



The Academy at  
**St James**  
Aspire, Achieve, Believe

The Academy at St James  
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## The Academy at St James Religious Education Policy



**Headteacher:**  
R.Thompson

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**Last reviewed on:** November 2024

**Next review due by:** November 2027



# Academy at St James

## Religious Education Policy

### Religious Education Policy Statement

#### INTRODUCTION

Religious Education (RE) is a core subject at the Academy at St James. In line with the academy's trust deed, we follow the Diocese of Leeds and York Diocesan Syllabus for Religious Education.

The most recent syllabus was published in 2017 and links to Understanding Christianity programme of study, which the school uses to inform its programmes of work on Christianity.

#### AIMS

At the Academy at St James staff, Governors and pupils work together to create a caring Christian ethos in the school. RE has a particular contribution to make towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of each child. The school echoes the belief that;

*Good RE equips pupils for life, by helping them to engage in balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief, which touch areas of everyday life on a personal, local and global level. It also enables the, to develop critical analytical skills alongside religious and theological literacy, as well as supporting the thoughtful and reflective development of pupils' own beliefs and values.*

*Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs; forward to the Diocesan Syllabus*



### R.E. Vision



By the end of their time at St James our children will:

- Discuss and compare the similarities and differences between all religion and atheist.
- Ask and answer challenging religious questions that make links between cultures, faiths and religious texts.
- Use religious terms accurately in their effective communication of ideas and judgements
- Enjoy learning, regard religion as fun and want more challenges and success
- Feel prepared for the next stage of their religious education and part of their adult life
- Feel proud of their beliefs, identity and their community.
- Developing the whole school understanding of the children's spirituality and the development of the curriculum.
- Allow for quiet reflective time and spaces.
- Have memories for life from visitors, visits and rich experiences.
- Investigating the beliefs and practices of other world religions.
- Understand how religion is relevant to a modern society.
- Develop a high-quality sequential religious education programme which is suitable for each year group.
- Select and apply their knowledge and skills from other subjects to draw conclusions and communicate their findings
- Develop the ability to critically reflect on, evaluate and apply their learning to their own understanding of religion, themselves and the world.

### Curriculum Intent

Religious Education is a key subject at the Academy at St James; the pupils have an entitlement to high-quality R.E. as part of a rich curriculum. Taught by class teachers, each child receives their entitlement of Religious Education, which equates to one hour each week. Pupils will be equipped with key knowledge to help them broaden their thinking and communicate effectively as part of their own spiritual development. Crucially, pupils will be afforded an open perspective to a world, where people of differing religions, faiths and practices are able to live as a cohesive community.

As a Church of England school, Christianity is given a greater share of learning time. However, other world faiths and non-religious views are also integral to the school's R.E. curriculum. Living in a diverse community, it is vital that children have access to learning about different religious beliefs, investigate a range of views and can reflect on the values shared between very distinct cultures. Through engaging with and understanding the beliefs of others, pupils will be able to create their own balanced questions and informed beliefs about fundamental questions about life and what it means to have a faith.

### Cultural Capital and Pupil Premium enhancements

Our Religious studies are supported by the Understanding Christianity resource, and progression follows the agreed R.E. syllabus of the Leeds Diocese. Understanding Christianity provides a sequential teaching sequence aimed to ensure the children's progression of skills and learning of key Biblical texts. The three strands of learning are: Making Sense of the Text, which involves reading and comprehending key messages; Making Connections in relation to the children's experiences and knowledge of other texts; Understand the Impact on the daily lives of people practising faiths (including different denominations of Christianity) around the world.

In association with St James Church in Thornton and Rev. Harry Gwinnett, who assists our learning and worship, we have strengthened our Christian values and how they underpin all that we do as a school. Daily worship – featuring texts and practices from a variety of faiths – often involves a deep focus on how to live in a peaceful and respectful community. Alongside our R.E. lessons, children are taught about the Bible's messages on how to live, the role model Jesus provides and God's relationship with humanity.

Across all subjects, children are encouraged to question and share their own ideas – this is a key component of our R.E. curriculum. While developing knowledge and key facts are important, R.E. offers a safe environment to have open discussions and subjectively discuss beliefs. Hearing about peers' practices and ideas not only widens understanding, but also develops understanding of both their and religion's role in the modern society. Our school is also dedicated to offering experiences for the children to develop their understanding of religion and pride in their own beliefs. Beyond visiting St James Church and weekly worships with Rev Harry, we invite visitors to discuss their faith and seek to organise trips to places of worship. Hand to Mouth have visited school in recent times for tailored sessions with pupils.

RE at the Academy at St James' involves learning through three core elements:

- Making sense of belief
- Understanding the impact
- Making connections

## TIME ALLOCATION

We follow the recommendation of the Diocese which requires a minimum 5% curriculum time for RE. The basic weekly entitlement is for 60 minutes in FS and KS1; 75 minutes in KS2 (This is in addition to time for worship). Teachers can use this time flexibly to provide the equivalent of 36 hours per year in FS and KS1; 45 hours per year in KS2. As a Church school, we make sure that this is fulfilled.

## PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

### Christianity

As a Church of England Academy, the principal faith that is explored through RE is Christianity; 66% of teaching time is focused on Christianity. Units of work for Christianity are taken from Understanding Christianity.

