is an academic subject with the same rigour and status as other core subjects, while also being integral to the spiritual and moral formation of our pupils.

We recognise two key dimensions of Religious Education:

- ✓ Implicit Religious Education – This takes place through the daily life and ethos of our school. Through relationships, routines, and the wider curriculum, pupils are continually invited to encounter the mystery of God and reflect on Gospel values in action. We actively seek and embrace these moments as opportunities for spiritual growth and formation.
- ✓ Explicit Religious Education – This is the formal, timetabled teaching of RE, which follows the structure of the RED. It is allocated 10% of curriculum time in each Key Stage and is delivered through a systematic and progressive programme of study. Pupils engage with Scripture, Church teaching, liturgy, and Catholic Social Teaching through the knowledge lenses of Hear, Believe, Celebrate, and Live, supported by the ways of knowing: Understand, Discern, and Respond.

We work in partnership with parents and the parish, recognising that parents are the first educators of their children in faith. Together, we nurture each child's journey of faith, ensuring that Religious Education is not only taught but lived. The Catholic ethos of our school is tangible in our daily life. It fosters a strong sense of community, where every child is valued, and where the presence of Christ is encountered in word, action, and relationship.

# Curriculum

## **Religious Education Directory (2023): *To Know You More Clearly***

St Mary's follows the Religious Education Directory: *To Know You More Clearly*. The Religious Education Directory (RED) is a comprehensive framework for teaching religious education in Catholic schools in England and Wales. It outlines the purpose, structure, and content of RE, aiming to deepen pupils' understanding of the Catholic faith while fostering respect for other religions and worldviews. The RED provides a structured programme of study, including knowledge lenses, ways of knowing, and curriculum branches, ensuring a coherent, progressive, and theologically grounded approach to religious education.

### **Knowledge Branches**

This curriculum is structured around six branches:

1. Creation and Covenant – God's gift of Creation and his promise to humanity.
2. Prophecy and Promise – God's call through the prophets and the coming of the Messiah.
3. Galilee to Jerusalem – Jesus' life, ministry, and teachings.
4. Desert to Garden - The Paschal Mystery: Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.
5. To the Ends of the Earth - The birth of the Church and its mission.
6. Dialogue and Encounter - Interfaith and intercultural understanding.

Knowledge Branches are thematic units that structure the RE curriculum across the school year. There are six branches—Creation and Covenant, Prophecy and Promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, Desert to Garden, To the Ends of the Earth, and Dialogue and Encounter—each aligned with key aspects of salvation history and the liturgical calendar. These branches guide pupils through a narrative journey of faith, helping them explore Scripture, Church teaching, and Christian living in a coherent and progressive way.

### **Knowledge Lenses**

Each branch is explored through six lenses:

1. Hear - Sacred Scripture and Revelation
2. Believe - Doctrine and Creed
3. Celebrate - Liturgy and Sacraments
4. Live - Catholic Social Teaching and Ethics
5. Dialogue - Interfaith understanding
6. Encounter - Study of other religions and worldviews

Knowledge Lenses are a key structural element of the RE curriculum. They define the core content areas that pupils are expected to study and understand by the end of each age phase. The term "lenses" is used to signify different perspectives through which the Catholic faith and other worldviews are explored. There are six knowledge lenses in total: four focus on the systematic study of Catholicism—Hear, Believe, Celebrate, and Live—and two support the study of other religions and worldviews—Dialogue and Encounter. Each lens corresponds to a particular aspect of religious understanding: for example, "Hear" relates to Divine Revelation and Scripture, while "Live" explores how faith influences moral and social action. These lenses ensure a comprehensive and coherent approach to religious education, enabling pupils to engage with the Catholic faith intellectually, spiritually, and practically, while also fostering respectful dialogue with other beliefs and cultures.

## **Ways of Knowing**

Pupils develop their learning through:

- Understand (Head) - Knowledge and comprehension
- Discern (Heart) - Critical thinking and reflection
- Respond (Hands) - Personal application and action

Ways of Knowing refer to the three distinct yet interconnected approaches through which pupils engage with religious education: understanding, discerning, and responding. These ways of knowing go beyond academic attainment to reflect a holistic model of learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop deep knowledge and comprehension of religious beliefs and practices (understand), to think critically and creatively about their meaning and significance (discern), and to reflect personally on how these insights might shape their own lives and actions (respond). Together, these approaches support pupils in making meaningful connections between faith, life, and learning.

