

St James' CE (Aided) Primary School



POLICY STATEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119 v105

Foundation

At St James' we aim to educate the whole person. We want each child to develop spiritually and flourish academically, informed by the deep tradition of Christian wisdom which offers a healthy, and long-term context for all their growing and learning together. This is enabled by an excellent education, a broad and balanced curriculum, with a rich variety of experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119 v105

The symbol of St James is the pilgrim's shell which represents the journey that our children make through this school. The Bible shines a light on our Christian values and on the teachings of Jesus to support and guide us as we follow this path together, laying firm foundations, growing and learning together.

We have adopted the following values to serve and supplement the vision, our core value being Christian love. They are intrinsically part of our RE learning:

Love
Trust, Forgiveness, Kindness,

Introduction

Our policy reflects our distinctive Christian vision and helps the children to lay strong foundations for the future. At St James Junior CE School, pupils and their families can expect a high-quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Through the Understanding Christianity resource, the use of an enquiry approach engages with significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Our scheme for RE in Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage has its foundation in Understanding Christianity but is bespoke for our school. It is based on treasure hunting journeys with lots of practical activities. In Key stage 2 we use a Bespoke scheme written for us which closely aligns with the Understanding Christianity from Rochester Diocese. Links with our Christian values and vision, as well as our links with St James church give support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied.

Aims

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims to enable pupils to:

- 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 world views, appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and world views studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- 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, (including the strong historical impact of Christianity on British culture).
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

Alongside these, we aim to lay strong character foundations which emphasise journeying together so all children are encouraged to listen to each other's ideas, beliefs and opinions with respect, kindness and openness.

Objectives

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, appropriate to age at the end of their education in our school, the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and as a minimum, pupils are able to:

- Explore and are then able to develop a theological informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.

- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for ideas about God and meaning of different beliefs that are appropriate with their own important values in the world in which they live.
- Have a meaningful understanding of, and dialogue with, those of other faiths and none.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

Teaching and learning

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing is comparable or above that of other core curriculum subjects.

Our high quality RE curriculum:

- Is intrinsic to our outworking of our distinctive Christian vision and allows all children to flourish. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Is delivered in an objective manner to engage and challenge all pupils through the explorations of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue for Christianity and also across a range of religions and world views.
- Enables pupils to develop religious literacy through looking at religious texts, considering the impact on believers and making links and connections with their own life, whatever their own beliefs.
'Religious literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.' (Key principles of a balanced curriculum in RE).
- Enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- Provides opportunities for the understanding of how beliefs, rituals and practices influence and form someone's identity across the religions and world views and then to reflect on their own identity. To know that everyone's contributions are valued.
- Encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all children flourish using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies, resources and support.
- Offers tasks that are age appropriate but also challenging and include differentiation. Tasks encourage deeper learning and use a wide range of higher-level skills such as enquiry, questioning, interpretation, evaluation and empathetic reflection to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion and world views as lived by believers. Supports other key cross-curricular skills such as reading, writing, observation, and discussion as well as cross curricular links to other subjects like art, music and drama.
- Supports wider learning skills and the school ethos in areas such as empathy, the ability to express thoughts and feelings, listening skills, behaviour, respect and so on. It also links strongly to our school values.
- Is visible through displays around the school and in the RE books. Every class has their own RE display.

Curriculum balance and time

As a Church of England Primary School, Religious Education is seen as a priority.

Therefore, the Curriculum balance for this is as follows:

Reception: 1 hour a week

Key Stage 1: 1 hour per week

Key Stage 2: 1 hour 15minutes per week
(This provision is separate to Collective Worship)

Teaching and Learning

RE offers a wide variety of teaching and learning experiences, understanding that pupils learn best in different ways. Pupils will experience opportunities to develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious and spiritual beliefs. They provide a safe space to explore their own thinking, expression and belonging along with opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue with others in a respectful and thoughtful way.

Our curriculum is an enquiry-based style of learning and is spiral so that the children revisit past concepts. The Christian units are based upon the 'Understanding Christianity' which is the Church of England's own scheme but have been written specifically for our school, with our pupils and their families in mind. Each unit explores one key question and is linked to one key concept. We also follow the Diocese units for other religions, including Jewish, Hindu, Islam, Humanitarianism and Sikh faiths.

Opportunities across RE include:

- Listening to the teacher and each other.
- Reading of texts and analysing them.
- Exploring texts for themselves.
- Research learning from the bible, the library and the internet.
- Discussion with the teacher and other pupils and listening.
- Making links to stories in Collective Worship.
- Making links with our values.
Using our learning powers.
- Asking RE style questions.
- Hot seating/ Freeze framing
- Pair and group work.
- Using a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music drama and dance and the work of various artists both historical and current.
- Visits and visitors.
- Learning and questioning on displays around the school.
- Artwork directly related to the learning.
- Outdoor learning
- Time for reflection (such as RAP questions).
- Two, special RE Days each year – linked to Christmas and Easter.

