Religious Education (RE) Policy
September 2025

Our Academies inspire confident, enthusiastic, high achieving, lifelong learners within a loving Christian community. Children are encouraged to develop an awareness of the difference between right and wrong and to respect Christian moral values. Every member of the school community is valued and respected for their contribution to the life of the school. Parents, Staff and Governors (LAC Members) are seen as partners in the process of enabling children to participate in, and to develop worthwhile and satisfying lives and as such will be expected to affirm the Christian values on which the school operates. The Saints Academies values The Lichfield Diocese and mutual liaison with the Churches and Communities which they serve. It maintains a Christian ethos throughout the teaching of the Diocesan agreed syllabus, the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus, the national curriculum and the wider curriculum. Staff treat each other with courtesy and consideration, respecting each other's opinions and working together in a spirit of helpfulness and friendliness. Collective worship develops the spiritual dimension of each child and emphasises the importance of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Daily collective worship aims to create a Christian foundation through which the children can discover a faith on which to base their lives.

Aims and Objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. We value RE highly. Across the Saints Academies we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions and world views, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions as well as teaching an awareness of, and sensitivity within, the diversity of religious and non-religious beliefs, practices, spiritual insights and world views due to our increasingly diverse society, religiously and culturally.

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- To discover the richness and variety within the Christian tradition especially as a living faith in the present day, and to explore the implications of Christian faith in daily life.
- To enable pupils to engage with Christian concepts and beliefs concerning God, the world and humanity.
- To promote an awareness of an insight into non-Christian faith communities locally, nationally and globally and for those with non-religious beliefs and worldviews.
- To maintain strong and well-established links with the local churches.
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems/world views found in Britain;
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- develop an understanding of religious and non-religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues; have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

Additionally:

- RE does not seek to impose religious beliefs on children nor to compromise the integrity of an individual's own beliefs by promoting one religion over another.
- RE is not the same as collective worship which has its own place within school life and a separate policy.
- There are no presumptions made as to the religious backgrounds, beliefs and values of the children and the staff. We value the religious background of all members of the school community and hope that this will encourage individuals to share their own experiences with others freely.
- All religions and their communities are treated with respect and sensitivity and we value the links between home, school and the faith communities.
- We acknowledge that each religion studied can contribute to the education of all our pupils.

- We promote teaching in RE that stresses open enquiry and first-hand experiences wherever possible for both staff and children.

St Peter's VA Academy - As a Voluntary Aided Church of England school whose identity and character are embodied in its Trust Deed (held in trust to for Church of England Education), our first priority will be to ensure a full and positive presentation of Christianity with opportunity for encountering the Christian life in Anglican and other contexts.

The Legal Position of Religious Education

The Education Reform Act (1988) places RE as part of the basic curriculum; a statutory subject which is an entitlement of all pupils. From 1998 RE is given equivalent status to core subjects. The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the Local Academy Council. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the LAC. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship.

At St Peter's, as a Voluntary Aided School, RE is according to its Trust Deed, and based on the guidelines issued by the Lichfield Diocese through its RE Resource Handbook.

The Saints Academies curriculum for Religious Education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). Our Federation's RE curriculum is based on the Staffordshire LA Agreed Syllabus for RE and Understanding Christianity. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are Christian and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions and those with non-religious beliefs and world views.

The Saints recognises the right of withdrawal of pupils by their parents, but works actively to promote participation by all pupils.

Rationale

RE is an important subject in its own right. It contributes to other areas of education and human experience (Aesthetic, environmental, ethical, political, social and spiritual). It is an important part of the wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Spiritual - widening pupils' vision of themselves and their own experience, within the context of a growing awareness and understanding of God.
Moral - helping each pupil develop their own informed values.
Social - helping pupils understand some major forces shaping the values in our society.
Cultural - aiding pupils in exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage and in developing positive attitudes towards diversity.

The Nature Of RE

a) The essential elements of RE are embodied in the 3 Attainment Targets from the Diocesan Guidelines:
- Knowledge of Religious beliefs, teachings and practices (learning ABOUT) -
The child's own personal understanding and response (learning FROM)
- Relationships and lifestyles (learning FROM)

b) There are six dimensions (programmes of study) to the teaching of RE. They are:

Beliefs, teachings and sources	Identity, diversity and belonging
Practices and ways of life	Meaning, purpose and truth
Expressing meaning	Values and commitment

Curriculum Planning in Religious Education

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus supported by a variety of resources alongside the Understanding Christianity curriculum. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. Each unit will include aspects of philosophy, theology and human social science. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through The Saints Academies.

There are key knowledge documents for each unit of work that have been developed by the RE subject leader alongside all teaching staff. These evidence all the knowledge needed to be taught. These are also used for assessing knowledge and learning throughout and at the end of units.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

Contribution of Religious Education to the Teaching of Other Subjects

English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our schools by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in Literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

Computing

We use ICT where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet as well as relevant APPs for the I-pads. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through teaching religious education across The Saints Academies, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Teaching Religious Education to Children with Special Needs

The Local Academy Council believes that all children, regardless of ability and behaviour, are valued equally at The Saints Academies. SEN children are not viewed as a separate entity but are part of the whole school approach, and different children's needs are recognised and met through varied and flexible provision throughout the curriculum. In order to meet the needs of all of our children we are actively working to sustain and develop our 'Dyslexia Friendly Schools status'. We believe that this will not only benefit children with dyslexic tendencies but will also have a significant impact on other pupils whose Literacy skills are not appropriate to their age, as strategies that are good for the dyslexic learner are good for everyone.

Assessment and Recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and from key questioning. We also use retrieval activities during and at the end of units. These are in the form of a quiz box. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the 'End of Year Expectations' (ARE). We record the ARE on the key knowledge documents. A summary sheet is completed at the end of the academic year with percentages recorded of pupils who are working towards, at or above ARE.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. We keep resources for religious education in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work. We have sets of children's bibles, collections of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research.

Monitoring and Review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the

subject across the Saints Academies. The RE subject leader indicates areas for further improvement. Within the review cycle, work, standards and progress are monitored.

Signed Karen Mann Chair of LAC

Signed Rebecca Walker Executive Headteacher