## **Overview of Content**

The Religious Education curriculum is structured around six thematic branches that align with the liturgical year and salvation history. These branches are explored progressively across the academic year:

### **Autumn Term**

- Branch 1: Creation and Covenant – Pupils explore God as Creator, the beauty of Creation, and the concept of covenant through stories like Genesis and Noah. Themes of stewardship and human dignity are introduced, linking to Catholic Social Teaching (CST).
- Branch 2: Prophecy and Promise – Focuses on the prophets, especially Isaiah and John the Baptist, and the anticipation of the Messiah. Pupils study the infancy narratives and prepare for Advent and Christmas.

### **Spring Term**

- Branch 3: Galilee to Jerusalem – Pupils journey through Jesus’ ministry, exploring his teachings, miracles, and parables. They learn about discipleship, compassion, and the Kingdom of God.
- Branch 4: Desert to Garden – Centred on Lent and Holy Week, this branch explores Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection. Pupils reflect on themes of forgiveness, sacrifice, and new life.

### **Summer Term**

- Branch 5: To the Ends of the Earth – Pupils study the Ascension, Pentecost, and the early Church. They explore the role of the Holy Spirit and the Church’s mission in the world.
- Branch 6: Dialogue and Encounter – Encourages respectful engagement with other Christian denominations, world religions (e.g., Judaism, Islam, Dharmic traditions), and non-religious worldviews. Pupils develop intercultural understanding and explore shared values.

Each branch integrates the four knowledge lenses—Hear, Believe, Celebrate, and Live—and is supported by the “ways of knowing”: Understand, Discern, and Respond.

# **Implementation**

## **Teaching and Learning**

At St Mary's, teaching and learning in Religious Education are rooted in a holistic, dialogical, and academically rigorous approach. We follow the structure of the Religious Education Directory, delivering the curriculum through six thematic branches and four knowledge lenses—Hear, Believe, Celebrate, and Live—supported by three “ways of knowing”: Understand, Discern, and Respond. These elements guide our pupils to engage with religious content intellectually, spiritually, and personally.

Religious Education is taught as a core academic subject, with a minimum of 10% of curriculum time allocated in each year group. Our lessons are carefully planned to be systematic and progressive, integrating Scripture, Church teaching, liturgy, and Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils are encouraged to explore religious truths through sacred texts, theological reflection, and real-life application, with a strong emphasis on critical thinking, personal reflection, and respectful dialogue.

Our teachers act as witnesses to the faith and facilitators of meaningful discussion. They are committed to fostering theological literacy and creating safe, inclusive spaces where all pupils feel valued and heard. We use a wide range of resources—including art, music, drama, and cultural expressions—to enrich learning and promote intercultural and interfaith understanding.

## **EYFS**

Our EYFS Religious Education curriculum is holistic, experiential, and rooted in wonder and awe. We integrate RE across all areas of early learning, using play, storytelling, sensory experiences, and creative activities to introduce our youngest children to the key elements of the Catholic faith.

Children regularly encounter Scripture through stories, songs, and role-play, and are gently introduced to prayer, the seasons of the Church, and simple liturgical celebrations. They learn about God's love, the beauty of Creation, the life of Jesus, and the importance of caring for others and the world around them. We also provide early opportunities for interfaith understanding, particularly through learning about Judaism.

Assessment is guided by Religious Education Learning Goals (RELG), which align with the EYFS statutory framework and support a smooth progression into Key Stage 1. Our approach ensures that every child begins their faith journey in a nurturing, inclusive environment that celebrates their natural curiosity and capacity for spiritual growth.

## **Inclusion and SEND**

At St Mary's, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can access and thrive in Religious Education. We deliver a fully inclusive curriculum that is flexible, differentiated, and responsive to the diverse needs of our learners. Using the “ways of knowing” (Understand, Discern, Respond), we provide multiple entry points for pupils to engage with the content meaningfully, whether through storytelling, visual resources, sensory experiences, or creative expression.

Our teaching strategies are designed to support all learners in developing their theological understanding, critical thinking, and personal reflection. We create safe, respectful spaces for dialogue, where every pupil's voice is valued. For pupils with SEND, we personalise learning outcomes and provide appropriate

scaffolding to ensure they can participate fully and make progress. Our inclusive approach reflects our Catholic ethos, affirming the dignity and worth of every child.

### **Pupil Evidence**

At St. Mary's, evidence of learning in Religious Education is recorded in a variety of meaningful and age-appropriate ways. In EYFS, a class floor book is used to capture collective learning through photographs, pupil voice, artwork, and written reflections. In Key Stages 1 and 2, individual RE exercise books are used to document pupils' learning.

