



Religious Education Teaching and Learning Principles

Date adopted	July 2021	Owner	Every child spiritual team
Last reviewed	July 2024	Review cycle	Three Years

Religious Education (RE) at St Martin's Schools is an inclusive, academic subject to which every pupil is legally entitled. It is an essential part of a broad and balanced curriculum, which equips pupils to manage life experiences with dignity and respect and to live well with each other. This approach is grounded in a commitment to

“a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person” (Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement). As such, high quality learning and teaching in RE is central to our schools' inclusive mission.

Religious Education is aspirational for all pupils. During their time at St Martin's, pupils develop a secure knowledge of the beliefs, traditions and practices of a range of religious and non-religious viewpoints (such as Humanism and Atheism) whilst learning to apply a wide range of higher-level skills, including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. At the same time, they are provided with a safe space in which to explore big questions of meaning and purpose and to reflect upon their own 'spirituality'; in other words, upon their own ways of seeing and engaging with the world. It is through this meaningful and informed dialogue that pupils develop their unique sense of 'self'. To this end, teaching within Religious Education is sensitive to different worldviews and is committed to the sensitive use language. Beliefs and concepts are introduced objectively and with appropriate professional distance, e.g. “Christians / Muslims believe that...” rather than “I / we believe that...”.

Parents and carers are entitled to expect that each child receives a discrete, weekly RE session which constitutes approximately 10% of the timetable. Learning activities should be broad and varied such that every child can make progress and flourish and learning is sequential, building on concepts encountered previously. The curriculum is determined by the Guildford Diocesan Board of Education), which specifies that Christianity must be the majority religion studied in each year group. As fully inclusive Church of England Schools, St Martin's Schools are committed to the celebration of diversity and teachers actively seek opportunities to learn about and from the pupils themselves.

In addition to the regular means of school assurance, the high quality of teaching and learning in RE is assured through regular SIAMS inspections.

Parents or carers have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE, on the grounds that they wish to provide their own. However, it should be understood that RE is not the same as 'Religious Instruction'. Rather, it is an open and broad subject which intends to develop hope, wisdom, a sense of community and dignity. Should a parent / carer still wish to exercise their right to withdraw, they are invited to discuss this with their child's class teacher in the first instance, before submitting a letter for the attention of the Senior Leadership Team.

The decision to withdraw a child will be logged by the child's class teacher, so that parental preferences are clear. This decision will be revisited in a discussion with the class teacher towards the start of each academic year, so that parents / carers understand what their child will miss and what they will be doing for the duration of the withdrawal. When communicating their preferences, parents / carers should be clear which of the following they wish their child to be withdrawn from:

1. The whole of RE
2. Particular areas of the RE curriculum
3. Particular events taking place within school that support teaching and learning within RE e.g. the nativity/Easter celebrations