ST JAMES' CE FIRST SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Religious Education Policy







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ST JAMES' CE FIRST SCHOOL AND NURSERY

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

"Make great choices. Be our best."

Underpinned by the story of the Wise and Foolish Builders

(Matthew 7: 24-27)

At the heart of our school we believe that everyone should be enabled to be the very best that they can be. We are committed to being a thriving village school and nursery; providing a solid foundation from which to build on, where all in our community are valued, respected and cared for. Through the creation of positive, life-long habits we send life-long learners into the wider world with the skills, confidence and drive that they need to flourish.

Our school values of ***Hope***, ***Peace***, ***Respect***, ***Friendship***, ***Trust*** and ***Kindness*** are captured through the story of the Wise and Foolish Builders and lived out by children, staff and parents across our community. The school's vision and values underpin this policy and have been used to drive and shape this policy.

Rationale

'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 for dignity and respect encouraging all to live life well together.'
Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions and worldviews and for the religious freedom of each person. ***RE Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office Feb 2019***

Pupils and their families can expect a high-quality religious education and World Views (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and worldviews. RE has a very high profile within the curriculum and makes a significant contribution to preparing our pupils for life in modern Britain and beyond.

Christianity is taught as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teachings of Jesus and the Church, alongside a range of other religions and worldviews. We encourage pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while creating a safe space for them to explore their own beliefs and questions of meaning.

We aim for pupils to be inspired by the subject and, that through their learning in RE, they will develop a wide range of skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection, to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on the world.

Legal Requirements

As an academy, we are independent of the local authority and not required to follow the national curriculum or the local RE syllabus. However, RE must be taught in accordance with our funding agreement and must reflect the requirement of the Education Reform Act 1988 which states 'that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principle religious traditions present in Great Britain.'
As a Trust we have agreed to teach religious education according to the Dorset locally agreed syllabus and under the guidance of The Diocese of Salisbury Board of Education.

Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. This is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS).

Aims of RE - Curriculum Intent

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school and Trust aims for all pupils:

- To explore core beliefs and use approaches that critically engages with biblical text, enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a diverse, global and living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To know about and have some understanding of different major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, and to appreciate the diversity, continuity and change within those religions and worldviews
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To develop their own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs, ways of living, thinking and values.

Curriculum balance

Reflecting our academy funding agreement, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that in Church schools Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group. Christianity studied within our school makes up at least 50% of curriculum time studied across an academic year. We dedicate curriculum time to meeting explicit RE objectives and aim to be close to meeting the standard of 10% of our weekly timetable.

It is distinctly recognised that RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship is not considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

Curriculum Implementation

At the heart of our Religious Education curriculum is our Christian vision: "Make great choices. Be your best." Through RE, pupils are equipped with the knowledge, understanding and reflective skills they need to flourish as thoughtful, compassionate and informed individuals in a diverse world.

RE lessons provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry question-led style of learning. Through this, 3 main strands offer a multidisciplinary approach to exploring each religion to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy.

- Theology- what do people believe?
- Sociology- how do they live this out?

Substantive knowledge is based on the foundational elements RE and world views. It refers to the established facts, concepts, beliefs, and practices of religious and non-religious traditions.

- Philosophy- what questions does this raise?

Disciplinary concepts will include skills in: emotional intelligence, empathy, personal reflection and critical thinking skills.

Teaching in RE aims to challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity, tolerance and respect. All questions, views, and opinions are valued and treated with sensitivity.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

Religious education is usually taught in a 'whole class' setting but with flexibility to allow for discussion, questioning and reflection in small groups and individually. Lessons offers tasks that are age and stage appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that as they progress through school they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. Visits to local churches and places of worship and visitors to school are encouraged as part of a varied approach to delivery. Other teaching approaches may include teacher presentations, role play, drama, art and story-telling as well as quizzes, discussions and debates. Teachers strive to ensure that RE learning is active and enjoyable as well as rigorous and challenging.

Curriculum Impact of RE - Assessment, Recording, Reporting

The impact of RE within the context of our school's vision and values is seen in the way pupils:

- demonstrate kindness, respect and peace towards others
- make thoughtful and responsible choices
- articulate their ideas with confidence and respect
- value diversity and challenge injustice
- reflect on their own beliefs and consider those of others
- Through Religious Education, our pupils are empowered to make great choices and be their best, living out our vision in their learning, relationships and contributions to the wider world

Assessment in religious education will:

- Be carried out through suitable opportunities identified in resources used in teaching, and in relation to the Dorset Agreed Syllabus
- Seek to identify pupils' development in the different areas of learning in the subject- theology, sociology and philosophy
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.
- Include pupil self-assessment.
- Enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective annual reporting to parents via reports and through verbal 'parents evening' feedback.
- We moderate our standards with other schools in our Trust and alongside support of Salisbury Diocese Board of Education to ensure our assessment processes are robust and reflect best practice

Through the assessment process , teachers are able to demonstrates clear progression within the curriculum. This allows pupils to develop their understanding within:

- concrete → to abstract concepts
- Knowledge of single religion → to multi-faith comparison
- Facts and knowledge led → to evaluation, analysis and justification

The key areas of impact include:

Pupils develop a deep and connected understanding of belief
Pupils think deeply and ask meaningful questions
Pupils understand how beliefs shape lives
Pupils grow in respect, dignity and empathy
Pupils experience spiritual development
Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain and beyond

Further information can be found on our RE impact statement- attached as appendix A.

