

St Paul's CE (C) Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Policy Agreed:	Autumn 2023
Policy Amended:	Autumn Term 2024
Proposed review Date:	July 2025

Religious Education Policy

Christian Vision

We welcome all God's children into St. Paul's loving family. We open up horizons of hope and aspiration, and guide our pupils and adults into ways of fulfilling them. We create a culture that promotes dignity and respect for all to equip our family to live in a modern and diverse Britain, embracing global communities. This will support the flourishing of all, to live well in God's world, with the promise of Jesus to live life in all its fullness.

Ephesians 4 4-5

'There is one body, and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you.'

Rationale for RE at St Paul's Primary School

Religious Education (RE) plays an important role in defining St. Paul's distinctive Christian character. The subject is regarded as a core subject within our curriculum and reflects the school's Christian vision. It has a vital role in developing religious literacy and deepening pupils understanding of Christianity, in all its forms, and fostering appreciation and understanding of other faith traditions.

As the Church of England document, '**Making a difference? A review of Religious Education in Church of England schools 2014**' recommends that the RE curriculum in all schools should,

".....ensure it provides a more coherent, progressive and challenging approach to the teaching of Christianity within the context of the wider exploration of the diversity of religion and belief in the modern world"

".....explore ways of extending pupils' ability to think theologically and engage in theological enquiry as part of their learning in RE"

RE Statement of Entitlement

RE teaching at St Paul's Primary School will be in line with the recommendations of the **Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools**, published by the Church of England Education Office (June 2016), see link below:

<http://smartfile.s3.amazonaws.com/d57a4d93b010f2ac6f24bc8cee2d789e/uploads/2019/02/NEW-RE-Statement-of-Entitlement-for-Church-schools.pdf>

Christianity will, therefore, be at least 50% of RE curriculum time. The teaching of Christianity is core to the teaching of RE in this Church of England school. However, as a Church school we have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and worldviews. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also learn to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own ideas and beliefs. These outcomes must contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice and discrimination.

The RE curriculum

RE teaching also follows the legal requirements of the **Education Reform Act (1988)**, which places RE as part of the basic curriculum; a statutory subject which is an entitlement for all pupils. St Paul's Primary School bases its RE Provision on the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus. In addition, the school uses the Lichfield Diocesan RE Guidelines, Understanding Christianity resources and other appropriate materials to enhance teaching and learning. At least 5% of curriculum time will be dedicated to meeting explicitly RE objectives, although the subject may be taught across the curriculum when appropriate. Within this teaching allocation at least 50% of subject content will be allocated to an exploration of the Christian faith, and the concepts, beliefs, teachings and practices that lie at its heart.

The aims of Religious Education are:

- To 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.
- To help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide.
- To enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and world views and their impact on society and culture.
- To give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- To enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of religious texts and teachings and understanding their impact on the lives of believers.
- To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief, of themselves, the world and human experience.
- To develop an understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth, and so to consider important human questions, values and concerns.
- To nurture understanding, respect and open-mindedness and inspire lifelong engagement with the study of religions and beliefs.

The outcomes for pupils at the end of their time at St Paul's Primary School are that they are able to:

- Compare and contrast the key beliefs and practices of the religions studied and show how they are connected to believers' lives.
- Describe different aspects of belonging to a religion – symbol, story, festival, belief, faith in action, ritual, worship.
- Express religious beliefs and ideas with the appropriate language, vocabulary and terminology and describe what they mean.
- Ask questions sensitively about the lives of believers and suggest appropriate answers
- Reflect on the decisions people make – including believers – and suggest possible outcomes.
- Compare their own experience and identity with others – including believers.
- Reflect and empathise with the big questions of life, suggesting some answers / insights.
- Be confident to explore their own spirituality and search for truth.
- Value the religious journey of faith.
- Develop pupils' ability to interpret and appreciate religious imagery and expression.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

In addition the subject contributes to other areas of education and human experience and plays an important part of the wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) 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 of our society
Cultural	Aiding pupils in exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage, and developing positive attitudes towards diversity.

