



Beliefs and Values Policy

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
THE AIMS OF BELIEFS AND VALUES IN OUR CHURCH SCHOOL	2
THE OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS AT THE END OF THEIR EDUCATION WITH US	2
OUR FOUR KEY ATTITUDES	2
THE CONTRIBUTION BELIEFS AND VALUES MAKES TO OTHER CURRICULUM AIMS	3
APPROACHES TO TEACHING BELIEFS AND VALUES	4
PLANNING	4
ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING OF BELIEFS AND VALUES	5
THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAWAL	6
MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS	6



'In the light of Christ we will shine together'

Jesus said: I am the light of the world. John 8.12

Live as children of light – for the fruit of light is all that is good and true and right. Ephesians 5.8-9

Our ambition is to serve our community by providing an excellent education, which is inclusive and distinctive within the context of Christian belief and practice, upholding our values in the daily life of the Academy and in our relationships with others.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. St Mary's C of E Academy is a voluntary aided Church Academy and therefore provides RE in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school, the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and the agreed local syllabus, 'Where do I stand?' 2023.
- 1.2. Here at St Mary's Religious Education is taught through the curriculum subject of Beliefs and Values.
- 1.3. It is central to the purpose of our school because, as a church school, we see that the Christian faith informs all aspects of our life together. We also understand that Religious Education is part of the basic education entitlement for all pupils and is statutory for all schools.
- 1.4. According to the new agreed syllabus we want to develop 'religious literacy, where all members of our school have the ability to 'hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.'
- 1.5. A minimum time allowance for Beliefs and Values per year is as follows:
KS1- 36 hours
KS2 – 45 hours
Reception children should receive the equivalent of 30 minutes a week

2. THE AIMS OF BELIEFS AND VALUES IN OUR CHURCH SCHOOL

- 2.1. To possess rich knowledge of the beliefs of different religions and worldviews, including how these may be differently interpreted or change over time.
- 2.2. To recognise that the 'lived reality' of different religions and worldwide views is complex and diverse, and that generalities and assumptions must be treated with care.



- 2.3. To contribute constructively to debate about religious questions and shared human concerns, using their understanding of religion and belief.
- 2.4. To reflect the underlying disciplines of RE: theology, human and social science and philosophy.
(As stated in the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE 2023)

3. THE OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS AT THE END OF THEIR EDUCATION WITH US

We aim for them to be able to:

- Respond to challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human.
- Develop an understanding of the diverse beliefs and teachings of Christianity and other principal religions and worldviews in Britain, and their influence on their lives and decisions of individuals, families and communities.
- Develop curiosity about the diversity and impact of worldviews, religions, beliefs, values and traditions, and develop the ability to learn from these
- Reflect on, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics, and to communicate their own ideas and responses clearly, while being sensitive to the worldviews of others
- Develop their own sense of identity and belonging, and clarify their own worldview, enabling them to flourish individually as responsible citizens in a plural society, and in a wider global community
- Prepare for adult life and employment, encouraging sensitivity to those whose beliefs differ, and seeking to combat prejudice and negative discrimination

(As stated in the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE 2023)

4. OUR FOUR KEY ATTITUDES

4.1. Self-awareness in Beliefs and Values, this includes pupils:

- Feeling confident about sharing their own beliefs and identity without fear of ridicule or embarrassment
- Developing a realistic, positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas
- Recognising their uniqueness and self-worth as human beings
- Becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people.



4.2. Respect for all in Beliefs and Values, this includes pupils:

- Seeing the need to listen and be sensitive to others' feelings
- Being willing to learn from others, even if their views differ
- Being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- Appreciating that some views are not inclusive and that this raises issues for individuals and society
- Being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias

4.3. Open-mindedness in Beliefs and Values, this includes pupils:

- Being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- Being able to engage respectfully in debate about religious, moral or spiritual questions
- Learning to disagree reasonably without belittling or abusing others
- Going beyond surface impressions
- Distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs

4.4. Appreciation and wonder in Beliefs and Values, this includes pupils:

- Appreciating and continuing to develop a sense of wonder at the world in which they live
- Recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- Developing their imagination and curiosity
- Developing a deep desire to ask, and respond to, questions of meaning and purpose

(As stated in the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE 2023)

5. THE CONTRIBUTION BELIEFS AND VALUES MAKES TO OTHER CURRICULUM AIMS

5.1. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Teaching RE as a blend of academic disciplines, in particular theology, human and social science, and philosophy, and that applied to learning in RE, will provide a more balanced picture of religions and worldviews, which in turn leads to better religious literacy and will achieve these aims. Exploring the concepts of religions and worldviews and their roles in the spiritual, moral



and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

5.2. Personal Development and Well-Being

Beliefs and Values play an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

5.3. Community Cohesion

Beliefs and Values make an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism, prejudice and discrimination.

6. APPROACHES TO TEACHING BELIEFS AND VALUES

Beliefs and Values have an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning through the locally agreed syllabus, and in accordance with the Emmanuel Project Scheme of Work.

- 6.1. In order to make Beliefs and Values a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness, mindfulness and reflection.
- 6.2. We also focus on exploring a blend of academic disciplines, in particular theology, human and social science, and philosophy to provide a more balanced picture of religions and worldviews, which in turn leads to better religious literacy.
- 6.3. We also use an enquiry framework with well-structured enquiries that build on particular opportunities under the headings: Engage, Enquire, Explore, Evaluate, Express and Extend.
- 6.4. Each enquiry is to be led by a precise question, helping teachers clarify expected outcomes and select sufficient, not excessive, content.
- 6.5. Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities, organised through EEFA (East of England Faiths Agency).

