



At St Mary's we champion every child to be the **best that they can be**. Our knowledge-led curriculum therefore endeavours to develop our children's **character**, **core skills**, **creativity** and sense of **community**.

Supported by our school's vision, ethos and position as a junior school, we believe that our specialist knowledge of the Key Stage 2 age range ensures **improving outcomes, opportunities and experiences for all our children**. To achieve this, we are aspirational for our pupils, instilling high expectations, the passion, perseverance and stamina to succeed.

Religious Education Policy

Ely St Mary's CofE Junior School

Written/reviewed by: Darlene Schulenburg

Date: 30th April 2022

Next review due by: **Summer 2025**

Our Vision

Our vision is to:

Provide opportunities for children, of all faiths and none, to be the best that they can be, in an environment where everyone is valued, respected, and challenged. In our school, individuals are supported in their personal journeys of learning, growth, and development within an ethos of nurture, encouragement, and love.

Let us think about each other and help each other to show love and do good deeds.
(Hebrews 10:24)

Our School Values

At Ely St Mary's, we welcome and respect each other and all our visitors.

- **Responsibility** – We will be responsible for learning and our behaviour.
- **Excellence** – We will strive for excellence.
- **Spirituality** – We will open our eyes in awe and wonder at God's creation.
- **Perseverance** – We can achieve anything with effort, resilience, and the right strategies.
- **Energy** – We will give our best at all times: our focus, positive attention and determination to succeed
- **Caring** – We will care for each other, our school and our world.
- **Tolerance** – We will respect our differences.

"Championing every child to be the best that they can be"

Responsibility **E**xcellence **S**pirituality **P**erseverance **E**nergy **C**aring **T**olerance

School Population

Ely St Mary's is a church academy (Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust: DEMAT). We serve a mixed socioeconomic community with families of Christian and other faiths. We work to overcome geographical challenges of our location to provide our children with knowledge and cultural capital of the world they need to succeed through lessons and experiences.

The school has a strong bond with our partner church, St Mary's Parish Church in Ely. Regular visits see children visiting the church for various festivals: Harvest, Christmas and Easter; musical celebrations, and to take part in Easter CSI investigations, and families within the school community joining together in Messy Church activities at school, led by members of the Church Team. We support mission projects such as filling Christmas shoeboxes and, closer to home, donating produce to the Ely Food Bank. St Mary's clergy are welcomed to lead in Collective Worship, and we welcome other Christian groups like 'Light and Life' to make regular visits to school and lead in Collective Worship. Visits are also made to Ely Cathedral for special musical events and concerts.

Aims of Religious Education

Religious Education has a significant profile in our school curriculum.

An aim of Religious Education at Ely St Mary's, built on a deeply Christian foundation, is to provide high-quality learning to enable our children to flourish as citizens in a global community; to prevent extremism and radicalisation. Our Christian ethos, sensitive to those of other faiths and none, enables our children and the community we serve to flourish, as they experience religious education for knowledge, wisdom and understanding, hope and dignity.

Another aim is to have a Religious Education Curriculum that enables children to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices, as well as those of other world religions also.

Furthermore, we have built a curriculum that enables and ensures learning is embedded and equips children with knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and world views. In addition to promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, children begin to explore the meaning of their existence and purpose in life. Children explore core concepts and questions enabling them to develop confident religious literacy.

Teaching & Planning

Our school's vision and ethos supports our Religious Education curriculum. As a junior school (key stage 2 only), we are in a unique position of specialism. We have a progressive, knowledge-based, explorative, and enquiring curriculum for our children, enabling them to understand and know Christianity and other major world religions and worldviews, to critically engage with the text. We give opportunities to reflect on their own religious, spiritual, and philosophical convictions in a safe, compassionate, and non-judgmental space, nurturing an enquiring mind, and helping to inspire growth mindset.

At Ely St Mary's we believe that high quality religious education supports children's religious literacy. Being religiously literate means that children will have the ability to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religions, their beliefs, and world views. Children will begin to make sense of religions and beliefs around them and begin to understand the complex world in which they live. We strive to teach children that a religious education is primarily about enabling them to become free thinking, critical participants of public discourse, who can make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion and belief which shape the global landscape.

