

Religious Education (RE) Policy 2024 – 2025

St John's Middle School



This policy is reviewed and updated by Revd Duncan Hutchinson, a Church of England Diocesan Education Advisor (Worcester) and Claire Woodward, Head of RE at St John's Middle School. It is approved annually by the Local Governing Body.

This policy has been written in conjunction with the Diocese of Worcester

Reviewed: **September 2024**
Ratified: **September 2024**
Next Review: **September 2025**

In collaboration with



Diocesan Education Team

Introduction

This policy has been written in the light of the [Church of England's Vision for Education](#) (Autumn 2016), [Valuing all God's Children](#) (Summer 2019) and through reflection on the 2018 [SIAMS Evaluation Schedule](#) for schools.

Name of School: St John's Middle School
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Legal Position of Religious Education in School

Religious Education (RE) is unique in the curriculum as it is neither a core or foundation subject. The 1988 Education Act states 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all pupils.

St John's C of E Middle School is a Church of England Academy; therefore, Religious Education is provided in-line with the funding agreement and the academy follows the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020 – 2025

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement

The Church of England's [Statement of Entitlement](#) (February 2019) outlines the aims and expectations for RE in Church of England schools and guides this school's approach to RE.

It begins by stating: '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 to educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together'. Quoting from the Church of England's *Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*, it continues: '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'.

Religious Education and the school's Christian Vision

Our vision is to be a school where every individual in our community is valued and enabled to flourish as a child of God; where education impacts upon the whole-person, and care and concern for others is key. We seek to be a truly inclusive community where all can 'Give of their Best', achieve their full God given potential, be good citizens and respect difference in our growing global world.

RE at St John's contributes to the outworking of our vision by having a RE curriculum that is ambitious, challenging, enriching and inclusive. We recognise that RE can be a first step to recognising and appreciating diversity and want St John's pupils to learn about things that

matter in the lives of local people, people within our country and in the wider world. RE can support pupils in developing ideas, values and identities and we encourage our pupils to express their insights and learn to agree or disagree with others respectfully. We recognise that RE lessons allow time for all pupils to reflect upon their own beliefs and values. We aim to develop confident and compassionate pupils who are equipped to flourish in our diverse and global world. Our aims and vision for RE also reflect our school vision and the principal aim of the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for RE (2020). The principal aim of this syllabus, which informs all RE planning, teaching and assessment is below:

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

School Approach to Religious Education

In-line with all church schools, this school has a duty to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and world views.

In RE lessons we use a range of imaginative teaching methods and pupil groupings ensure effective RE lessons. We appreciate the positive impact that local faith communities can have on pupils' experience in RE. Therefore, this school aims to encourage visits to places of worship and to welcomes visitors from different faith communities. We recognise it is vitally important that teachers demonstrate respectful attitudes towards all faiths, modelling the attitudes and responses we would expect from our pupils.

As identified in the *Statement of Entitlement*, teaching and learning in RE in this school will provide:

- a challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework
- an assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts
- a curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide
- a pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place
- the opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.

- RE that makes a positive contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development

Our school values of forgiveness, love, integrity and perseverance permeate our whole school and the RE department organises termly certificates to celebrate some children who consistently demonstrate these values.

All pupils are encouraged to enter the National “Spirited Arts” Competition each year. There is an after-school club held in the summer term of each year to support this aim.

Organisation & Time Allocation

In accordance with the structure of Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus we have agreed that, as a minimum:

- At Key Stage 2 pupils study Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and also consider non-religious worldviews
- At Key Stage 3 pupils study Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and also consider of non- religious world views
- RE is timetabled for one fifty-five minute lesson per week in both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- We also have two enrichment days a year in RE with a focus on the Christmas and Easter festivals

Assessment / Recording & Reporting

The Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-2025 sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the expected end of Key Stage learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus.

As a school we track progress in RE through formative ongoing teacher assessment within lessons. We also track progress against Key Performance Indicators termly, identifying any pupils who might require a graduated response to meet their targets.

School reports are sent home in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms of each year and the RE report is written with reference to assessment records.

Responsibilities for RE in School

The Headteacher has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the legal framework for RE is carried out and that the teaching of RE fits within the school’s distinctively

Christian vision. At St John's Middle School some of the responsibilities for RE are delegated to other members of staff.

The Head of Department is responsible for:

- ensuring personal subject knowledge and expertise are kept up to date by participating in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for RE and sharing good practice
- attending RE clusters / hub meetings (STLP; Bromsgrove Pyramid; NATRE)
- providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary
- ensuring the staff are familiar with the syllabus and supporting resources such as *Understanding Christianity*
- supporting and clarifying approach to planning, delivery and assessment being clear about the subject's intent, implementation and impact
- acquiring and organising appropriate resources and managing the department's budget
- monitoring the teaching and learning of RE through regular lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks, analysis of data and pupil voice and being able to discuss impact and standards, all in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team
- contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process.

The **Headteacher and Governors** must ensure:

- RE has a high profile within the curriculum
- that the legal framework for RE is upheld within the school
- that all pupils make progress in achieving the learning outcomes of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have effective and regular opportunities for CPD
- teachers newly appointed to church schools are provided with support offered by the diocese to enable them to become effective teachers of RE
- that clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils make good progress
- appropriate support is in place to ensure the effective provision of RE.

The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

At St John's Middle School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history and citizenship.

Where parents make a request to withdraw their child(ren) from the teaching of RE, the school will, as a matter of courtesy, ensure that the parents are aware of the following:

- the learning objectives covered in RE so that parents can make an informed decision
- what supervision arrangements will be in place for child(ren).

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of RE at our school.

Review

This policy will be subject to the normal cycle of policy review and will be reviewed and ratified by the governing body every year. Furthermore, there may be occasions where this policy is reviewed outside the normal review cycle, including but not limited to:

- a change in Agreed Syllabus
- a change in legal position framework for RE