Cross-curricular links

RE supports the development of general educational abilities as it addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects such as literacy, art, history and PSHE. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development through the development of empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs It allows supports pupils' understanding of British values in our modern, multicultural society.

Managing the right to withdraw

In accordance with the DfE Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes.

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum and our school will comply with any such request. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and ask that anyone wishing to withdraw their child arranges to discuss this with the headteacher and to take up the opportunity to discuss the contents of the RE curriculum in school before making this decision.

In the event that parents still wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons, our school will undertake responsibility for their supervision elsewhere in school during the allocated lesson time.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In our academy, Trustees have overall responsibility for Church School Flourishing and the successful achievement at SIAMs inspection. One Trustee is responsible for church school representation on the board and a detailed report is provided at each termly meeting.

Monitoring and evaluating the various aspects that make up the school's flourishing in its entirety is delegated to a range of individuals across each individual school.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the RE and World Views curriculum taught in school.

Local School Committee members, or a delegated individual/ small group, will review the RE curriculum across a year through planning scrutiny, lesson learning walks, book looks, staff and pupil conferencing.
Lines of enquiry may include:

i. How well RE helps pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith and helps pupils to consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage
ii. How well RE enables all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of major world religions and worldviews and their impact of this on society and culture
iii. How well RE give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions and what this looks like, 'lived out' in our school.

The RE subject leader will assist the headteacher and Local school committee members by:

- monitoring long term and medium-term plans to ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement to religious education and that RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- monitoring RE through work scrutiny and observation of teaching, carrying out pupil conferencing/pupil voice sessions; reviewing the learning environment/lesson visits.
- monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards against the assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE.
- produce and regularly review this subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- be responsible for drawing up an action plan for religious education. Generally, this will be an annual plan and should be informed by this policy.
- Ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- Keep up to date with information, initiatives and developments in religious education by seeking professional development opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and disseminate this.
- Liaise with the headteacher and Local Committee Members to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE.
- Liaise with the school's Diocesan adviser and/or the Diocesan adviser with responsibility for Religious Education.

Date of review: September 2026
Headteacher signed: J. Hudson
Chair of Governors signed: TBC
Date of next review: September 2029 (unless needed beforehand)

The school's current vision and values underpin this policy and have been used to drive and shape this policy	**This policy was reviewed on:**
	September 2026

APPENDIX A

RE impact statement

At the heart of our Religious Education curriculum is our Christian vision:

"Make great choices. Be your best."

The Impact of RE on Our Pupils

1. Pupils develop a deep and connected understanding of belief

Pupils leave our school with a secure and progressively deepening understanding of Christianity as a living faith, alongside a respectful and informed awareness of a range of worldviews, including Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Humanism. They can explain key theological concepts such as God, salvation, incarnation and resurrection, and understand how these ideas influence the lives of believers.

2. Pupils think deeply and ask meaningful questions

RE enables pupils to engage with big questions of meaning and purpose. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to ask "I wonder…" questions, which develop into more complex philosophical enquiry as they progress through the school. By Year 4, pupils are beginning to compare different viewpoints, connect ideas within beliefs and give reasons for their own responses with increasing confidence and maturity.

3. Pupils understand how beliefs shape lives

Through the study of lived religion, pupils recognise how beliefs influence actions, choices and ways of life. They can make connections between belief and practice, such as how compassion, stewardship, forgiveness and service are expressed across different faiths. This enables pupils to reflect on their own choices and understand the importance of living the best life they can lead.

4. Pupils grow in respect, dignity and empathy

RE actively promotes the dignity and worth of every individual. Pupils learn to appreciate diversity, challenge stereotypes and engage respectfully with different beliefs and perspectives. They develop empathy by considering how others live and what matters to them, enabling them to contribute positively to a peaceful and inclusive community.

5. Pupils experience spiritual development

RE provides regular opportunities for reflection, discussion and personal response. Pupils explore ideas of meaning, purpose, identity and belonging, and are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas as well as reflect on their own beliefs and values. This supports their spiritual development, helping them to grow in self-awareness and understanding of the wider world.

6. Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain and beyond

Through engaging with a wide range of religions and worldviews, pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to navigate an increasingly diverse society. They leave our school as respectful, open-minded individuals who are able to engage in thoughtful dialogue and make informed, ethical choices.

Through Religious Education, our pupils are empowered to **make great choices and be their best**, living out our vision in their learning, relationships and contributions to the wider world.