

St Denys Primary



Creativity, Choice, Challenge



Achievement for All

Religious Education Policy

September 2024

Review September 2026

Vision Statement

St Denys Primary is a welcoming and inclusive school that represents a diverse ethnic, cultural and religious community. We are committed to building a learning community in which learners, of all ages, are actively encouraged to share their beliefs and religious and cultural experiences so that we learn with, from and on behalf of one another to broaden our understanding of life in today's multi-cultural and multi-faith Britain.

At St Denys Primary School, we are committed to delivering an RE curriculum which enables our children to appreciate and embrace the benefits of belonging to such a diverse, global community. Planned learning is underpinned by a broad range of cross-curricular opportunities through which our children will explore Christianity, other principal religions and world views so that they understand how different religious viewpoints affect the fabric of one's personal and social life.

Religious Education at St Denys Primary School will also encourage children to explore the meaning and purpose in life from beginning to end. It will give space for individual reflection and spiritual development, identify the reality of evil, injustice and suffering and open up visions of how life for all the world's citizens may be transformed by truth, beauty and goodness.

We want our children to demonstrate a curiosity about people of faith and commitment who have changed individual lives, society and culture. Through RE, we hope that ultimately, they too will feel compelled to imagine and contribute to the creation of a better world for all.

We believe it is important for our children to acquire a better understanding of the role that religions play in today's pluralistic world. Even within such a diverse community as that which our school serves, we recognise that the need for our curriculum offer will continue to evolve as different cultures and identities interact with one another through travel, commerce, media or migration. Although we acknowledge that a deeper understanding of religion does not automatically lead to greater tolerance and respect for others, ignorance increases the likelihood of misunderstanding, stereotyping, and conflict.

What is the Purpose of Religious Education at St Denys Primary School?

- To provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- To awaken and develop an awareness of the spiritual aspect of life and how this is of equal importance to their physical and intellectual growth;
- To encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn.
- To enable pupils to build a sense of identity and belonging which helps them flourish within their local communities and supports them to view themselves as equal, valued and valid global citizens;
- To develop our children's understanding of how religious beliefs and practices affect people's lives;

- To foster in our children, genuine respect for the right of others to believe and hold differing points of view and be willing to challenge prejudice, now and in the future.
- To prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and others and to explore how they might positively contribute to their communities/wider society

The Legal Status of Religious Education

Section 352 of the Education Act 1996 identifies the distinctive place of Religious Education alongside the National Curriculum. Religious Education is of equal significance to the core and foundation subjects. It differs from these subjects only in that it is not subject to national prescription. It is a matter for the Agreed Syllabus Conferences to recommend locally prescribed procedures for the Local Authority (LA).

The Education Act 1996, School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Education Act 2002 require that:

- Religious Education should be taught to all children and young people other than those in nursery classes and except for those withdrawn at the wish of their parents. Teachers' rights are safeguarded, should they wish to withdraw from the teaching of religious education;
- Religious Education in all community, foundation and voluntary controlled schools should be taught in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus;
- An Agreed Syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions in Great Britain;
- An Agreed Syllabus must not be designed to convert pupils, or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils.

At St Denys Primary School, we follow *Living Difference III* – the Agreed Syllabus for schools in Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight – to teach Religious Education. This document is the statutory framework which defines the matters, skills and processes which need to be taught.

Living Difference III is an approach to enquiry in religious education. It takes as its starting point an exploration, with children, of what it means to exist in and with the world.

Equal Opportunities

In line with all our other school policies, all children - regardless of any Special Education Needs or Disabilities, level of ability, cultural background or belief - will be fully included. All children are entitled to access RE provision at our school or indeed, any school that promotes a balanced view of a multi-cultural society, promotes tolerance and British Values.

Our teachers will always be sensitive to, and aware of, the distinct needs of individual children with SEND and will use the material most appropriate to help them achieve.

Right to Withdraw

The right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of Religious Education (RE) lessons is set out in section 71(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, in paragraph 1.

At St Denys Primary School, RE respects the integrity of all participants, irrelevant of their faith background. All can participate without compromising their own faith or belief.

However, should parents/staff wish to withdraw from all, or part of RE lessons, they may do so after discussing their concerns with the Headteacher. A record of all children/staff who withdraw from collective worship is kept and updated by the school.

However, this right to withdraw does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, for example, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as History or Citizenship.

Staff at St Denys Primary School will work closely with parents to ensure that the school's RE curriculum is shared, together with the concepts that will be covered, in order to provide parents with the information needed for them to make well informed decisions.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE, we have a duty to supervise them, though not provide additional teaching or incur extra cost as a result.

School Context

We are a multi-faith school and as such, offer a rich and varied curriculum. RE is taught by starting from our children's own life experiences and relating these to similar or different experiences of other people in the local community and then the wider national and international community.

Religious representation at St Denys Primary School (February 2025) is currently:

Religion	Number of Children (409)	%
Christian Church of England	71	34%
Christian Roman Catholic	3	1%
Muslim	15	7%
Sikh	3	1%
Hindu	2	1%
Buddhist	3	1%
Other	3	1%
No religion	64	31%
Refused/Unknown	45	23%

Staff may have their own religious beliefs/faith and may show this through the wearing of religious or spiritual symbols. However, the teaching of RE must not be used to indoctrinate or challenge children's faiths/beliefs which may be different from their own.

Staff at St Denys Primary School will be sensitive about the language that they use, recognising that even within one religion, there will be different practices and views held. Therefore, when teaching, teachers will not share their own beliefs but instead use 'some', 'many' and 'most' when discussing followers of a religion.