Each new branch begins with a 'Big Question' displayed centrally on the page, around which pupils record their initial thoughts through writing, drawing, or scribed responses. Throughout the branch, evidence includes written work, creative tasks, scripture reflections, and responses to key theological concepts. At the end of each branch, pupils revisit the Big Question using purple pen to reflect on their learning. A dedicated 'Respond' session allows pupils to consolidate and articulate their understanding, supported by scaffolded discussion and individual 'Respond' sheets, which are added to their books.

### **Other Faiths**

At St Mary's, we are committed to fostering a spirit of respect, understanding, and dialogue with people of all faiths and worldviews. In line with the Religious Education Directory, we ensure that pupils have meaningful opportunities to learn about other religions and non-religious worldviews through the knowledge lenses of Dialogue and Encounter.

Pupils are introduced to the beliefs, practices, and traditions of other major world religions—such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism—through age-appropriate, accurate, and respectful teaching. This learning is not comparative but seeks to understand each tradition on its own terms, encouraging pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of religious life.

We also celebrate key festivals and events from other faiths throughout the school year, often inviting visitors from different religious communities, engaging in themed assemblies, and incorporating music, art, and storytelling. These experiences help pupils to develop empathy, cultural awareness, and a deeper understanding of what it means to live in a diverse society.

Through this approach, we aim to form pupils who are confident in their own faith and identity, while being open to and respectful of the beliefs of others, in the spirit of authentic dialogue and the Church's mission to promote peace and unity.

### **Assessment**

Assessment in Religious Education is an integral part of teaching and learning. It is used to support pupil progress, inform planning, and ensure that all learners are engaging meaningfully with the curriculum. In line with the Religious Education Directory, assessment is based on the "ways of knowing": Understand, Discern, and Respond. These provide a framework for evaluating pupils' knowledge, critical thinking, and personal reflection. We assess pupils' progress against the expected outcomes for each age phase, which are linked to the knowledge lenses—Hear, Believe, Celebrate, and Live. Assessment is both formative and summative, allowing teachers to monitor understanding throughout each unit and to make informed judgements at key points in the year.

Assessment methods include observation, discussion, written work, creative responses, and pupil self-reflection. Teachers use this evidence to provide feedback, adapt teaching, and celebrate achievement. In Early Years, assessment is guided by the Religious Education Learning Goals (RELG), which align with the EYFS framework and support transition into Key Stage 1.

Our approach to assessment values the whole child, recognising that growth in faith and understanding is a personal journey. It ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND, are supported to make progress and flourish in their religious education.

### **Formal Assessment**

Class teachers use assessment grids at the end of each term or topic to evaluate pupils' progress in Religious Education. These grids are completed and included in pupils' RE books, with clear judgements made against the expected outcomes. Teachers indicate whether each pupil is working towards, working at, or working at greater depth, and provide a personalised next step to guide future learning. This ensures that pupils understand what they need to focus on to continue developing their knowledge and understanding. This approach supports both academic progress and spiritual development, in line with the expectations of the Religious Education Directory.

Class teachers use the online assessment platform Arbor to record termly teacher assessments, ensuring that pupil progress is monitored consistently and accurately throughout the year. Religious Education is included in our termly pupil progress meetings, where class teachers and senior leaders discuss individual and group progress. These meetings help to identify pupils who may require additional support or challenge and inform future planning and intervention.

The RE Subject Leader oversees the progress of individuals, groups, and whole classes by reviewing the data submitted by teachers. At the end of each academic year, the Subject Leader conducts a detailed analysis of RE assessment data. This analysis is used to celebrate pupil achievement, identify trends, and highlight any groups or individuals who may benefit from targeted support in the following academic year. Findings from the analysis are shared with the Headteacher and contribute to strategic planning for curriculum development. The progress and attainment of pupils in Religious Education are also reported to the Governing Body, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement in the delivery of high-quality RE across the school.

### **Monitoring**

At St. Mary's, the RE Subject Leader plays a key role in ensuring the high quality and consistency of Religious Education across the school. Monitoring is carried out regularly through a range of strategies, including lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutinies, pupil voice interviews, and planning reviews. These activities help to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning, ensure curriculum coverage, and identify areas for development.

The Subject Leader also oversees assessment data, using the Arbor system to track pupil progress and attainment. This data is analysed termly and discussed during pupil progress meetings to identify trends, celebrate strengths, and plan targeted support where needed. The Subject Leader works closely with staff to provide feedback, share best practice, and offer support through coaching, mentoring, and CPD opportunities.



Findings from monitoring activities are shared with the Headteacher and inform the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. The RE Subject Leader also reports regularly to the Governing Body, ensuring that Religious Education remains a central and high-priority area within the life of the school.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of any new developments. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.