

Saint George's Church of England



Religious Education Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: October 2021
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Last reviewed:	September 2021
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Religious Education Policy

All Different, All Equal, All Flourishing

This policy is guided by our vision; **'At the heart of our vision is the belief in inclusive, educational excellence; the belief that we are called to serve all pupils, staff, parents and the local community by providing places where all develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually in order to live life in all its fullness'**.

As a Church of England Academy our RE provision must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School, 'Improving the life chances of local children'. The Governors in consultation with the Headteacher, following advice from the DBE, have decided to adopt the Locally Agreed Syllabus and supplement this with material from the Diocese and elsewhere.

At Saint George's School we aim that Religious Education will: -

- **be of the highest standard**, always striving for inclusive educational excellence
- **reflect the school's distinctive character** and give pre-eminence to the teaching of Christianity, allowing pupils to develop intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually by equipping all our students with a rich deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice
- **provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, a range of other religions and world views that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own beliefs** (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives and enriches the inclusive nature of our community.
- **enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens of a diverse society in modern Britain.
- **teach pupils to develop respect for** and embrace all others, including people with different faiths and beliefs which helps to challenge prejudice
- **prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to and serve their own communities and the wider society. It encourages students to develop an understanding of and apply many Christian values including creativity, honesty, respect, inclusion, stewardship and thankfulness, ensuring flourishing for all.
- **enable pupils to develop a sense of awe** and wonder and mystery
- **explore faith in action**

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Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

All pupils should follow a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life' (Education Act 2002). Learning about and from religion, faith and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

RE promotes the school's mission statement '**All different, All equal, All flourishing**' by promoting an ethos of respect for others, challenging stereotypes and building understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions British values and human rights.

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided.

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including collaborative learning, art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of reflection. Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities.

In accordance with the RE Statement of Entitlement and the structure of the locally agreed syllabus we have agreed that:

- At Key Stage 3 pupils RE is delivered as a discrete subject over three lessons per fortnight (the equivalent of 6% of curriculum time). Students study five principal religions across the two years with 50% of learning time dedicated to Christianity. Students also have the opportunity to explore and discuss ethical issues such as stewardship, multiculturalism and civil rights.
- At Key Stage 4 all pupils follow the full course GCSE (currently Edexcel B). Paper 1:
 - Christianity. Paper 2 Islam. At Key Stage 4 RE has 5 hours per fortnight (the equivalent of 10% of curriculum time).
- At Key Stage 5 RE is offered at A Level (currently Edexcel Religious Studies). Paper 1 – Philosophy, Paper 2 – Ethics, Paper 3 – New Testament Studies. All Sixth Form students take part in RE stop days throughout the year.

In line with the school policy on assessment it is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils through marking work set. The school marking policy is followed.

All key stages, pupils will complete one formal assessment per term which are carefully constructed to incorporate increasingly challenging examination skills and questions as they progress to GCSE. This will form part of the data used to track pupil progress by the Head of RE and will be used by the class teacher to ensure that work is correctly pitched and appropriately challenging. We currently report on progress twice a year. Examination groups will also complete formal mock examinations at key assessment points throughout the year.

The Head of RE will monitor RE within the school through analysis of this assessment data, learning walks, lesson observations and book scrutiny. The Head of RE is responsible for contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process with a key focus on Strand 7 – The effectiveness of religious education. They will evaluate the following:

- a) Through effective curriculum planning RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement, or Methodist equivalent, develops religious literacy and meets statutory obligations.
- i. How well does RE help pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through the exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with text? How well does RE help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide?
 - ii. How well does RE enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and world views and their impact on society and culture?
 - iii. How well does RE give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and /or philosophical convictions?
- b) Do teachers share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development? Does RE have in place rigorous systems of assessment?

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and Headteacher should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives 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 regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- ensure pupils have opportunities to take courses leading to an accredited qualification in the subject
- 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 can make good progress

At Saint George's Church of England School, we recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their child from religious education. However, given that parents have chosen to send their child to a Church of England School with a distinctive inclusive Christian ethos, we would expect that parents will rarely, if ever exercise this right. The right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum. This includes for example, when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in class discussions in other areas. We would ask any parent considering withdrawal to contact the Headteacher and Head of RE to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Saint George's Church of England School.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE the school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises. It will be the responsibility of parents to provide adequate religious education for their child during school time.

This policy will be reviewed every two years. The next review is due September 2023.