Time for Religious Education:

At our school we expect that sufficient time should be prioritised for the teaching of RE.

NB: The following is a minimum recommendation:

- ✓ **Reception:** approximately 36 hours per year
- ✓ **Key Stage 1:** 36 hours per year
- ✓ **Key Stage 2:** 45 hours per year

Collective Worship is distinct from Religious Education part of the time taught day and cannot be considered as part of the recommended time for teaching the Agreed Syllabus. PSHE should be taught in a distinct way from RE.

The Teaching and Learning of Religious Education

Living Difference III is an approach to enquiry in religious education. It takes as its starting point an exploration, with children, of what it means to exist in and with the world.

The *Living Difference III* approach is a process of enquiry into concepts, where a concept is understood as a name for, or way of referring to, an idea that exists or has the possibility of existing in a particular kind of way under particular conditions.

Concepts are divided into three broad groups. Each group contains individual concepts of greater and lesser complexity. At different key stages children are progressively introduced to different groups of concepts, as follows:

A concepts that are common to all human experience

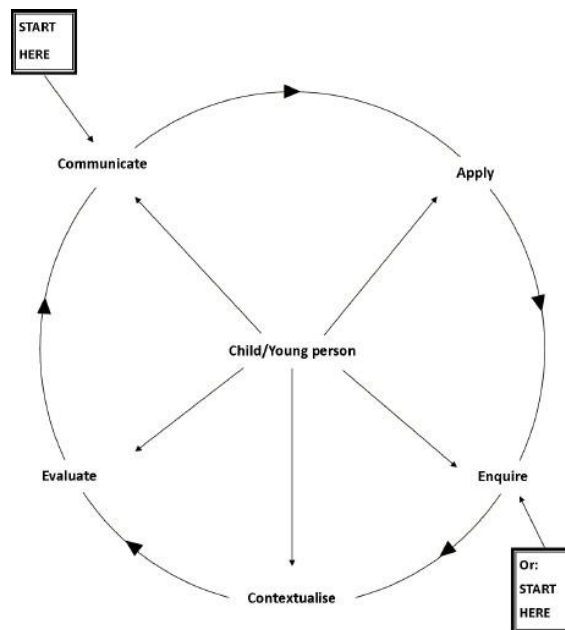
B concepts that are shared by many religions and are used in the study of religion

C concepts that are specific to particular religions

As children progress through St Denys Primary School, they will have opportunities to engage with all three groups of concepts.

The Process for a Cycle of Enquiry:

The *Living Difference III* approach to enquiry in Religious Education enables teachers to explore children's own experience of particular concepts, before enquiring into related religious as well as non-religious ways of living, represented in Great Britain and beyond.



These concepts are introduced, taught and developed through a range of enquiry skills, as follows:

Communicate their own responses

Apply their own beliefs and values to situations in their own lives.

Enquire about the meaning of the concept

Contextualise concepts within religious beliefs and practices

Evaluate the importance of the concept by exploring the viewpoints of believers, and non-believers

(See Living Difference documentation for further information)

Curriculum Planning

- RE is integral to our whole school curriculum. Planning is developed from the agreed L.A. Syllabus for R.E “Living Difference”;
- Throughout their time at St Denys Primary School, children will engage with concepts in relation to:
 - Foundation Stage – aspects of Christianity and Hinduism
 - Key Stage 1 – Christianity and Hinduism
 - Years 3 and 4 – Christianity and Buddhism
 - Year 5 and 6 – Christianity and Islam
- Concepts and key skills are taught progressively and build on previous and current experiences;
- Links are made with learning in other areas of the curriculum where possible. Sessions can be taught discreetly, directly linked to topics or ‘blocked’ for deep immersion in the concept;
- RE contributes significantly to learning in other areas of the curriculum. It contributes to the teaching of English by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. In addition, some of the texts selected for use in Literacy may have themes or content that are religious in nature;
- There are also strong links between RE, PSHCE (Personal, Social Health and Citizenship Education) and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education)

In RE, children are taught about the values and moral beliefs which underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote, through the teaching of our School “St Denys Way” values, respect and tolerance for others and the need to take personal responsibility.

Assessment:

In RE, a child shows that they are making progress by being able to show that they can interpret human experience in relation to religion and a religious way of looking at and existing in the world.

Evidence of children’s achievement in RE will be captured and recorded in a number of ways, for example through speaking and listening activities, drama, dialogue and discussion, as well as through a range of pictorial/written forms.

Attainment will be measured against the age related expectations for each year group / phase, found in Living Difference III. This is to ensure there is progression over time in the dispositions and skills of Religious Education. Over the course of a year, teachers will assess one outcome per child for each stage of the cycle.

Resources

At St Denys Primary School, we believe our children learn best from ‘real’ experiences in order to capture their imagination and foster curiosity. Wherever possible, teachers will use resources, visits and visitors to bring children’s learning to life.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At St Denys Primary School, all teachers are responsible for the teaching of the RE curriculum. The provision for RE is currently led by the RE Subject Leader, Mr Fielder

The Subject Leader will:

- Provide the strategic leadership and direction for this subject;
- Provide support and advice to colleagues planning and resourcing RE.
- Ensure staff are aware of current developments in Religious Education and make sure that this is shared with staff;
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning as part of the school’s agreed cycle of monitoring and evaluating;
- Review, evaluate and update the RE policy every two years.

The Governing Body have a duty to ensure that RE provision fulfils statutory requirements. The Subject Lead will report to Governors at least once a year.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.