



Religious Education Curriculum Statement

At Wareham St Mary CE Primary School, Religious Education plays a central role in our vision of enabling all children to flourish as unique individuals made in the image of God. Religious Education (RE) contributes significantly to pupils' personal development by encouraging them to explore challenging questions about meaning and purpose, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, morality and what it means to be human.

At Wareham St Mary we follow the Dorset Locally Agreed syllabus for RE. It is taught weekly throughout the school and provides pupils with opportunities to develop both knowledge and critical thinking skills through enquiry, reflection and discussion. As a Church of England school, Christianity is at the heart of our curriculum. Using the *Understanding Christianity* resources, pupils develop a deep understanding of Christian beliefs, teachings and practices whilst also exploring the diversity that exists within Christianity today.

Through Religious Education, pupils learn both *about* and *from* religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts. Alongside Christianity, pupils study Judaism, Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism), Islam, Sikhism and Humanism, enabling them to develop an understanding of the rich diversity of beliefs, practices and traditions that shape our world. We use the Emmanuel Project resources to support this.

Our curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to discover, explore and consider a range of responses to thought-provoking questions. They develop an understanding of how beliefs and values influence individuals, communities and society, while learning to appreciate and respect different viewpoints and lived experiences.

RE at Wareham St Mary encourages pupils to engage critically with different sources of wisdom and authority, including religious texts, traditions, practices and the experiences of believers. As they encounter a variety of faiths and worldviews, pupils are supported to reflect on their own ideas and beliefs, deepen their understanding of others and articulate their thoughts with increasing confidence and maturity.

We aim for pupils to:

- Develop a secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths and worldviews.
- Explore questions of meaning, purpose, truth and identity.
- Reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences.
- Recognise and respect diversity within communities, faiths and cultures.
- Develop critical thinking, enquiry, discussion and debate skills.

- Understand how beliefs influence the lives and actions of individuals and communities.
- Evaluate different perspectives thoughtfully and with empathy.
- Express their own views clearly, respectfully and with confidence.

Through meaningful learning experiences, reflection, discussion, visitors, educational visits and collective worship, pupils are encouraged to make connections between faith, belief and everyday life. RE supports our wider spiritual development model of *Self, Others, World and Beyond*, helping children to understand themselves, relate positively to others, appreciate the world around them and explore life's biggest questions through the lens of our school values of *Friendship, Respect, Courage and Perseverance*.

We strive to develop pupils who can engage in meaningful dialogue with those whose beliefs may differ from their own. Through this process, children learn the importance of empathy, respect and open-mindedness, preparing them to flourish within a diverse and rapidly changing world.

By the time they leave Wareham St Mary CE Primary School, our pupils will have developed the knowledge, understanding, respect and confidence needed to engage thoughtfully with different faiths, beliefs and cultures. They will be equipped to contribute positively to their communities and to navigate life in modern Britain with curiosity, compassion and understanding.

Implementation:

At Wareham St Mary CE Primary School, our Religious Education curriculum is delivered through two complementary resources: **Understanding Christianity** and **The Emmanuel Project**.

Understanding Christianity

To support pupils in developing a deeper understanding of Christianity and its significance in shaping both the world and their own experiences within it, we draw upon the *Understanding Christianity* resource. This approach explores eight core concepts that underpin Christian belief and practice, providing pupils with a coherent framework for understanding the Christian faith. The concepts are set within the context of the Christian 'Big Story' of the Bible, enabling children to see how key themes connect and develop throughout scripture. As pupils encounter these concepts through Religious Education and Collective Worship, they are encouraged to make links between Christian teachings, their own lives and the wider world, fostering deeper reflection and spiritual growth.

The Big Frieze



The frieze illustrates seven of the eight core concepts explored through the *Understanding Christianity* resource and provides a visual representation of the Christian 'Big Story' of the Bible. Created as an artistic interpretation of the Understanding Christianity approach, it helps pupils to see how key concepts are connected within the overarching biblical narrative. The frieze serves as a valuable reference point during Religious Education lessons and Collective Worship, enabling children to place their learning within the wider context of Christian belief and practice and supporting their understanding of how these concepts relate to both faith and everyday life.

The Emmanuel Project

Alongside *Understanding Christianity*, we use *The Emmanuel Project*, developed by the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The Emmanuel Project complements the teaching of Christianity by providing high-quality units on other world faiths and Humanism.

The Emmanuel Project is built around clear theological concepts and encourages pupils to explore sacred texts, narratives and beliefs in depth. It makes meaningful connections between religious teachings, the life of faith communities and the impact that beliefs can have on individuals and their daily lives. This approach supports pupils in developing both substantive knowledge and deeper understanding of religion and belief.

The Emmanuel Project and *Understanding Christianity* have been developed in close partnership and work together effectively to provide a coherent and progressive Religious Education curriculum. Both resources are underpinned by a carefully planned spiral curriculum, enabling pupils to revisit key concepts, deepen their understanding over time and build upon prior learning. Through this approach, children develop a wide range of disciplinary and theological skills, allowing them to engage thoughtfully with Christianity, other faiths and worldviews throughout their primary education.

Organisation:

The RE curriculum is taught in weekly one-hour sessions. RE lessons are supplemented by visitors and visits e.g. visits to the local church, visitor from other faith communities.

Effective teaching principles:

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils can succeed and make progress in RE. Our teaching is underpinned by a shared set of effective teaching principles which support children in developing secure knowledge, deep understanding and critical thinking skills.

In RE:

1. **Previous learning is regularly revisited** to strengthen retrieval and develop fluent recall of key concepts, vocabulary, beliefs and practices.
2. **New learning is carefully sequenced and presented in small steps** to avoid overloading working memory. Teachers model new knowledge and skills before guiding pupils through practice and supporting them towards independent application using the "I do, We do, You do" approach.
3. **Effective questioning** is used to deepen understanding, encourage reflection and support pupils in making connections between prior learning, religious concepts and their own experiences. Questions also help teachers check understanding and address misconceptions.
4. **Appropriate scaffolds and support are provided** to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum and engage with challenging theological and philosophical concepts. These scaffolds enable all learners to participate fully in discussion, enquiry and written responses.
5. **Teachers regularly check for understanding and provide timely feedback** throughout lessons. Feedback supports pupils in refining their thinking, developing their reasoning and making progress in their understanding of religions and worldviews.

These principles enable pupils to develop both substantive knowledge about religions and worldviews and disciplinary skills such as enquiry, interpretation, analysis, evaluation and reflection. Through high-quality teaching, pupils are supported to become curious, thoughtful and respectful learners who can engage confidently with big questions about faith, belief, meaning and purpose.