

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



St. James' Church of England Primary Academy

Approved By: Local Governing Body

Date: January 2026

Next Review Date: January 2028



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

All our policies are written with the objective of continuously improving our school in our aim of realising St. James' vision, which is to create a community that reaches their full potential:

"He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

Matthew 13: 31-32

We believe a small act of kindness and an act of faith can have a huge impact on another's life.

Our Governors, leaders and staff uphold the vision of

'We grow together, through God we are Giving, Loving and are Honest'

At St James' Church of England Primary Academy, we believe that Religious Education (RE) should be of the highest standard, always striving for excellence and be at the heart of our distinctive Christian character and Vision. We believe that RE provides an opportunity to celebrate and foster an awareness of differences, not just at school but within our local community and beyond.

The parable of the mustard seed encapsulates our vision at St James', inspiring us to believe that although we begin our journey as small as the mustard seed, we have the potential to grow both as people, learners and as a community. The teaching of RE is reflected within this vision. We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum.

The aim of RE is to contribute educationally to the development of pupils as an individual and members of society by fostering a reflective approach to life in the context of a growing understanding of the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and religious practices.

Aims

Religious Education at our school aims to:

- Provoke challenging questions, reflect theologically and explore the challenges of life in today's society.
- Develop children's knowledge of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development and be able to articulate their understanding of the Christian Faith.
- Enable children to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- Prompt children to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery, for example creation and the world around us and how best to be guardians of our amazing planet.
- Encourage empathy, generosity and compassion.

Statutory Duty of School

The legal Position of Religious Education (RE) must be provided for all registered pupils at the school in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Rochester Diocesan Board of Education recommends that all Church schools follow the Diocesan Schemes of Work, which are based on Understanding Christianity.

This takes account of the 1996 Education Act, which requires the syllabus to reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. Religious Education is inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools [SIAMS])

Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in the children's learning. It is a major contributor to the ethos of our school. However, we fully recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE on the grounds of conscience. We do encourage parents to contact the Headteacher if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the school.

Approach to Teaching

The teaching and learning approach in RE has three core elements, which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs.

These include:

- Making sense of beliefs
- Understanding the impact
- Making Connections

These elements set the context for open exploration of religion and belief. We use Understanding Christianity to support our teaching. This offers a structure through which pupils can encounter diverse religious traditions alongside non-religious worldviews – which reflect the backgrounds of many of the pupils. All pupils are required to develop understanding of Christianity in each key stage. In addition, across the age range, pupils will develop understanding of the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law as well as non-religious world views.

Teaching and Learning Styles

We aim for the highest possible standard in the teaching of RE and therefore adopt many teaching styles and learning opportunities so that the children engage, are enthusiastic and are equipped to leave school with skills that will allow them to grow spiritually throughout their lives. We encourage children not only to learn about religion but also learn from it and questioning is a key element of every lesson in order for the child to think more deeply. Whole class, groups work, differentiated work and questioning allow the children's learning and self-esteem to flourish.

We believe in providing a safe environment where children feel able to talk openly and freely: about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule, to express doubts and ask questions; explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society.

A number of learning styles are used in order for children to understand and develop their creative and analytical thinking and therefore enhance their knowledge of what it is to be human, and a spiritual being. These styles include drama, visualisation, group work, use of artefacts, art, symbolism, visits and visitors. Children are encouraged to discuss and evaluate their work and thinking.

Contribution of RE to the Curriculum

Our Curriculum ensures pupils develop core knowledge and skills leading to high quality learning outcomes, as well as developing pupils' confidence to make a difference in the world. We believe the fundamental goal of a world-class education is to ensure students make a meaningful contribution within their community and beyond. Therefore, the teaching of RE is firmly embedded within our curriculum ethos and teaching. RE links with the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing.

Our current scheme of learning, RE Today, has allowed a much wider range of topics and outcomes ensuring the lessons are inclusive for all.

It also allows the children to embed key knowledge and revisit world faiths at several points over their time at St. James' allowing them to truly understand other beliefs.

Children develop oral skills through discussing questions or presenting their findings to the rest of the class. They develop their writing ability by using different types of genre such as reports, letters and diary entries. Timelines are used when developing a sense of chronology, as well as historical skills and vocabulary when dealing with characters, events and historical figures relating to RE.

