

St John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School



'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' Philippians 4:13

Religious Education Policy

**Ratified: Spring 2026
Review Date: Spring 2029**

At the heart of our school vision is a desire for an authentic and life-giving relationship with ourselves, one another, our world, and with God. We believe that it is through Christ who gives us the strength, all can achieve within a learning environment where every child is valued as a unique individual created in the image of God, and where teaching and learning is of consistently high standard.

STJHV Statement of Intent

St John's Highbury Vale in Islington is committed to providing a nurturing and inspiring environment where every child is empowered to reach their full potential. Grounded in our Christian ethos and guided by our values, we strive to create a vibrant and dynamic educational experience that prepares our pupils to lead fulfilling lives and contribute positively to society.

Our Christian Vision

At St John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School, our vision, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me', underpins all aspects of school life. Rooted in Christian values, this vision shapes our approach to Religious Education, enabling pupils to grow in wisdom, respect and understanding as they explore faith, belief and meaning in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Introduction

St John's Highbury Vale C.E. Primary School is an inclusive school located in the heart of Islington. This policy aims to support staff and pupils in developing a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. It is grounded in the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, and the school's vision and associated Christian values.

We hold high expectations for all our pupils and provide a rich and varied curriculum. This curriculum fosters religious literacy within an inclusive and safe environment, encouraging critical thinking while celebrating and respecting diversity.

What is RE?

Religious Education is a core academic subject in church schools, enabling pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews while considering their local, national, and global contexts. The subject provides all pupils with opportunities to ask questions and express their own views in response to the material they study, as well as to engage thoughtfully with questions about their beliefs and ideas.

Aims of RE

A Statement of Entitlement, the aims and objectives of Religious Education in church schools are: 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 being 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;
- to explore their own religious, spiritual, and philosophical ways of living, believing, and thinking.

Time allocation

RE is taught weekly in every year group. Additional time is given to the teaching of RE through Prayer weeks and RE enrichment days that have a specific religious focus given to them.

Legal requirements

Religious Education is a statutory subject in all maintained schools. In Church of England schools, RE is a core subject and must be provided for all registered pupils, including those in Reception classes, in accordance with the school's Trust Deed and the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.

In line with the Education Act 1996 and DfE Circular 1/94 (paragraphs 44 and 49), Religious Education is provided for all registered pupils unless withdrawn at the request of a parent (or by the pupil if aged 18 or over). This right of withdrawal applies to both Religious Education and Collective Worship.

As a Church of England school, we hope that all pupils will participate fully in Religious Education, reflecting the distinctive Christian ethos of St John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School and the shared understanding established through our induction process and home-school agreement.

Parents wishing to withdraw their child must inform the school. Appropriate supervision will be provided, and arrangements will be made that respect the dignity of the child and minimise disruption to their education.

Religious Education is allocated approximately 5–10% of curriculum time, in line with LDBS guidance. Collective Worship is distinct from curriculum provision and is not included within RE curriculum time.

Our approach to the teaching of Religious Education at St John's Highbury Vale

R.E flourishes in schools when it is given equal status with other subjects of the National Curriculum. R.E is a core subject in our school. Our aim is that R.E at St John's is delivered through our vision of, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me', and is a celebration of our humanity without exception of exclusion. This begins in our Reception Class.

The governors have adopted the LDBS RE syllabus as the school's main resource for the teaching of RE.

The aims of the syllabus are as follows:

- To enable all children to become religiously literate.
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – vision for Education (Church of England)
- To offer a systematic enquiry- based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
 - Ability to be critical thinkers
 - Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions
 - Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews.
 - Ability to reflect, respond and express their own opinions and beliefs.
 - Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews belief systems, values and practices.

To offer units of learning that:

- Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content.
- Promote critical engagement with Biblical and sacred texts.
- Offer challenge and an in-depth exploration of religion/belief and practices.
- Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or world views to their own.
- Progression of learning both in terms of knowledge and understanding and skills across the primary age range.

To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances:

- The Christian vision of our school.
- Contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils
- Takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools – Statement of Entitlement
- The Church of England's vision for Education.

Within every unit, the sequence of learning is as follows:

•**Enquire:** Engage with the big and subsidiary questions which focus on theology.

•**Investigate/explore:** What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This 'explore' stage of the enquiry is where pupils will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective the following strategies are used:

Interpreting and analysing sacred texts

Using challenging and controversial questions

Extended pieces of writing

Discussion which continually asks 'Have we gone deep enough yet?'

Pupils engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc)

Grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues

•**Evaluate/communicate:** What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/practice make? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus is on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

•**Reflect on/express:** What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response? It is always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Religious Education is planned and taught under the 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' framework, with a balance of child-initiated experiences and direct teaching. At St John's, the LDBS syllabus is delivered in the Reception class. This is supported by learning the foundations of Christianity through the exploration of Bible stories and parables, through age-appropriate storytelling, discussion and reflection, as well as through celebrating festivals of Christianity and other world faiths. Teaching and learning strategies in the Early Years Foundation Stage include small and large group activities, individual tasks, and circle times to introduce moral and theological concepts. Children are encouraged to explore and respond to the world around them using all their senses. Cultural and religious stories are used to inspire children's questioning and critical thinking. Opportunities to visit religious places and handle artefacts provide first-hand experiences that enrich their early development.

