



St John's Church of England Primary School

## **Religious Education Policy**

Date Approved:	Summer 2026
Headteacher:	Miss Anna Pyatt
Chair of Governors:	Ms Joanna Conn
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### **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).

The broad aims of religious education are set out within the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus and the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement (2019). The primary purpose of religious education is to promote religious literacy. By this we mean that pupils are able to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.

At St John's Church of England School, we aim for RE are to enable pupils to:

- Know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text;
  - To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews studied;
  - To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human experience and existence;
  - To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places; and
  - To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.
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- 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

In achieving these aims, religious education contributes in a significant way to the flourishing of all children, allowing them to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

As an academy/free school, RE is taught in accordance with our funding agreement.

## **Curriculum**

Religious education is an academic subject, delivered in an academic, objective and pluralistic manner.

The curriculum for religious education is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at the heart. A multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences.

**Theology:** This examines where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

**Philosophy:** This is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence.

**Human/Social Sciences:** This explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

A sequential curriculum map has been designed in order to allow pupils to become religiously literate through developing, year on year, their knowledge and skills. The three disciplines detailed above provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached.

In accordance with the structure of the Bedfordshire's 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

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement (2019), at least two thirds of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Christianity. This entitlement is met both through the weekly or blocked

teaching of religious education, and through additional 'RE' days which focus on an aspect of the Christian Faith.

The use of the resource *Understanding Christianity* particularly supports the development of the theological perspective.

To enhance the pupils' understanding of Christianity further, each class engages in a Godly Play session each half term as well as additional Retreat Days 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	The hope of Easter
Year 2	King Solomon
Year 3	Jesse Tree
Year 4	The Rosary
Year 5	Stations of the Cross
Year 6	Stewardship and Leadership

### **Teaching RE**

Religious education uses an enquiry-based approach to learning. This is based on the best practice framework in *Understanding Christianity* and the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus. This approach enables pupils to focus on an enquiry question which explores aspects of the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences. 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.

### **Assessment**

Pupils are assessed in terms of how they are making progress in relation to the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences disciplines within religious education. In broad terms, the following principles have been applied to each aspect in terms of what it means to become more religiously literate:

- Extending knowledge and understanding from the concrete and familiar to the abstract and complex;

- Moving from simple ideas and beliefs/concepts to making connections between them and placing these within a bigger picture or meta-narrative;
- Demonstrating increasing layers of interpretation of religion, religions, beliefs and worldviews through engagement with a broadening and increasingly complex range of information;
- Showing an increasing ability to critically question and form coherent, logical arguments, including increasing recognition of divergences of opinion about and the controversial nature of religion and belief; and
- Expressing a broadening understanding of diversity in terms of the nature of religion, religions and worldviews.

Pupils are assessed using age-related expectations. This is done in a variety of ways e.g. through written activities, role play, art work, discussion. Progress is tracked using our MIS and is reviewed by the Subject leader.

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.

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

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

The co-ordinator will monitor provision and standards within St John's through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum with staff.

The co-ordinator is responsible for contributing to the school's self-evaluation process. In addition, the governing body monitor the role of religious education in upholding the funding agreement of the academy and its contribution to the Christian vision of the school.

### **Responsibilities for RE at St John's**

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the local governing body and headteacher should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the aims of the RE curriculum;
- the subject is well-led and effectively managed;
- 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;
- where appropriate, pupils have opportunities to take courses leading to an accredited qualification in the subject;
- clear information is provided on the school website about the RE curriculum;

- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress;
- where there are insufficient teachers in a school/academy who are prepared to teach RE, the principal/headteacher ensures that pupils receive their entitlement to religious education. In these circumstances, headteachers might wish to seek advice from the Diocese.

### **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.

- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents, and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given;
- Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where religious education is integrated in the curriculum, we will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated;
- If pupils are withdrawn from religious education, the school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on the premises;
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for religious education of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This religious education could be provided at St John's, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable religious education is provided if this is reasonably convenient;
- If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of religious education that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from the school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external religious education;
- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the local authority is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at the school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

### **Role of the RE Leader**

- To ensure that the RE policy is implemented and to keep up to date with reviews;
- 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;
- To develop links with the Church and Diocese;
- To coach, mentor and support teachers in developing their strengths in teaching RE, including planning, arranging and delivering CPD as appropriate; and
- To liaise with parents to ensure all children receive their entitlement.

### **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.

### **Parental and Community Involvement**

Parents are encouraged to involve themselves in RE. Parents are invited into the school to look at their children's work, and a report on their child's standard and progress in religious education is given out annually. The community is encouraged to support the teaching of the subject through visits and visitors, e.g.: the children visit the church to learn about concepts such as salvation.

### **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.

### **The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims**

#### *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'. Examining and exploring religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in religious education, 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*

Religious education 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*

Religious education makes an important contribution promoting 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 religious education will promote community cohesion at each of these four levels.

#### **St John's community**

Religious education provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

#### **The community within which St John's is located**

Religious education 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 religious education is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

#### **The global community**

Religious education involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

Religious education 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.

#### **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.