Additional links will be found across the curriculum especially with **personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), Relationship & Sex Education (RSE)** and **British values**. RE can also make a positive contribution to enhancing creativity and enjoyment and ensure the well-being of all pupils.

The management of RE

RE is given equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. Pupil achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects. Teachers should share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development (SIAMS 2018).

As a church school we recognise that it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in RE.

The RE subject leader is responsible for:

- Producing a scheme of work.
- Supporting colleagues in the detailed planning and delivery of RE provision.
- Ensuring Religious Education has status within the school.
- Keeping in touch with subject developments and disseminating information as appropriate.
- Auditing and recording current resources, supplementing resource provision when money is available and disseminating this information to staff.
- Undertaking personal development and subject training and ensuring provision for staff INSET.
- Monitoring RE provision, practice and outcomes.
- Ensuring rigorous systems of assessment are in place (SIAMS 2018) and are in line with the Local Agreed Syllabus.
- Creating the RE Development Plan and ensuring its regular review.
- Being accountable for RE standards in the school.
- Meeting with a member of the Diocesan RE advisory team when possible.

Right to withdrawal - see appendix

At St Paul's Primary School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship on the grounds of conscience, without giving a reason. Parents wishing to exercise this right are asked to write to the Principal who will then invite the parents into school to discuss their concerns, clarify the nature of the RE and worship provided by the school and set out the options open to the parents as set out in education law. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum 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 other subjects. Where a pupil is withdrawn from RE and does not take part in alternative religious education they will be supervised by an appropriate member of staff whilst doing work set by their parents which will seek to further their knowledge and understanding of their parents beliefs and values.

Current RE practice and principles

RE at St Paul's Primary School is delivered by class teachers and HLTA's. Each year group has a set day and time for the teaching of RE. The academy follows the guidelines set out by the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus and uses the 'Understanding Christianity' resources to enhance teaching and learning. Children study other faiths during their time at St Paul's, with Islam, Sikhism and Judaism taking priority. RE is planned in a way which encourages full and active participation from all children, whilst being differentiated to meet individual needs and abilities.

Approved and signed off by

Headteacher

Chair of IEB.....

This policy was presented to and approved by the IEB Summer 2023

To be reviewed in the Summer Term 2025.

Nb: this policy was amended in Autumn 2025 due to the new vision being added

Appendix

Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education
March 2017

Religious Education

The government guidance *Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010* states that:

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those who withdraws by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over)

In voluntary controlled schools and academies, religious education must be provided in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus provided by the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) of the local authority in which the school is situated.

In voluntary aided schools and academies, the decision on the content of religious education rests with the Governing Body, and should be in line with the Trust Deeds of the school.

In all forms of church school, the religious education provided should contribute to the Christian character of the school, and this is in aspect of the school's work which is subject to the *Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)*, whether VC, VA or academy.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, *the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum 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 other subjects such as history or citizenship. (Non-statutory Guidance 2010)*

Any parent considering withdrawal must contact the Headteacher / Principal to discuss any concerns relating to the policy, provision and practice of religious education at the school.

Managing the Right of Withdrawal

It is important that the school makes clear on its website and through other forms of communication, the RE syllabus being taught in school. There needs to be a clear understanding of the relevance of the RE curriculum and how it respects pupils own beliefs. It is good practice to review requests to withdraw from RE and collective worship annually.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Whether the parents wish their children to be withdrawn from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it.
- Parents can withdraw their child from a specific activity, such as a visit to a place of worship, and not withdraw their child from the remainder of the RE.
- Where pupils are withdrawn from Re or collective worship, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or incur extra cost.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn from RE, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This could be provided at the school or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided. Outside arrangements are permitted providing the necessary safeguarding procedures are in place and the LA or Trust Board is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from withdrawal will only affect the start or end of a school session (*Non-statutory Guidance 2010*)

It is important that schools are fully aware of issues surrounding religion, race and culture and ensure that parental right to withdrawal requests to not hamper their responsibilities to ensure equality for all and the promotion of British Values.