Teaching and Practice

Follows an Enquiry Cycle model within each unit (Engage / Enquire / Explore / Evaluate / Express). All the units expand the EXPLORE section into three areas (scriptural text or narrative / community practice / daily living) to ensure a balanced approach to religious material.

Focuses on key beliefs / concepts of six different faiths and a non-religious worldview as the driver to get to the heart of faith and link together stories, practices, festivals, and ways of life.

Engaging starters introduce children to the key beliefs at the start of the unit. A set of symbols is used in KS2 to represent the key beliefs and acts as a practical learning aid.

Utilises a key question, often including the key concept, as the title of the unit and more questions throughout to help structure the learning and activities. Plans are easy to follow with an introduction to key beliefs, and notes to help teachers learn alongside the children.

Offers a wide variety of activities, with plenty of detail, and a good resource list. Teachers are encouraged to think of each lesson as a whole and select the right activities, resources, and timing for their own class.

All children have a Religious Education workbook, where there is evidence of some extended pieces of writing (narratives, letters, poetry, biographies, diaries), story-maps, illustrations with captions; moreover, a wide range of methodologies are used, some being group/ class discussions, reflections, drama, and role play and presentations. We believe that learning sits with the child, and class displays, workbooks, and children explaining their new knowledge, as well as making connections and explaining the impact the learning has on them, collectively provide an important insight into their progress and understanding.

Resources

We use 'the Emmanuel Project' (written by faith communities, a member of SACRE, and a local authority advisory teacher) that shows continuity and progression in both Christian content and other world religions.

The scheme of work offers a wide variety of activities and a good resource list. These ensure secure teacher subject knowledge and therefore high quality and effective RE lesson delivery.

There is a resource box for all religions taught in school which is kept centrally. There is a class set of bibles in lower key stage 2 and upper key stage 2; other sacred texts are also available.

Right of Withdrawal

Religious Education, as a subject, does not make assumptions about the personal commitments of children. As a subject, it is to inform, not influence. Religious Education can help children to explore beliefs and values, and promote the values of respect, tolerance and empathy, gain knowledge, understanding and skills to enable reflection on their own.

The aim of Religious Education at Ely St Mary's, across Key Stage 2, is to enable our children to flourish as citizens in a global community, to have the ability to hold an informed conversation about religion and belief, and at the same time, to equip pupils with knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and world views.

It is the right of parents to withdraw their children from Religious Education lessons. Requests to withdraw children from particular lessons can be discussed on an individual basis.

Assessment

Our flexible curriculum adapts to many forms of assessment (also see our Feedback Policy).

After each unit of work taught, learning is assessed in a supportive environment, where children of all abilities can demonstrate their increased knowledge and the impact the learning has made via a range of methods including in their writing, discussion or even creatively through art work and presentations.

Values of equality and respect are taught in Religious Education and PSHE, where we ensure that we create a supportive environment to reflect diverse identities. We are mindful of creating an inclusive school, using our 'positional privileges' to give equal opportunities to reduce the educational gaps of culturally disadvantaged children.

Reviewing and Monitoring

Religious Lead with support of SLT will ensure there is an in-date policy that is: reflective of the school's vision and ethos; there is a progressive curriculum of Christianity and other world faiths/religions so that learning is embedded and explicitly helps our children to become global citizens.

The following are checked:

- Consistency of policy application
- Long Term Planning followed
- Year Group planning covers the five Es
- Lesson drop-ins and follow-up discussions
- Pupil-voice
- Identifying areas for development

Professional Development

Training Materials provided by DEMAT and shared with teaching staff.

Subject lead attends courses and training provided by DEMAT.

Staff development linked to Performance Management

School's website has information for viewing

Equality Smartlog to keep informed of changes in law, use of politically correct terminology, expectations, and skills

Links to other policies

Religious Education links to many subjects in the curriculum.

- SEND Policy
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- History Policy
- Guided Reading Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Most Able Policy
- Feedback Policy

RE Lead and School Leadership Team, May 2022

To be presented to the Local Governing Body: June 2022

This policy will be reviewed in June 2025