

# Religious Education and Worldviews Policy



**St. Michael's**  
Church of England Primary Academy

Updated June 2025

To be reviewed June 2026



# St. Michael's

## Church of England Primary Academy

### **Our Theologically Rooted Vision:**

To embody the love of God by championing justice and inspiring service.

### **Our Values:**

Community

Aspiration

Learning

Love

Each of our values provides the basis for our school rules, which in turn are supported by key Bible verses:

- **Community** – Treat others as you want to be treated.  
*'Do not seek your own good, but the good of others.'* 1 Corinthians 10:24
- **Aspiration** – Try your best in everything that you do.  
*'Take delight in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.'* Psalms 37:4-5
- **Learning** – Be engaged in your learning.  
*'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more.'* Matthew 25:20
- **Love** – Forgive and forget.  
*Do not seek your own good, but the good of others.'* 1 Corinthians 10:24

### ***Vocati Resurgemus***

*(Rise to the **CALL**)*

### **Underpinned by two biblical narratives:**

1. The woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment  
- **Mark 5:21-34**
2. Jesus meets Zacchaeus the Tax Collector  
- **Luke 19:1-10**

## **Legal Framework: Links to OFSTED and SIAMS expectations**

The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook, November 2019 No. 190017, page 59 & 60, states:

Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the school's activities but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings, and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning willingness to reflect on their experiences.

The SIAMS Evaluation Schedule for Schools and Inspectors, September 2023, includes the following questions:

IQ6 Is the religious education curriculum effective (with reference to the expectations set out in the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education)?

- a) How do school and trust leaders ensure that the provision, profile, and priority of religious education in all key stages reflect its place on the curriculum of a Church school?
- b) How do school and trust leaders ensure that the religious education curriculum is challenging, accurate, well-sequenced, well-balanced, relevant, and diverse?
- c) How do school and trust leaders ensure that religious education is well-resourced, and that continuing professional development for staff has an impact on the effectiveness of the curriculum?

## Introduction

### **A statement of the legal position of RE at St. Michael's CE Primary Academy**

The 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'. St Michael's CE Primary School is a Church of England Academy, therefore the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. The school is guided by the Church of England Statement of Entitlement as a basis for the composition of the religious education curriculum offer and also influenced by material that is recommended or provided by NATRE (National Association for Teaching of Religious Education) the subject association. St. Michael's CE Primary Academy boasts a curriculum that is entirely bespoke and created in-house to suit the diverse worldviews, religions and cultural backgrounds that exist in the community of Handsworth.

### **The Intent of the RE Curriculum:**

As a school, we strive for academic excellence by way of an aspirational curriculum which compels every child to fulfil their individual potential within all areas of school life. We are driven by our school vision, which is "To embody the love of God by championing justice and inspiring service." The contribution of Religious Education to ensuring children and staff are conduits of Justice is vital. The RE curriculum provides in depth studies of religion and belief as well as in-depth foci on the adherents of these religions.

True to our curriculum driver of 'faith', Religious Education is regarded as a rigorous academic subject at St. Michael's. It is held in the same regard as one of our core subjects. A breakdown of our curriculum drivers and how they apply to RE is detailed below.

**Cultural Heritage** – significant religious figures, narratives and events, where possible have been selected to reflect the heritage of the St. Michael's pupils. Our 'dharmic' religions reflect the culture, beliefs and religious systems of South Asia and its people. Spiritual worldviews such as Rastafari reflect a belief system of the Caribbean, whilst Christianity is reflective of its global character. It is complemented by curriculum content that celebrates the rich religious diversity of both Handsworth and British society at large.

**Aspirations** – Our knowledge-led curriculum sets out substantive bodies of knowledge that are taught in-depth over a 9-week period. With fewer religions studied in each year group, but with greater depth – each religion is valued highly in its own right (rather than in a thematic approach), and we can focus teaching on the aim of deepening pupil understanding and avoid surface-level understanding.

For example, while a lesson about a Christian place of worship that requires pupils to simply make a replica model of a church may have its merits, we aim to avoid this 'cardboard curriculum' and focus on the disciplinary lenses of religious education.

**Faith** – The entirety of our curriculum provides children with knowledge of faith and provides them the opportunity to share their own personal knowledge and worldview.

**We aim:**

- to enable children to encounter Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage;
- to enable children to learn about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, facilitating children's expression of responses and insights;
- to contribute to the development of children's own spiritual / philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and beliefs.