Religious Education in Key Stage One

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim for all children to develop an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism, and one other world faith at an age-appropriate level. Children will begin to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions. They will develop a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and will be encouraged to ask important questions about life.

Children will also learn to recognise and respect that others may have different viewpoints from their own. Those working at greater depth will start to make connections between religious teachings and practices, describing similarities and differences in greater detail.

Religious Education in Key Stage Two

In Key Stage Two, we build on previous learning to deepen children's understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts in Christianity. Additionally, children study three further world faiths to broaden their perspectives.

By the end of Key Stage Two, our goal is for children to be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level. They will be confident in using a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary and will have a solid understanding of the teachings of Christianity and other faiths studied. Children will also gain insight into the impact of belonging to a faith on a believer's life.

We aim for children to be able to confidently express and justify their own views while engaging critically with Biblical and other sacred texts. By drawing on their religious knowledge, they will develop their ability to form opinions and understand the world they live in. Critical thinking and respectful engagement with diverse perspectives are central to this stage of learning.

Access to the Curriculum

We recognise, through our tailored planning system, that children have diverse learning needs, which are thoughtfully reflected in the activities we plan. We approach each child as a unique individual, with sensitivity, to minimise any barriers to their learning. Our aim is to empower every child to develop new skills, concepts, and knowledge, enabling them to thrive.

All children are treated with equal respect, worth, and value, regardless of their race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning needs, or abilities.

Environment and Resources

We aim to provide a rich, engaging, and stimulating environment for Religious Education, one that encourages deep questioning and critical thinking.

We carefully plan and organise the environment with tailored tasks and activities to ensure that all children can access the curriculum, regardless of their stage of development or learning needs. All tasks are given equal importance in our planning and delivery of the curriculum.

We ensure that children learn how to handle a variety of artefacts with care and respect.

We emphasise the value of hands-on experiences using a wide range of real-life resources, including class trips and visits from community members. We take pride in our strong working relationship with our three local parishes and actively collaborate with the churches and the wider community.

In addition to fostering individual learning, we encourage children to work cooperatively and collaboratively on a variety of Religious Education activities.

Planning and assessment and monitoring

Teachers make professional judgements about pupils' attainment and progress in Religious Education based on their ongoing assessment of pupils' work, dialogue and engagement in lessons. These judgements are informed by the LDBS assessment grids, which are used as guidance alongside teacher assessment. Assessment information is recorded on a termly basis using the school's in-house systems and is tracked over time to monitor progress and ensure Religious Education has parity with other core curriculum subjects.

Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them to tailor lessons to the specific needs of each cohort. The LDBS syllabus is designed with content comprising two-thirds Christian teachings and one-third other major world faiths.

The standards and quality of teaching and learning are monitored through the following processes:

- **Book scrutiny:** Reviewing pupils' work to assess progress and quality of learning.

- **Cluster moderations:** Collaborating with other schools to benchmark standards beyond the school.
- **Summative and formative assessments:** Used on a termly basis to evaluate pupils' understanding and progress.
- **LDBS assessment grids:** Used as guidance to support and benchmark teacher judgements and monitor progress over time.
- **Progress in Religious Education:** Reviewed termly by the R.E. lead using assessment information recorded in the school's in-house systems. Summary information is reported to the Full Governing Body and discussed during pupil progress review meetings with teachers.
- **Moderation meetings:** Held termly with class teachers to ensure the accuracy of teachers' judgements, guided by the R.E. lead.
- **Pupil voice:** Gathering feedback from pupils to evaluate their engagement and understanding.
- **Learning walks:** Observing classroom environments and teaching practices.
- **Lesson observations:** Assessing teaching methods and pupil interaction during lessons.

This comprehensive approach ensures high standards in Religious Education across the school.

Parents and Carers

As a school, we recognise that building a strong partnership with parents and carers is essential for helping children thrive.

Children are encouraged to share their learning at home, fostering a collaborative approach between school and family. Parents are invited to attend all collective worship activities (see the Collective Worship policy), providing opportunities for children to share their learning and achievements with their families.

Parents and carers are kept well-informed and encouraged to engage in discussions about their children's progress during parent consultation evenings. Staff provide parents with clear information about curriculum aims and achievements through regular newsletters outlining the term's programme of work, parent evenings, and the annual report.

Role of the Religious Education Lead

It is the responsibility of the Religious Education lead to:

- ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of Religious Education;
- ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement;
- to keep up to date with developments in the area of RE through reading, attending
- LDBS RE network meetings and training and by forming links with other Church of England schools;
- to monitor and evaluate the planning, teaching and assessment of RE across the
- school in collaboration with the leadership team;
- to support staff in the teaching of RE across the school through team planning,
- teaching and moderation;
- to lead the review of the policies and impact of the syllabus on raising standards;
- to plan and lead INSET and CPD to build on the staff's knowledge and practice of
- effective RE teaching;

- to work closely with the senior leadership team to identify CPD needs of
- individuals, teams and the whole school;
- to regularly review and keep up to date the school's self-evaluation document for
- RE that forms part of the SIAMS ongoing self-evaluation document;
- oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and
- stored respectfully and replaced where necessary;
- ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a
- suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the RE leader in consultation with the Executive Headteacher and ratified every three years by the Governing Body.