



St John's Church of England Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Date Approved:	Spring 2022
Headteacher:	Mrs Samantha Da Costa
Chair of Governors:	Mr Robin Davis
Review Date:	Spring 2025

Love, Respect, Value

St John's Church of England Primary School is committed to high expectations for all and to embracing equality.

'The church school, far from being a ghetto of Christian faith resistant to the exploration of other faiths and worldviews, should be sufficiently confident in its faith position that it encourages exploration and open dialogue with other faiths, welcoming areas of common concern, and being realistic and sensitive about differences. It thereby contributes to inclusiveness and social cohesion.'

John Cox, More Than Caring and Sharing, Page 136

RE Policy Statement

Religious Education is unique in the curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject, but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'.

Aims

Religious Education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10).

It will help educate children to show dignity and respect; encouraging all to live well together. Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions, worldviews and for the religious freedom of each person. (Church of England Vision for Education 2016)

At St John's Church of England School, we aim for Religious Education to enable pupils to:-

- Encounter Christianity as the religion that shaped British culture and heritage and influences the lives of millions of people today
- Learn about the other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history and on the lives of their adherents
- Develop an understanding of religious faith as a search for an expression of truth
- 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
- Explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious) in the light of what they learn, developing their own spiritual/philosophical convictions and enriching their own beliefs
- Examine moral and ethical issues relating to religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; building resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives
- Develop their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- Develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, helping to

challenge prejudice

- Consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society
- Work closely with other faith leaders in promoting tolerance, inclusivity, harmony and concord

The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims; in particular to community cohesion

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'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being - RE plays 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.

Community cohesion - RE makes an important contribution to an academy'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 and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at each of the four levels outlined in DfE guidance

The school community – RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The local community – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

The UK community – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

The global community – RE involves the study of matters of global significance, recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues. RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive

academy ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

Teaching RE

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning through the Beds agreed syllabus, the Understanding Christianity resource, guidance from the Diocese and taking into account the need to offer breadth of content. A range of teaching strategies are used to ensure learning is challenging and relevant, including the use of art, music, thinking skills, artefacts and stories.

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.

Curriculum

Religious Education at St John's is carefully planned around key questions and the systematic study of religion and belief to ensure depth of understanding.

In accordance with the structure of the Beds agreed syllabus and Understanding Christianity resource, we have agreed that:

- EYFS: Introducing Christianity as the 'heritage religion' of the country and the one that most influences school and community life. Children find out about other worldwide religions during RE lessons and through festivals and celebrations as part of the broader EYFS curriculum
- KS1: pupils primarily study Christianity with Judaism and Islam in addition
- KS2: pupils primarily learn about Christianity with Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism in addition

To support the pupils' understanding of Christianity additional Retreat Days are held for each year group whereby the focus is on a specific aspect of Christian faith or the liturgical calendar:

Rec	Shrove Tuesday
Year 1	Mary
Year 2	Pentecost
Year 3	Jesse Tree

Year 4	The Rosary
Year 5	Stations of the Cross
Year 6	Stewardship

Assessment

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to assess all pupils in their class. We assess the children in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject and to plan future work. Assessment is based on the pupils' mastery of knowledge and understanding related to the key enquiry question for each topic. This is done in a variety of ways e.g. through written activities, role play, art work, discussion.

In addition, pupils are encouraged to use self-assessment to evaluate their own knowledge and understanding. A comment about their progress is made in the annual report to parents.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The RE Coordinator will monitor RE provision and standards through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum with staff.

The RE Coordinator is responsible for contributing to the school's self-evaluation process.

The local governing body monitors the role of religious education and its contribution to the Christian ethos of St John's.

Responsibilities for RE at St John's (Headteacher and Trustees)

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the Governing Board and the Headteacher should also make sure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- The subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- Those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- Teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- Teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion

- Clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- Teachers may withdraw from the teaching of RE unless they have been specifically employed to teach or lead and manage RE. An application to withdraw must be given in writing to the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. Pupils must not miss out on RE teaching because a teacher has withdrawn from teaching RE. The school must make alternative provision for the pupils to be taught RE
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the academy can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress
- Where there are insufficient teachers who are prepared to teach RE, the Headteacher ensures that pupils receive their entitlement to RE. In these circumstances, advice from the Diocese might be sought

The Right of Withdrawal From RE

At St John's, we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, 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. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education at St John's.

Role of the RE Coordinator

- To keep the RE Policy under regular review
- To work closely with the Vicar of St John's and the Headteacher in implementing the RE curriculum and planning any additional RE activities
- To have oversight of the RE curriculum and keep up to date with local and national changes
- To monitor, review and update resources
- To monitor pupil progress and achievement
- To maintain and build priorities set by St John's School
- To contribute to the school's self-evaluation
- To develop links with the Parish Church, Watford Deanery and Diocese of St Albans
- To coach, mentor and support teachers in developing their strengths in teaching RE, including planning, arranging and delivering CPD as appropriate
- To liaise with parents to ensure full participation in the programme

Entitlement and Inclusion

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum at an appropriate level. Teachers should include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child should be given the opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self-esteem.

Resources

As a growing school, we are developing a wide range of resources to reflect the curriculum. Resources include books, artefacts and toys to support learning.

Parental and Community Involvement

Parents are encouraged to involve themselves in RE. Parents are invited to assist with trips and visits. The community is encouraged to support the teaching of RE through visiting local religious buildings and parents are invited to give talks to the school about their religious experiences.

Professional Development

Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through the school's self-evaluation process and staff appraisal. At St John's the aspiration is for the school to achieve recognition for high quality RE and professional development supports this aim.

Monitoring & Review

The implementation and impact of the policy will be evaluated through our self-evaluation processes. The policy will be reviewed every three years.

Links to Other Policies

- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Collective Worship
- Curriculum Policy