**At the end of their primary education at school, children should be able to:**

- know about and understand Christianity as a living global world religion.
- understand core theological concepts.
- make sense of biblical texts and understand their impact in the lives of Christians.
- make sense of other religious texts and understand their impact in the lives of believers.
- critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and beliefs of themselves, the world and human experience.
- respect the faith of others.
- notice areas of similarities between faiths.
- explain the value of concepts studied to people of particular religions and describe in increasing detail some of the issues that this raises.
- explain their own response to the concepts studied and explain how this relates to their own life and the lives of other people.

**The Implementation of the RE Curriculum:**

**EYFS to Year 1** – Teacher Handbooks – Children in Reception and Year 1 develop their understanding of the world through RE and begin to explore the disciplinary lenses and key concepts through a strong emphasis on religious stories and narratives.

**Years 2 to 6** – Pupil Workbooks – We believe that knowledge underpins and enables the application of skills. The knowledge taught across the RE and Worldviews curriculum is defined at the outset and made explicit to all teachers. Regular retrieval activities and carefully planned tasks ensure learning is broken down into small chunks in order to avoid cognitive overload.

**Curriculum progression - three types of knowledge catered for in our RE curriculum**

These broad types of knowledge are the 'pillars of progression' in RE.

1. **Substantive knowledge:** knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions
2. **Disciplinary/ 'ways of knowing':** pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion.
3. **Personal knowledge and Worldviews:** pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study.

## Substantive Knowledge

*“Students are entitled to learn wonderful substantive knowledge because it is their inheritance.”*

(Ruth Ashbee, 2020)

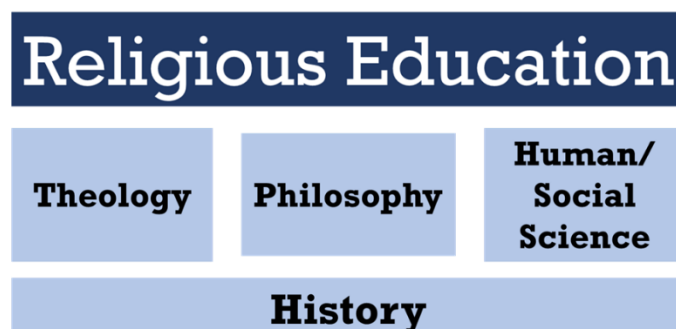
At St. Michael’s CE Primary Academy, our substantive umbrella for RE is categorised into three sub-groups consisting of:

1. **Established Facts (factual knowledge):** e.g. A Hindu place of worship is a Mandir, Easter celebrates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, etc.
2. **Religious Concepts (conceptual knowledge):** e.g. Incarnation, Repatriation, Covenant, Sacrifice, etc.
3. **Key Religious Themes (‘big ideas’):** e.g. rituals and practices, ethics, doctrine, metaphysics, stories and narratives, etc. These key themes are also be used to underpin the RE curriculum and it serves as a structure for the substantive knowledge to be delivered.

### Disciplinary Knowledge: multi-disciplinary in nature

There is a general consensus that religious education is governed by a careful balance of the following three disciplines (theology, philosophy and human/ social sciences). However, at St. Michael’s CE Primary Academy, our disciplinary approach to RE goes a step further and includes History as our fourth discipline.

Fig.1



The positioning of the ‘history’ discipline in fig. 1 is not indicative of its primacy as no discipline takes precedence over the other. In fact, there is a mutual dependence between the four disciplines, which gives birth to rich enquiry and examination of how the knowledge came to be. This symbiotic relationship is necessary to ensure a balanced approach to how we engage with the disciplines that make up religious education.

### For example:

#### 1. Year 6

(Islam: Harmony – ‘What can we learn about communities from the location of places of worship?’)

In this lesson, children study the concentration of Muslim places of worship (masjids and prayer rooms) on a map across the different localities in the city of Birmingham. Here, there is an interplay between two disciplines in particular - human/ social science and theology. Children gain an understanding of the lived and diverse reality of individuals, communities and the overall societal impact as well as considering the way believers see the world and, as a result, how they live their lives.

## 2. Year 2

(Christianity: Incarnation – ‘Where do Christian traditions stem from?’)