Differentiation and Special Educational Needs

Policy and practice in religious education reflects whole school policy and encompasses the full range and ability of all pupils. All pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs. A range of teaching and learning strategies to achieve differentiated learning are used including task, outcome, resource and support. Teachers plan tasks that are challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils whilst extending the most able. Children are sometimes given the opportunity to record their learning in different ways and given help with this as needed.

Breadth and balance

Christianity is our main focus and alongside this, children learn about major world religions and other world views. Teaching includes developing knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. RE also develops empathy, evaluation of attitudes, reflection of world beliefs other than their own and the development of respect for a wide diversity of faiths and non faiths. Opportunities are given for children to share their own beliefs, lifestyle and opinions throughout the year and openness is encouraged.

Foundation Stage lays a foundation of Christianity. From Year one onwards, as well as exploring and learning about Christianity, another religion is introduced and studied in detail each year. Links and comparisons are then made between the religions as pupils progress through the school and gain a deeper understanding.

Balance of learning is broken into three areas:

Text – learning about a religious text.

Impact – The impact of a text on those who follow that religion.

Connections – What can I learn from this? What links can I make to my own life? What insights can I apply to my own life?

Eg Sikhs teach us a lot about respect so the children reflect and learn about respect in relation to their own property and relationships.

Equal Opportunities

Teaching in Religious Education challenges 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. All questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Relevance

Teachers establish clear connections 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. This will be done through engaging pupils in an enquiry-based style of learning and by posing challenging questions to and by pupils. Children will make comparisons between their own beliefs and values and other religious traditions and practices. Children will explore the relevance of their RE learning to themselves, the school community, their own local community and the world that they live in. For example, some Christian charities are studied in RE and charity collections are made in the wider school context.

Cross-curricular links

Religious education supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMCS) development which also includes character development, attitudes to learning and associated learning skills (learning powers). It addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects, such as English, art, drama, dance, history, geography, computing, music, PSHE, (Personal, Social, Health Education), British values and citizenship. St James' encourages cross curricular links and these often occur naturally with our topic based learning.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's health and safety policy in these circumstances.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in religious education will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work such as the St James agreed syllabus.
- Be based upon the expectations of the Diocesan Syllabus Understanding Christianity and the St James' agreed syllabus.
- Follow the school marking policy so that marking in RE is the same as for other subjects. At the end of each piece of recorded learning the teacher will assess whether a child has answered the Learning step question for that lesson.
- Floor books will be used to collect and share learning, ideas and self reflections for each Learning step.
- Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- 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.
- Have one piece of writing which is done on yellow paper as an assessment. This is not about length but quality and the child's own reflections. It is not just about knowledge. It is usually at the end of the unit and based on the term's key question.
- Assess children in the middle and end of each year as below, just below, or expected. This is based on contributions and attitude in class as well as written work.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.

Role of the RE subject leader

The subject leader will:

- Ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. (Feb 2019)
- Regularly review the subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- Ensure all teachers are aware of 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, help to develop their confidence and expertise and offer training opportunities.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy, schemes of work, the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of RE, pupils' progress and standards
- Monitor and give feedback to staff on RE displays.
- Help SLT with the SIAMS evaluation.
- Liaise periodically with the HT and Governors.
- Seek opportunities for professional development for themselves and other staff.
- Regularly take part in the diocesan support group for the area and feedback to staff as needed.
- Maintain resources and order more as needed.
- Monitor assessment and RE books.
- Update the subject leader action plans regularly.

- Observe the teaching of RE in school, providing feedback, support and guidance for teachers.
- Ensure that the school protocol and safeguarding procedures are followed for any RE related visitors.
- Plan RE Christmas and Easter special days.

Resources.

Religious education in St James is given a good budget to buy:

- A range of new resources to be purchased each year including books, updated bibles and artefacts when needed as well as resources to support the teaching of other religions.
- Consumable resources for RE special days.
- Bibles for the end of the Year 6.
- Treasure for the treasure box each term in KS 1 and FS.
- Practical resources such as the wooden concept symbols are renewed when needed.

Resources are kept in a large cupboard and include:

- Resources for prayer tables and displays.
- Large number of age appropriate nativity sets
- Key Stage One resources in boxes labelled for each term. Each year group is responsible for checking the contents of these boxes.
- Understanding Christianity materials and resources.
- Resource boxes, artefacts and books for the other religions and world views.
- Resources for RE special days.
- Specific resources for telling the big story of the bible.
- RE books

Resources for specific religions in KS2 are usually kept by the year group that are studying that religion.

Some resources are available from the diocesan website.

Legal Requirements

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28).

Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', including pupils in reception classes. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child from RE lessons and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, parents need to be aware that our Christian ethos, vision and values are intrinsic to the whole school day, not just to RE lessons. 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 that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the headteacher before making this decision.

Date_____

Signed_____

Chair of the Governors

Date of review_February 2026 Signed_Kjones