Children use ICT in RE to enhance their skills in presenting written work, and they research information using the internet. Children develop self-confidence by having opportunities to explain their views on a number of social questions such as how society should respond to moral and ethical issues. They learn how society is made up of people from different cultures and start to develop tolerance and respect for others. Children are encouraged to think creatively about artefacts, artwork and symbolism and are encouraged to use their creative skills to communicate their understanding through art form.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in RE is the responsibility of the RE Subject Lead and the Headteacher. Monitoring is carried out by lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil interviews in line with the school monitoring schedule. A yearly audit is carried out by the RE coordinator from which an action plan is drawn up. The RE coordinator gives the Headteacher and staff reports in which they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicate areas for improvement.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We assess children's work in RE by making assessment for learning judgements as we observe them during each RE lesson, listen to their discussions and their learning outcomes such as artwork, written work and projects. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher marks the work and will give a reflective question to deepen their ideas and understanding, as per Feedback and Assessment Policy.

We track progress in RE using the Statements and questions supporting Understanding Christianity. We use the terms working towards, expected and exceeding, to identify the level the children are working at in accordance with the expected standard. Progress in RE is reported to parents at parents' evenings and on the child's annual written report.

Special Educational Needs

All pupils with special educational needs are entitled to the same broad and balanced curriculum as all other pupils. Careful planning and differentiated work, based on the syllabus, where appropriate, will aid children with special educational needs towards at least the basic understanding of RE issues.

"But I came to give life—life in all its fullness."

John 10:10



St. James' Church of England Primary Academy

RE OVERVIEW

This follows the SIAMS Syllabus with partnership to the Rochester Diocese and NATRE

	Autumn - Term 1	Autumn - Term 2	Spring - Term 3	Spring - Term 4	Summer - Term 5	Summer - Term 6
Reception	Unit 1 Why is the word God so important to Christians? (Creation)	Unit 2 Why do Christians perform Nativity plays at Christmas? (Why is Christmas special for Christians?) (Incarnation)	Unit 3 Being special: where do we belong? (Thematic)	Unit 4 Why do Christians put a cross on their Easter garden? (Why is Easter special to Christians?) (Salvation)	Unit 5 Which places are special and why? (Thematic)	Unit 6 Which stories are special and why? (Thematic)
Year 1	Unit 7 Who do Christians say made the world? (Creation))	Unit 8 Why does Christmas matter to Christians? (Incarnation)	Unit 9 Who is Jewish and how do they live? (Judaism)	Unit 10 What do Christians believe God is like? (God)	Unit 11 What does it mean to belong to a faith community? (Thematic)	Unit 12 How should we care for the world and for others, and why does it matter? (Thematic)
Year 2	Unit 13 What is the good news Christians believe Jesus brings? (Gospel)	Unit 14 What is the good news Christians believe Jesus brings? (Gospel)	Unit 15 Who is a Muslim and how do they live? (Part 1) (Islam)	Unit 16 Why does Easter matter to Christians? (Salvation)	Unit 17 Who is a Muslim and how do they live? (Part 2) (Islam)	Unit 18 What makes some places special to believers? (Thematic)
Year 3	Unit 19 What is it like for someone to follow God? (People of God)	Unit 20 What is the Trinity and why is it important for Christians? (Incarnation/God)	Unit 21 How do festivals and worship show what matters to a Muslim? (Islam)	Unit 22 How do festivals and family life show what matters to Jewish people? (Judaism)	Unit 23 What do Christians learn from the creation story? (Creation/Fall)	Unit 24 How and why do people try to make the world a better place? (Thematic)
Year 4	Unit 25 What kind of world did Jesus want? (Gospel)	Unit 26 For Christians, when Jesus left; what was the impact of Pentecost? (Kingdom of God)	Unit 27 What do Hindus believe God is like? (Hindus))	Unit 28 Why do Christians call the day that Jesus died 'Good Friday'? (Salvation)	Unit 29 What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today? (Hindus)	Unit 30 How and why do people mark the significant events of life? (Thematic)

	Autumn - Term 1	Autumn - Term 2	Spring - Term 3	Spring - Term 4	Summer - Term 5	Summer - Term 6
Year 5	Unit 31 What does it mean if Christians believe God is Holy and loving? (God)	Unit 32 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today? (Islam)	Unit 33 Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people? (Judaism)	Unit 34 Creation and science, conflicting or complimentary? (Creation/Fall)	Unit 35 How can following God bring freedom and justice? (People of God)	Unit 36 What matters most to Humanists and Christians? (Thematic)
Year 6	Unit 37 Christians and how to live: what would Jesus do? (Gospel)	Unit 38 Why do Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah? (Incarnation)	Unit 39 Why do Hindus want to be good? (Hindus)	Unit 40 What difference does the resurrection make to Christians? (What do Christians believe Jesus did to 'save' people?) (Salvation)	Unit 41 For Christians, what kind of king is Jesus? (Kingdom of God)	Unit 42 Why do some people believe in God and some not? How does faith help people when life gets hard? (Thematic)