## Major world faiths

The Diocesan syllabus provides opportunities to study other major world religions; the school has chosen to study Islam in greater depth in recognition of the home background of many of our pupils.

KS – major faiths represented in the cohort

KS1 – Islam

LKS2 – Hinduism

UKS2 – Islam

## Thematic studies

We promote tolerance, respect and understanding for those who adhere to religions other than Christianity. The syllabus provides opportunities to compare religious, and nonreligious views from a broad range of traditions. At the Academy at St James careful planning ensures that all the pupils' home beliefs and practices are represented in RE lessons.

## FOUNDATION STAGE

For our youngest children in YN and YR, RE is covered through a range of adult-led and childinitiated activities. It is assessed using the relevant areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

### Key Questions:-

- F1 Why is the word God so important to Christians?
- F2 Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?
- F3 Why do Christians put a cross in an Easter garden?
- F4 Being special: where do we belong?
- F5 Which places are special and why?
- F6 Which stories are special and why?

## KEY STAGE 1

Y1 and Y2 are taught in a **two-year rolling programme**. Over the course of the cycle they cover the key questions.

### Key questions: -

- 1.1 What do Christians believe God is like?
- 1.2 Who do Christians say made the world?
- 1.3 Why does Christmas matter to Christians?
- 1.4 What is the "good news" Christians believe that Jesus brings? 1
- .5 Why does Easter matter to Christians?

### Key question from key religion (10 hours+) - 1.6

Who is Jewish and what do they believe?

- 1.7 Who is a Muslim and what do they believe? (page 29)

Comparisons of beliefs and practices between different faiths and beliefs are taught through the thematic units (6 hours+).

- 1.8 Who am I? What does it mean to belong? (page 31)
- 1.9 What makes some places sacred to believers? (page 33)
- 1.10 How should we care for the world and for others, and why does it matter? (page 35)

*Time allocations can be found on page 25 of the Diocesan syllabus.*

## LOWER KEY STAGE 2

Y3 and Y4 are taught **in a two-year rolling programme**. Over the course of the cycle they cover the key questions.

Key questions: -

- L2.1 What do Christians learn from the Creation Story?
- L2.2 What is it like to follow God?
- L2.3 What is the Trinity?
- L2.4 What kind of world did Jesus want?
- L2.5 Why do Christians call the day that Jesus died “Good Friday”?
- L2.6 When Jesus left, what next?

Key question from key religion

- L2.7 What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today? (page 40)
- L2.8 What does it mean to be a Sikh in Britain today?

Comparisons of beliefs and practices between different faiths and beliefs are taught through the thematic units.

- L2.9 What are the deeper meanings of festivals? (page 44)
- L2.10 How and why do believers show their commitments during the journey of life? (page 46)

*Time allocations can be found on page 38 of the Diocesan syllabus.*

## UPPER KEY STAGE 2

Y5 and Y6 are taught **in a two-year rolling programme**. Over the course of the cycle they cover the key questions.

- U2.1 What does it mean if God is holy and loving?
- U2.5 What would Jesus do?
- U2.6 What did Jesus do to save human beings?
- U2.8 What kind of king is Jesus?
- U2.2 Creation and science; conflicting or complementary?
- U2.3 How can following God bring freedom and justice?
- U2.4 Was Jesus the Messiah?

- U2.7 What difference does the Resurrection make for Christians?

Key question from major religion

- U2.9 What does it mean for Muslims to follow God? (page 52)

Comparisons of beliefs and practices between different faiths and beliefs are taught through the thematic units.

- U2.11 Why do some people believe in God and some people not? (page 54)
- U2.14 How do religions help people live through good times and bad times? (page 60)
- U2.12 What will make our city a more respectful place? (page 56)
- U2.13 Why is pilgrimage important to some religious believers? (page 58)

*Time allocations can be found on page 50 of the Diocesan syllabus.*

## APPROACHES

The Diocesan syllabus is organised through a series challenging questions. Teaching approaches reflect this. Children are taught RE through the acquisition of key skills:

- Investigating
- Reflecting
- Expressing
- Interpreting
- Empathising
- Applying
- Discerning
- Analysing
- Synthesising, and
- Evaluating

(see pages 80 – 81)

Much work is done orally as well as through written and illustrative methods.

Recorded work is kept in a designated RE book that the pupils take with them through their time in school. In FS and KS1, much work is recorded in *floor books* that become a classroom resource for re-reading and reflection.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment is based on the three core elements.

- Making sense of belief
- Understanding the impact

- Making connections

There are end-of-phase outcomes outlined in the Diocesan syllabus pages 16 – 17. The RE co-ordinator will collect teacher assessments at the end of each term each year. These assessments will be based on written evidence, creative outcomes and contributions from the child made during lessons. Book monitoring, lesson observations and pupil sampling will assist the co-ordinator to moderate teacher assessments. Progress in Religious Education is reported annually to parents and has a prominent position in their end of year report.

## DIFFERENTIATION AND SPECIAL NEEDS

At the Academy at St James, all children are made to feel that their contributions are valued. Re lessons are planned to enable all children to access the RE curriculum and achieve their highest potential.

## WITHDRAWAL

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from all or part of the RE curriculum. Such requests will be discussed with the head teacher before coming to a final decision.

## REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by staff and governors bi-annually.

RE Subject Co-ordinator: Chris Brownsell

Head of Governors: Elizabeth Lawley

