

St James CE Academy



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Everyone Loved

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you"

John 15:12:

Joy in Lifelong learning

"Put these abilities to work; throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone may notice your improvement and progress." Timothy 4:15

Unlocking potential and flourishing

"I can do all things through Christ; who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13.

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Date of Review: **NOVEMBER 2020**

St James Church of England Academy **Religious Education (RE) Policy**

Aim Statement

The principle aim of RE is to engage pupils with systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own (Coventry and Warwickshire agreed syllabus for Religious Education 2017-2022).

RE teaching and learning should enable pupils to:

- A Know about and understand a range of religions and world views
- B Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religious and worldviews.
- C. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.

Aims at St James Academy

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At St. James Academy, we help the children to learn from religions as well as about religions. Through Understanding Christianity resources we aim to provide a deeper understanding of the Christian faith as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage. We develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, their impact on society, culture and the wider world and help children to mature in relation to their own patterns of beliefs and behaviour through religious beliefs and practice. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

The aims of religious education at St. James Academy are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- be capable of reflecting on their own experiences, and of developing a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- develop an understanding of religious traditions, and an appreciation of cultural differences in Britain today;
- develop their investigative and research skills, in order to hold reasoned opinions on religious issues;
- have respect for other people's views, and hence to celebrate diversity in society.

By the time children leave St James, they should be religiously literate and able to:

- Give a theologically 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 God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none,
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own philosophical and ethical convictions.

(The Church of England Education office)

Teaching and Learning

Teaching time for RE is 5% of curriculum time which equates to a minimum of one hour per week.

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values, and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover, etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship, and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues; sometimes they prepare presentations working individually or in groups.

Our pupils have widely differing abilities, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- using teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Planning

We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus and Understanding Christianity units. We ensure that the topics studied in RE build on prior learning and offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit. The progression planned and spiral nature of the schemes of work offer the children increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each year group during the year. The medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each half term and are reviewed at least termly by the RE leader.

Understanding Christianity

By exploring core theological concepts, *Understanding Christianity* seeks to enable pupils to understand Christianity as a living world faith. Children are given the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact in lives of Christians. Primarily through discussion, they are then encouraged to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief (particularly Christianity), of themselves the world and human experience.

The Understanding Christianity approach is based on the core concept that the bible tells the 'Big Story' of salvation. Key concepts are revisited, deepening pupils' understanding and making links to the overall 'big story'. Please see below for the key question overview.

Concept	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
GOD			2b.1 What does it mean if God is holy and loving?	
CREATION / FALL	2a.1 What do Christians learn from the Creation story?			2b.2 Creation and Science: Conflicting or Complementary?
PEOPLE OF GOD	2a.2 What is it like to follow God?			2b.3 How can following God bring freedom and justice?
INCARNATION	2a.3 What is the Trinity?		2b.4 Was Jesus the Messiah?	
GOSPEL		2a.4 What kind of world did Jesus want?	2b.5 What would Jesus do?	
SALVATION		2a.5 Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'?	2b.6 What did Jesus do to save human beings?	2b.7 What difference does the resurrection make for Christians?
KINGDOM OF GOD		2a.6 When Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost?		2b.8 What kind of king is Jesus?

Special Educational Needs

RE is taught to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE, learning opportunities are matched appropriately to the needs of children with learning difficulties.

Resources

We are continually investing in sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our RE teaching units. We have purchased the RE Today scheme of work to supplement the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus and have undergone training in *Understanding Christianity*. We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in RE. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a visit to a Hindu temple, for example, that involves a journey), we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Staff

The subject leader should receive specialist training or qualifications and all teaching staff should have access to appropriate professional development. All teaching staff should have a deep understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within church schools.

Local Governing Body

At St James Academy, the Local Governing Body will support and monitor standards in RE regularly and effectively.

Assessment

Teachers will assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements through observations during lessons and review of work in books. Completed work is marked in accordance with the school marking policy and the learning objective. Summary judgements are made at the end of each unit and reported to the subject leader termly. We use the end of unit outcomes as set out by the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus as a basis for assessing the progress of the child along with the key learning outcomes from *Understanding Christianity*.

Monitoring and Review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in religious education. The subject leader uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe RE lessons across the school. The RE subject leader reports to the governing body, completes an annual audit and prepares an action plan.

Withdrawal

In the UK, parents still have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own religious education. (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S71 (3)). This will be the parents' responsibility. However, at St James we would always talk to parents to ensure that they understand the aims and value of RE before honouring this right.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.