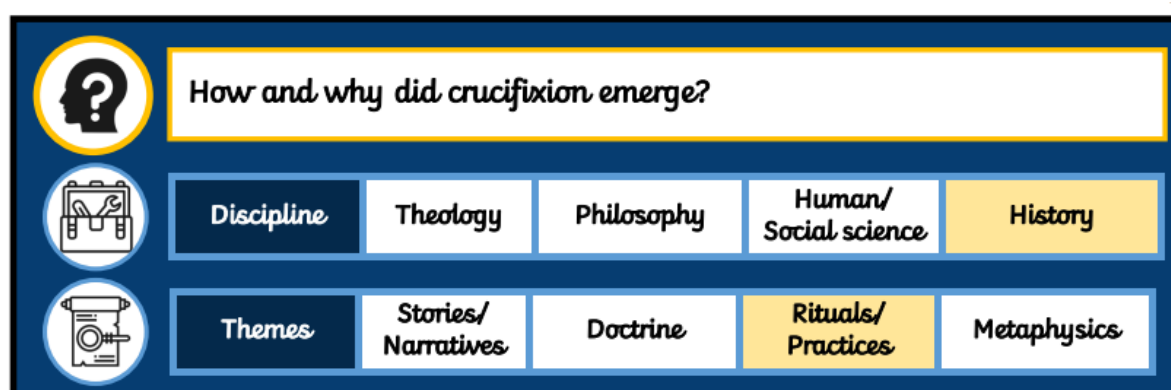
In this lesson, there is mutualism between history and human/ social science. Children gain an understanding of how different Christian communities celebrate Christmas and the advent season around the world today and where those beliefs have emerged from. For instance, they study the practices of some European societies that were originally Pagan, such as the decorating of Yule tress as well as looking at the practices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

### Framing the learning content

Framing the learning content with specific lenses can alter the way we enquire of the knowledge, the questions we ask and the answers that we inevitably will arrive at. In the National Entitlement for RE, point 9 describes the various academic disciplines that could be used to frame the specific learning content.

*“This can be imagined as a lens to look through at the learning content. It is bigger than the learning content and provides a backdrop or framing against which the learning content makes wider sense. The lens might be historical, theological or ethnographic, it might be philosophical, sociological or anthropological, and so on. You might be looking at a specific point of, for example, Islamic history, but will be thinking more widely as a historian and asking the sorts of questions a historian might ask.”<sup>1</sup>*

Fig. 2: Enquiry question and disciplinary focus alongside key religious theme studied in this enquiry for Year 4 Christianity: Salvation



<sup>1</sup> Commission on RE. (2018) Religion and Worldviews: the way forward. A national plan for RE (Final report)

Fig. 3: Opening Pages of Year 4 Christianity unit

How and why did crucifixion emerge?

Discipline

Theology

Philosophy

Human/  
Social science

History

Themes

Stories/  
Narratives

Doctrine

Rituals/  
Practices

Metaphysics

A-Z

Define key vocabulary

Synonyms: execute

Vocabulary

Definition: punishment

History—Crucifixion

Use historical sources to understand events.

Crucifixion was not merely a thought up form of torture, but was a Roman institution of capital punishment.

Roman Punishment

The Romans designed their punishments to discourage potential criminals. How you were punished depended on who you were and your position in Roman society.

Scourging and fines were the most common punishments. Wooden shoes were sometimes placed on the feet of prisoners, making escape difficult. An enslaved person could be forced to carry a piece of wood around their neck that stated their crime.

Name 2 groups that had crucifixion reserved for them.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |

Name one of the most common forms of punishment.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |

Scourging

A scourge was a whip of leather thongs with small sharp pieces, such as broken glass, bronze and bone attached to the end of each thong, which would sometimes end with a hook. The culprit would then be bound to a low pillar and beaten severely with the scourge. The result of scourging often led to death. Scourging or flagellation as it is sometimes referred would precede crucifixion according to Roman law. Jesus himself was scourged according to the Christian scriptures, "Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged." (John 19:1)

A-Z

Which 2 words are synonymous with 'scourge'?

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |

The Flagellation of Jesus

Using Subordinating Conjunctions:

Complete the sentences

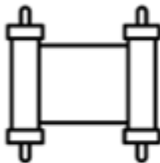


Before Jesus was crucified,...


Although Jesus was flogged,...

If anyone is to be crucified,...



