

St John Baptist CE Primary School

Religious Education Policy



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Reviewed: June 2026

Review Date: June 2028

Signed: FGB

1. Our Christian Vision

At St John Baptist CE Primary School, our Christian vision shapes every aspect of school life, including Religious Education.

Inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 5:16, we seek to enable every member of our school family to flourish and become a shining light through living out our faith, being hope-bringers in times of darkness and showing God's love to all.

We believe that every person is created in the image of God and is therefore of inherent worth, unique value and limitless potential. Religious Education plays a vital role in helping pupils understand themselves, others and the diverse world in which they live. Through exploring religion and worldviews, pupils develop knowledge, curiosity, wisdom and respect, enabling them to engage thoughtfully with questions of belief, identity, purpose and meaning.

As a Church of England school, Religious Education is central to our curriculum. It enables pupils to gain a deep understanding of Christianity as a diverse global living faith whilst engaging academically with a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. In doing so, pupils develop the religious literacy, critical thinking and respectful dialogue needed to flourish within modern Britain and an increasingly interconnected world.

This policy outlines the principles that underpin Religious Education at St John Baptist CE Primary School. Detailed curriculum planning, progression, assessment and unit overviews are contained within the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Religious Education Curriculum and accompanying school curriculum documentation.

2. The Purpose of Religious Education

Religious Education is a core academic subject and an essential part of our curriculum. It is distinct from Collective Worship and provides pupils with opportunities to develop secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity, alongside a diverse range of religious and non-religious worldviews.

In accordance with the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement and the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Religious Education Curriculum, RE develops pupils' religious literacy through the study of theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply, ask challenging questions and engage respectfully with different beliefs, practices and lived experiences.

At St John Baptist, Religious Education enables pupils to:

- develop a secure understanding of Christianity as a diverse global living faith;
- gain knowledge of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews;
- understand how beliefs influence individuals, communities and society;
- ask meaningful questions about belief, identity, purpose, justice and meaning;

- develop the knowledge, vocabulary and disciplinary thinking needed to become religiously literate;
- appreciate diversity whilst recognising the dignity and value of every person;
- reflect upon their own developing worldview with openness, curiosity and respect.

Through Religious Education, we seek to nurture knowledgeable, reflective and compassionate young people who are equipped to become shining lights within their communities.

3. Principles of Religious Education

Our Religious Education curriculum is built upon four key principles.

Rooted in our Christian Vision

Our vision shapes both the content we teach and the way pupils learn. Religious Education reflects our belief that every child should flourish intellectually, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. We encourage pupils to explore religion and worldviews with confidence, respect and curiosity, recognising that understanding others is fundamental to living well together.

Academically Rigorous

Religious Education is a challenging academic subject that develops religious literacy through disciplinary enquiry. Following the Southwark Diocesan curriculum, pupils learn through the complementary lenses of **Believing (Theology)**, **Thinking (Philosophy)** and **Living (Human and Social Sciences)**. They investigate, interpret, analyse, evaluate and reflect, developing increasingly sophisticated understanding as they progress through the school.

Diverse and Inclusive

Our curriculum reflects both our Christian foundation and the rich diversity of our local community. Whilst Christianity remains central, pupils also study a wide range of religious and non-religious worldviews, recognising the diversity that exists within and between traditions. Learning is enriched through visits to churches, synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras, temples and other places of worship, together with opportunities to meet and learn from people of different faiths and beliefs. These first-hand experiences enable pupils to appreciate religion as something that is lived, dynamic and relevant to contemporary society.

Flourishing for All

We believe that every child can succeed in Religious Education. Learning is carefully sequenced and adapted to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND and pupils learning English as an additional language, are supported and challenged appropriately.

Through high expectations, thoughtful enquiry and meaningful dialogue, pupils develop the confidence to express their own ideas whilst respecting the beliefs and experiences of others.

4. Our Curriculum

At St John Baptist CE Primary School, Religious Education is taught through the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Primary Religious Education Syllabus (2024). The syllabus reflects the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and provides a coherent, enquiry-based curriculum that enables pupils to develop deep knowledge, critical thinking and religious literacy.

Learning is carefully sequenced from the Early Years to Year 6 so that pupils progressively develop substantive knowledge (what they know about religions and worldviews), disciplinary knowledge (how they think and enquire within Religious Education) and personal knowledge (how they reflect upon and respond to their own beliefs, values and experiences).

The curriculum is structured around the three disciplinary lenses of Believing (Theology), Thinking (Philosophy) and Living (Human and Social Sciences). Through these lenses, pupils explore what people believe, why those beliefs matter and how they influence the way individuals and communities live. They are encouraged to investigate, interpret, analyse, evaluate and reflect, developing the confidence to ask challenging questions, consider different viewpoints and engage respectfully with a wide range of religious and non-religious worldviews.

As a Church of England school, Christianity lies at the heart of our curriculum and is studied in every year group as a diverse, living global faith. Alongside Christianity, pupils learn about Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and non-religious worldviews. This enables pupils to appreciate both the diversity within faith traditions and the richness of the society in which they live.

