

St James Church of England Primary School, Handsworth
Religious Education Policy
March 2022

Background

St James CE Primary School is a voluntary controlled Church of England school in the area of Handsworth and in the parish of St James Church.

Families and carers who send their children to this school are in the main from a Christian, Sikh or Muslim background with Hinduism, Rastafarianism and Buddhism also represented.

RE is concerned with learning from religion and learning about religion. The faith background of staff and children is respected at all times.

At St. James RE is seen as a crucial opportunity for children to grow in their knowledge and understanding of other faiths, heritages and cultures and an opportunity to build a harmonious community of the future.

Aims of Religious Education

At St James, we believe that it is highly important for all our pupils to learn about different faiths in order for them to understand the world around them. We believe that children are free to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief. RE at St James, does not try to persuade but rather inform and develop the skills with which evaluation can take place whilst respecting their own culture and home life. It is very important to us that our RE curriculum reflects the local area whilst still upholding the Church of England values. We want to encourage children to share and discuss their own faith as well as give them the skills and understanding, to handling questions raised by religion and beliefs.

Religious Education and the National Curriculum

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires the RE syllabus to reflect 'the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

Withdrawal

All parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or any part of RE and arrangements will be made for any parent wishing to do so.

A parent should express their wishes in writing, together with their reasons.

A senior leader will arrange to discuss the parent / carer's reasons with them, before the parent / carer makes their final decision.

Whole School Planning and Delivery

At St James, we have decided to follow the Discovery RE scheme of work where we have woven the dispositions from the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus into each unit. Our daily collective worship is also centred around the dispositions taken from this syllabus. This scheme of work uses an enquiry-based model, so that children's critical thinking skills can develop and their knowledge and empathy with people and their beliefs and religions can be enhanced.

At the start of each unit the children are given a key question to explore using a four step model.

The four step model works as a cycle:

Step 1 Engagement: this step starts by the children sharing and linking the big question to their own experiences. This bridges the human experience to the religion.

Step 2 Investigation: in this step the teacher guides the children through the enquiry, the children gain subject knowledge which has been carefully selected to assist their thinking about the key question.

Step 3 Evaluation: this step draws together the children's learning and their conclusions about the key question.

Step 4 Expression: in this step the children are taken back to Step 1, their own experience, to reflect on how this enquiry might have influenced their own starting points and beliefs.

Throughout our RE curriculum we encourage each child to be creative, imaginative, curious, debate their idea, have discussion and show independence. It plays an important role alongside other subjects in promoting a social awareness, British Values and making them aware of their rights and responsibilities as Global Citizen.

Time Allocation

The time allocation for RE is as follows:

EYFS: 15 minutes' adult led input followed by daily continuous provision

Key Stage One: 1 hour

Key Stage Two: 1 hour

The time allocation for Collective Worship is required to be separate from that allocated to RE.

Planning

Planning in RE is supported by the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. The scheme of work taught ensures that our aims are met at each key stage. This is through the twenty-four Dispositions following a spiral learning model.

Religious Education and the Whole Curriculum

RE teaching and learning will access wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions. There are opportunities to:

- explore multicultural and equal opportunity issues
- consider environmental concerns
- examine moral questions raised
- promote a sense of citizenship

The RE curriculum will also compliment elements of Personal, Social and Health Education and encourage children to make informed decisions and develop life skills. Links will be maintained with people and communities within the local area.

Cross-curricular Links

Cross-curricular links will be identified between RE and other subjects.

Equal Opportunities

All children will be given access to the RE curriculum regardless of gender, ability, ethnic origin and social circumstances and, through differentiation, be given opportunities to make the greatest possible progress.

Special Educational Needs

The school will ensure that the children with SEN have full access to the RE curriculum at their own level of achievement.

Resource Management

It is the responsibility of the RE subject lead to ensure that adequate resources are available for the successful implementation of the scheme of work for RE in the school.

Educational Visits to Places of Worship

Each year a calendar of visits to places of worship is organised including our St James church and St. Phillip's Anglican cathedral, a Hindu temple, Singers Hill Jewish synagogue, Birmingham Central Mosque, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Gurdwara and Birmingham Buddhist Vihara Trust.

During their lives at St. James we hope that each child will have the experience of visiting a place of worship of each of the world's major religions with the aim of growing in their knowledge, understanding and tolerance of other faiths, heritages and cultures.

We urge parents and carers to encourage their children's participation in these visits. Any parent / carer considering withdrawing their child is urged to, first, discuss their thinking with a senior leader, before they make a final decision. (See "Withdrawal" above).

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Health and Safety

We aim to provide a safe working environment for the children, staff and visitors at all times. Out of school visits will be organised with an awareness of Health and Safety issues.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

All assessment, recording and reporting takes place within the context of the School Assessment Policy. The legal requirement to report to parents once a year about RE will be fulfilled in the annual report written on each pupil.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as required or annually by RE subject leader. It is subject to review in accordance with school development planning.

Policy Written: March 2022

Last Policy Review: Mrs Hanson (Deputy Head Teacher)
Mrs McGowan (RE subject leader) March 2022

Next Review: March 2023