## Disciplines that make up the RE Curriculum:

| Discipline  |                                      | Definition  |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
|    | <b>Theology</b>                      | <p>This is about <b>believing</b>.</p> <p>This considers the sources of beliefs, such as sacred texts, tradition, reason and experience; the reliability and authority of sources may also be debated.</p> <p>It also considers how key beliefs, concepts and ideas have changed through history, or have emerged at different points in response to societal events. It makes connections between different beliefs, concepts and ideas both within and between religions and belief systems/worldviews. It considers how theology impacts on the way believers see the world and, as a result, how they live their lives.</p> |
|    | <b>Philosophy</b>                    | <p>This is about <b>thinking</b>.</p> <p>It is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously the nature of reality, knowledge and existence.</p> <p>Philosophy is less about coming up with answers to difficult questions and more about the process of how we try to answer them. It uses dialogue, discussion and debate to refine the way in which we think about the world and our place in it.</p>  |
|  | <b>Human/<br/>Social<br/>Science</b> | <p>This is about <b>living</b>.</p> <p>It explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs. It engages with the impact of religion and belief on individuals, communities and societies. It is the difference between studying 'Christianity' and 'Christians' or 'Islam' and 'Muslims'.</p>  |

| Discipline  |                | Definition  |
|---|----------------|---|
|  | <b>History</b> | <p>This is about <b>framing the context</b>. It looks at the different factors that were present at the time, including political and social dilemmas. It engages with sources of evidence and attempts to reconstruct what happened in the past.</p> |

## Personal Knowledge

When pupils study RE content, they do so 'from a position'. This position is their 'viewpoint' or perspective on the world, which is influenced by, for example, their values, prior experiences and own sense of identity. Through the curriculum at primary and secondary level, pupils build 'personal knowledge', which includes an awareness of the assumptions that they bring to discussions concerning religious and non-religious traditions.


At St. Michael's CE Primary Academy, children are continually given opportunity to express their worldview. Whilst the personal lens of the children that we teach is not necessarily something that we can or even should attempt to assess, it is something that we can evaluate and explore as well as provide ample opportunity for children to shape, refine and express.

## Concepts

At St. Michael's CE Primary Academy, Religious Education is taught conceptually and key concepts are revisited repeatedly over time, ensuring that children learn more and remember more as a result. For example, Hinduism is taught through the concept of 'dharma' and Christianity through the concepts of 'incarnation' and 'salvation'.

Example: key concepts such as sacrifice are taught and exemplified in our RE curriculum repeatedly. The following is not an exhaustive list:

*Fig. 4: Concept of sacrifice examples and its occurrence*

| Concept   | Potential Examples   |
|---|--|
| <b>Sacrifice</b><br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Exodus and the initiation of the Passover Festival.</li><li>- Siddhartha Gautama's Asceticism and forsaking of privileges.</li><li>- Pleasing a deity (atonement)</li><li>- Formation of the Khalsa</li><li>- Jewish altar sacrifice</li><li>- The crucifixion of Jesus Christ</li><li>- Types of offering</li><li>- Vedic Period rituals</li><li>- Relationship with the terms: sacred and holy</li></ul> |

| Examples of where this concept could occur  |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| EYFS  | KS1   | LKS2  | UKS2   |
| First encountered...  | Then...   | After...  | Finally...   |
| Pupils in Reception learn of the different rituals from varying religions that illustrate the idea of offerings and receiving blessings in return for sacrifices. | <p>In Christianity, Year 1 pupils learn of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Year 2 pupils study the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the sacrifices that he made.</p> | <p>Year 3 pupils study Early Hindu offerings during the Vedic Period to gods such as Agni.</p> <p>Year 4 pupils study the 'near sacrifice' of Isaac in Judaism and are exposed to the provision of a male ram in the thicket, which is ultimately sacrificed in place of Isaac.</p> | <p>In Sikhism, Year 5 pupils study the formation of 'The Sikh Khalsa' and how its formation was built on the idea of sacrifice.</p> <p>Year 6 pupils study the life of Siddhartha and learn of the privileges that he forsook in pursuit of nirvana.</p> |

### Impact:

Outcomes in RE books, evidence a broad and balanced RE curriculum and demonstrate the children's acquisition of identified key knowledge. Children review the agreed successes at the end of every session and are actively encouraged to identify their own target areas, with support from their teachers. Children are also asked what they have learned comparative to their starting points at the end of every topic. End of unit essays showcase the culmination of the learning journey of each unit.

### The Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by children or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education.



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Community - Aspiration - Learning - Love

*vocati resurgemus*