Learning experiences are engaging, varied and rooted in authentic encounters. Pupils explore sacred texts, artefacts, artwork, music and stories, participate in discussion, debate and reflection, and undertake visits to a wide range of places of worship within our local community. They also learn directly from members of different faith communities, helping them to understand religion as something that is lived and experienced rather than simply studied.

Teachers foster classrooms where curiosity is encouraged and respectful dialogue is expected. Pupils are taught that they can question, challenge and explore ideas with confidence whilst recognising the dignity of those whose beliefs and experiences differ from their own. Through high-quality questioning and carefully planned enquiry, pupils develop increasingly sophisticated understanding and the ability to express their ideas using accurate religious vocabulary.

Our Religious Education curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. By exploring life's big questions, encountering diverse beliefs and reflecting on their own experiences, pupils grow in wisdom, empathy and respect, supporting our vision of enabling every member of our school family to flourish and become a shining light within their communities and the wider world.

5. Leadership and Monitoring

Religious Education is carefully led and monitored to ensure that it remains a high-quality academic subject that reflects both our Christian vision and the expectations of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Religious Education Curriculum.

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Teachers use a range of formative assessment strategies, including questioning, discussion, written work, observation and pupil reflection, to identify pupils' understanding and inform future planning. Assessment focuses on pupils' developing knowledge, understanding and religious literacy, enabling teachers to build securely on prior learning and ensure progression over time.

The Religious Education Subject Leader has overall responsibility for the strategic development of the subject. This includes supporting colleagues, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, reviewing curriculum provision and ensuring that RE remains accurate, engaging and ambitious for all pupils.

Monitoring is undertaken through a range of activities, including lesson visits, work scrutiny, planning reviews, pupil voice, learning walks and professional dialogue with staff. Governors also monitor Religious Education as part of their responsibility for preserving and developing the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Information gathered through monitoring informs subject development priorities and contributes to the school's ongoing self-evaluation.

Professional development is valued highly. Staff are supported through diocesan training, collaboration with colleagues and regular curriculum updates, ensuring that subject knowledge remains current and that teaching reflects the latest guidance and best practice.

Leaders regularly evaluate the impact of Religious Education by considering the progress pupils make, the quality of classroom experiences and the confidence with which pupils discuss religion and worldviews. This evidence helps ensure that Religious Education continues to enable pupils to flourish intellectually, spiritually and personally, whilst preparing them to participate thoughtfully and respectfully in an increasingly diverse society.

6. Inclusion

At St John Baptist CE Primary School, we believe that every child is created in the image of God and deserves the opportunity to flourish. Religious Education is therefore fully inclusive

and accessible to all pupils, regardless of their faith, belief, background, ability or additional needs.

Learning is carefully adapted to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum, participate fully and achieve success. Teachers use their knowledge of individual pupils to provide appropriate support, challenge and scaffolding, enabling every child to develop their understanding, confidence and religious literacy. High expectations are maintained for all learners, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those learning English as an additional language.

Our diverse school community is one of our greatest strengths. Religious Education provides opportunities for pupils to encounter a wide range of religions and worldviews, encouraging respect, empathy and generous dialogue. Pupils are taught to appreciate both the diversity within faith traditions and the shared dignity of all people. They learn that it is possible to hold different beliefs whilst treating one another with kindness, respect and understanding

Religious Education contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and supports our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Through engaging with different beliefs, traditions and lived experiences, pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and confidence to participate positively in modern Britain and the wider world, living out our vision of becoming shining lights within their communities.

7. Right to Withdraw

Religious Education is a statutory part of the curriculum for all pupils in maintained schools and is central to the life and Christian distinctiveness of St John Baptist CE Primary School.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child, wholly or partly, from Religious Education. Any parent wishing to exercise this right is encouraged to discuss their request with the Headteacher so that the aims and content of the Religious Education curriculum can be explained and any questions or concerns addressed.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from Religious Education, the school will ensure that appropriate supervision is provided. Parents are responsible for making suitable arrangements for any alternative religious education they wish their child to receive.

The school values the diversity of its community and seeks to provide Religious Education that is inclusive, academically rigorous and respectful of all faiths and worldviews. Our aim is that every pupil feels welcomed, valued and able to engage thoughtfully with the subject.

8. Review

The Governing Body will review this policy every two years, or sooner if required by changes to legislation, diocesan guidance or the needs of the school.

The Headteacher, Religious Education Subject Leader and Governing Body are committed to the continual development of Religious Education. Through regular self-evaluation,

monitoring, professional development and collaboration with the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education, we seek to ensure that Religious Education remains academically rigorous, inclusive and inspiring.

At St John Baptist CE Primary School, Religious Education is far more than a curriculum subject. It is one of the principal ways in which our Christian vision is lived out, enabling pupils to grow in knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Through Religious Education, we seek to develop children who are religiously literate, intellectually curious and respectful of others, equipping them to flourish as shining lights within our school, our community and the wider world.