

St Peter's C of E Academy  
Religious Education Policy

As a church school, we believe that '**Giving children the keys to unlock their future**' will enable all pupils to flourish within our care and achieve their full potential. This is underpinned by the words of Jesus:

*"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* (John 10:10)

*"I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 16:19)

## Introduction

St Peter's Academy believes that Religious Education has a vital place in the education of all children. Through it we can teach moral and ethical values, foster personal, social and spiritual development, give meaning to the cultural traditions of this country, and encourage respect for the beliefs of other religions. It deserves a special place in the curriculum of a Church School called to educate for wisdom and knowledge, hope and aspiration, living well together with dignity and respect.

## Aims

The aim of Religious Education in our Academy is to enable children to:

- Learn about God through the life of the Holy Trinity
- Learn about the person and life of Jesus
- Learn about the Bible
- Learn about the Church
- Learn about Christian festivals
- Learn about Christian beliefs, prayers and values
- Develop their knowledge and understanding of, and their ability to respond to the theology of Christianity, for example the Incarnation and salvation
- Learn **from** religion and human experiences
- Develop enquiry and response skills through the use of distinctive language, listening and empathy
- Reflect on, analyse and evaluate their beliefs, values and practices and communicate their responses
- Learn about other Faiths and reflect on these through the enquiry-based approach used in Discovery RE
- Learn that not everybody has a religious faith and that all people have a right to voice their opinions, whether from a standing of religious faith or not.

## Teaching and Learning

St Peter's Academy is part of the Bristol Diocese and was formerly a voluntary aided Church of England school. Therefore, the teaching of Religious Education is considered to be of particular importance. It is a core subject taught not only as a discrete subject but linking with all other areas of the curriculum.

Religious Education is to be taught in school through:

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- Using the Understanding Christianity and Discovery RE schemes as frameworks throughout the school and referring to the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus when appropriate in KS1 and in KS2.
- An annual school-wide focus on an aspect of global citizenship/courageous advocacy where children explore different issues, making connections between their lives and those of others around the world. This incorporates multiple perspectives, Christian, other world faiths and non-religious. It also includes opportunities for pupils to respond and make a positive contribution to the issue we have explored.
- Development of the themes followed in collective worship
- Understanding of the meanings of songs/hymns sung in hymn practice and collective worship;
- Part of the celebration of Christian festivals, i.e. Easter, Christmas.
- The Christian tradition will be explained to the children, detailing why each festival is celebrated and what it means to Christians. This will also be linked to festivals from other faiths when relevant i.e. Festivals of Light.
- Where possible links will be made to enhancing the teaching of PSHE/SEAL and cross-curricular links with other subjects

At all times, questions of a religious nature will be addressed as they arise in an honest and sensitive way, at a level that is appropriate to the age and spiritual development of the children in the class.

The majority of the time allocated to RE will be devoted to the teaching of Christianity. The other main faiths that will be explored are:

KS1 – Judaism and Islam

KS2 – Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism

### **KS1**

The children learn about how followers focus on their personal relationship with God and the best way to show commitment to God. Children also examine special places like the Church, the Mosque and the Synagogue which can involve visits. Children look at a variety of stories from these faiths and talk about the messages they convey.

In Christianity the children start the journey of learning about the three elements which run through all of the Christianity units:

- making sense of the text
- understanding the impact
- making connections.

They also learn about core Christian concepts, which tell the 'salvation narrative' or 'big story' of the Bible and start to build their knowledge (building blocks) which set out core learning.

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In Judaism the focus is on different festivals and celebrations and the children will discover the meanings behind them. Children look at religious artefacts and discover the uses and meanings associated with them.

In Islam we focus on prayer and the children learn about the key beliefs of Muslims.

## **KS2**

The children continue to learn about how followers focus on their personal relationship with God, building on their knowledge of how believers show their commitment to God. Children may also visit special places like the Church, Mosque or Synagogue. Children look at a wider variety of stories from faiths and debate the messages they convey.

In Christianity, the children build on the foundations of their understanding from KS1 to enable them to:

- Know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith, by exploring core theological concepts
- Develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians
- Develop ability to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief (particularly Christianity), of themselves, the world and human experience.

In other faiths or belief systems, children look at Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. During these lessons they learn from and about other faiths, festivals, celebrations, pilgrimage and types of worship and discover the meanings behind them.

## **Assessment**

Teachers use the statements from Understanding Christianity to assess children's knowledge and understanding of the key theological concepts taught in this scheme. The Discovery RE scheme of work contains opportunities for assessment for other faiths and belief systems. Pupils are individually assessed on AT1 & AT2 (learning **about** and **from** religion and human experiences) at the end of each unit of work. Teachers also use the RE Expectations to assess children's progress and attainment at the end of each academic year. In FS and Year 1 these records are kept as a class group, but in Years 2 to 6 they are kept in the front of each child's RE book. These records are passed on to the child's next teacher.

As an academy we are independent of the local authority and take our guidance from the Education Acts which are required and the Academy Trust to which we belong. This requires:

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*'that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principle religious traditions present in Great Britain.'*[Education Reform Act 1988].

The school teaches religious education according to the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus. Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. This is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

**Managing the right to withdraw**

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum and collective worship. In this event, we will undertake responsibility for their supervision with regard to health and safety. There will always be opportunity for parents to discuss the contents of the RE curriculum should they have concerns. It is hoped that parents/carers who choose to send their children to St Peter's Academy do so, because they appreciate its close connection with the Church and wish to take advantage of the provisions made for a Christian based education.

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