7. PLANNING

- 7.1. The locally agreed syllabus sets out a curriculum with three main disciplines in mind: theology, human and social science and philosophy. The three disciplines are present in each key stage but with the



emphasis shifting slightly, so that human and social science may be more obvious in the Early Years and Key Stage 1, theology in Key Stage 2 in preparation for philosophy in Key Stage 3.

1. Theology in Beliefs and Values involves enquiry into:

- Key beliefs/concepts of a religion or worldview, both distinctive and shared
- Sources of authority for religious beliefs e.g. sacred texts, religious leaders, divine revelation
- Particular beliefs about God, humanity, life, and the nature of an after-life
- Differences in interpretation of key beliefs and changes in religious belief across time/culture

2. Human and Social Science in Beliefs and Values involves exploration of:

- Different customs, celebrations and rituals based on religious and secular beliefs
- The influence of sacred texts and religious leaders on communities
- Diverse interpretations of religious practices in different societies locally and globally, and at different times
- Moral, ethical and practical lifestyle choices based on secular or religious worldviews

3. Philosophy in Beliefs and Values involves engagement with:

- Ultimate questions of truth, morality, purpose and meaning in life
- Questions arising from religious and secular standpoints, texts or customs
- Conflicting answers offered by religious and non-religious groups and individuals
- Changes in questions/answers over time and across societies

7.2. In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed Suffolk syllabus and the Emmanuel Project Scheme of Work, we have agreed that the religions to be covered are:

- Foundation Stage: Christianity and encounters with other religions
- At Key Stage 1, children will learn about Christianity, as well as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam.
- At Key Stage 2, children will learn about Christianity, as well as Islam, Hinduism, Humanism, Sikhism and Buddhism.

7.3. In accordance with the locally agreed Suffolk syllabus we will publish Beliefs and Values details by year group on our website.

8. ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING OF BELIEFS AND VALUES

8.1. In line with our policy on assessment, each teacher is expected to take responsibility for the regular assessment of Beliefs and Values; this is done through inputting data on Insight on an ongoing basis, and ensuring it is up to date at the end of every unit, in line with other core subjects.



- 8.2. Teachers must provide an annual report to parents or carers giving brief particulars of progress and achievement in Beliefs and Values.
- 8.3. Pupils' progress and attainment must be assessed in relation to:
- The aim of Beliefs and Values-are pupils becoming more religiously literate i.e. increasingly able to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and worldviews?
 - The Beliefs and Values Curriculum- Are they making progress in all three disciplines of Beliefs and Values i.e. Human and Social Sciences (What people do as a result of their beliefs), Theology (What people believe and why) and Philosophy (How people address 'big' questions).
- 8.4. Evidence for assessment comes from a wide range of sources, including verbal responses, written responses and reflections in Beliefs and Values floor books for Early Years and Year 1. In Year 2 and Key Stage 2, children will evidence their own learning in Beliefs and Values exercise books.
- 8.5. **Non-negotiable of Beliefs and Values Floor Books and Exercise Books**
- Every new unit must have a title page with the big question being studied through the unit- this can be a copy of the title page from the Emmanuel planning units.
 - There must be evidence from every lesson in class floor books and children's exercise books including key questions linked to the objectives from the Emmanuel planning. These must be built up to celebrate progress by the class (EYs and Year 1) and by individuals (Year2/KS2). Floor books and exercise books must give all children the opportunity to have their learning and reflections celebrated with examples of work and photographs to post-it notes/speech bubbles with evidence of deeper thinking.
 - The floor books must evidence that pupils of all abilities are planned to show progress from their starting point.
 - The floor books and exercise books must form an integral part of learning reflection and be referred to with the children throughout all of the units.
 - Care must be taken in the presentation of the floor books and exercise books to reflect their importance and celebrate the learning that has taken place.
 - Floor books (EYFS & KS1) and exercise books (KS2) need to be in school every day and have easy access for reflection and monitoring purposes.
- 8.6. There must be evidence across a range of learning that shows planned outcomes as stated in section 3 of this policy.
- 8.7. **Visual representation of Beliefs and Values around school/ Prayer Spaces**
- There must be Beliefs and Values floor books displayed in each Early Years and Year 1 classrooms reflecting current learning. Year 2 and KS2 should have books readily available.
 - Each classroom should have a 'working wall' showing their current unit of learning for Beliefs and Values.



- Prayer Spaces are accessible around school in a variety of formats such as shared spaces in year groups/phase areas or in whole school spaces. Prayer boxes and reflection activities will be available to encourage and allow for meaningful prayer.
- Each classroom should have a Beliefs and Values space/table to make it evident that we are a Christian school.
- The Beliefs and Values space/table should include – coloured liturgical table cloth, a bible, the Lord's prayer, a cross, the class candle and our current value poster on display.
- The Beliefs and Values display in the main school corridor will be an overview of our learning in school.

8.8. Staff Development

This takes place through staff meetings, courses provided by the diocese and informal discussions in the course of general planning and evaluation meetings among staff. Care is taken to ensure the effectiveness of our planning as we recognise the need to maintain continuity and progression for our pupils. The Beliefs and Values coordinator oversees the Beliefs and Values provision throughout the school and feeds back any new information to the rest of the staff.

9. THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAWAL

- 9.1. Parents/carers may make a request, in writing, to the Principal, that their child be withdrawn from Beliefs and Values.
- 9.2. However, it should be noted that requests for withdrawal are often based on a misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of Beliefs and Values, therefore discussion of this is vital before a decision to withdraw can be made.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

- 10.1. The Principal will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. It will be reviewed every two years by the Community, Ethos and Mission Committee; or before at any time, if there is new relevant legislation or guidance.