

St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy



Our vision is that St Francis, through its Christian ethos, will be dedicated to the community that it serves and will provide:

- New exciting ways of learning to equip people with skills for life
- A nurturing and inspirational environment
- A caring community

Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life' – John 14:6

Religious Education Policy

Date Agreed: November 2025

Review Date: November 2026

Revision Record

Revision No.	Date Issued	Comments
1	June 2024	Reviewed policy - KM
2	November 2025	Reviewed policy - RC
3		

The provision of Religious Education for all pupils attending the Academy is the responsibility of the Governing Body. It shall be fully Roman Catholic and fully Church of England in accordance with the provisions of the Instrument of Government for the Academy and the Trust Deed relating to the Academy.

The Governing Body shall:

1. Ensure that Religious Education will be guided by the principles established by the Instrument of Government and established as least initially within the framework laid down in the 'God Matters' (Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth RE Programme), Understanding Christianity and the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus Programme. The Academy has a combined scheme that is unique to St Francis.
2. Seek to develop and secure partnership of home, Academy and parishes
3. Incorporate Christian Scripture and the Church liturgical cycle into the life of the Academy
4. Ensure that appropriate teaching time of 7½% is allocated to effectively teach the programmes of study
5. Ensure the provision of Religious Education is monitored effectively and receive reports on a regular basis
6. Ensure that all those appointed to teach Religious Education present the subject with enthusiasm and are provided with realistic opportunities for ongoing formation and professional development
7. Ensure that the leadership and management of Religious Education are reserved for committed members of the Roman Catholic Church or Church of England.

Religious Education Policy
St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy

Jesus said, 'I am the way and the truth and the life' John 14:6

Mission Statement

A Christian Academy that serves its local community

Inspiring values for life and lifelong learning
Nurturing spirituality, respect for self and others
Pursuing excellence for all through Teaching and Learning
Challenging all children to achieve to the very best of their ability
Enabling all to recognise and celebrate their Gifts and Talents

As St Paul writes to bear with one another charitably with complete selflessness, gentleness and patience.

Introduction

Religious Education forms the cornerstone of the life and work of St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary School and permeates throughout the whole curriculum. We believe that,

“Religious Education is not one subject among many but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life. It should provide the context for, and substantially shape, the school curriculum and offer living experience of the life of faith in its practical expression.”
(Bishops of England and Wales, 1988)

We see our Christian community sharing in the mission of the church, on our journey to closeness with Christ.

We strive for our Christian ethos to pervade our school day. We try to conduct our relationships in the way Christ wishes.

Rationale

We aim to teach Religious Education in a way that reflects the Christian nature of the Foundation of the Academy. St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy is based on Christian values in which the traditions of the Church of England and Catholic Church are valued and affirmed by the whole community. We believe that Religious Education makes an invaluable contribution to the ethos and spiritual dimension of the Academy.

The management of Religious Education is a distinctive role of the Governors and Principal. Religious Education at St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy is in accordance with the Trust Deed and with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England and Catholic Church. The Governing body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of Religious Education provided at the Academy.

Although Religious Education and Collective Worship naturally complement and enrich one another, they are managed separately.

Aims and Objectives

The nature of R.E. at St Francis is firmly rooted in an understanding of life based on Gospel values. Our chief emphasis is on the teaching and practice of the Catholic and Anglican Churches, where faith is fostered and positive attitudes and relationships developed, in accordance with our mission statement.

Our aims are as follows:

- 1.To teach and encourage the celebration of the Christian faith and thereby promote a good Christian community, at the centre of which is the worship of God. The call to love God and our neighbour.
- 2.To develop and teach a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, appropriate to the needs of the individual child, and to acknowledge and develop fully each child's potential within a caring environment.
- 3.To work towards each child's realisation of self-esteem and to recognise the contribution this can be made by all children in the use of their individual talents and qualities. Thus enabling each child to use their state of grace as Christ allotted.
- 4.To value the contribution of each staff member and encourage them to undertake training for their own development and the good of the school.
- 5.To foster an openness in communication within the school and community in the decision making process.
- 6.To forge links between home, school and parish and within the world wide community.

Our objectives are as follows:

1. That we should have a particular concern for justice by showing forgiveness, compassion, care and love, and should clearly demonstrate an appreciation of the worth of the individual.
2. That through the experience of belonging to the school, the children may be encouraged towards a personal relationship with God and a desire to love one another.
3. That the children should know the principal truths of the Christian faith reflected through the teachings of the Churches.
4. That each child should be encouraged to make good use of whatever gifts he/she has been given but especially the gift of faith.

Content and Time Allocation for Religious Education

Religious Education lies at the very heart of the curriculum at St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy. We use our own 'Joint Religious Education Curriculum' which incorporates topics from the framework laid down in the 'God Matters' (Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth RE Programme), Understanding Christianity and the Locally Agreed Syllabus Programme Living Difference IV. The Academy has worked with colleagues from both the Anglican and Catholic Dioceses to produce a combined scheme that is unique to St Francis. 7 ½ % of curriculum time is devoted to RE.

St Francis Catholic & Church of England Primary Academy aims to ensure that pupils flourish

through the provision of high quality religious education reflecting the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement](#) and that religious education expresses the school's Christian vision.

Christianity plays a central role in RE. Appropriate teaching about other major religions and world views is included in the curriculum – In EYFS and KS1 – Judaism, LKS2 - Hinduism , UKS2 – Islam.

The Religious Education curriculum has a balanced approach of Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion.

Respect in Religious Education

Religious Education aims to equip pupils to recognise the common search of all humanity for ultimate truth and relationship with the divine. It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world, therefore, that respect for the major world faiths is fostered at Academy. The RE curriculum at the Academy focuses on Christianity and other major world faiths in the ratio of two thirds to one third respectively. This respect is based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the other major religions which is consistent with the Academy's loyalty to its Christian foundation. Religious Education at St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy aims to help pupils to:

- learn about other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practices and from them through encounter and dialogue
- recognise and respect those of all faiths in their search for God
- recognise areas of common belief and practice between different faiths
- enrich and expand their understanding of truth while remaining faithful to their own tradition
- enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions
- recognise the common human quest for justice, peace and love and the common goal of the survival of life on this planet.

Guidelines

The Religious Education curriculum at St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy is distinctive and unique. It includes:

- *opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year*
- *study of the story of the local Christian communities with its saints and martyrs*

- *visits to places of worship, especially the local parish churches of St Wilfrid's, St Catherine's, Holy Trinity and St. Albans and the Cathedrals in Portsmouth, to develop an understanding of the Church as a living community*
- *welcoming visitors from the local parishes to share their experience of Christian belief and life*
- *liaison with the local parishes to enable these visits and links to occur*
- *opportunities to learn about the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist and Reconciliation*
- *support for the pupils; confident use of religious language*
- *sets of Bibles in language that can be understood by the learners and examples of prayer books from a variety of contexts*
- *the facility to listen to Christian hymns and spiritual songs from a wide variety of traditions*
- *access to Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence*
- *encouragement of mutual respect based on Christian values, where pupils and teachers are able to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule*
- *pupils to make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity*
- *pupils from Christian families to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to grow in their faith*
- *pupils from other faith backgrounds to understand and be encouraged in their faith*
- *pupils with no religious background to face the challenge of the Christian faith*
- *pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the place of doubt and certainty in a maturing faith*

Religious Education's contribution to Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural Development

Spiritual development within Religious Education at St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment. At St. Francis, we support children's spiritual development using the 'candle, window, mirror, door' approach.

Moral development is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives.

Social development enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice. Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

Special Educational Needs Provision

Religious Education is taught in ways appropriate to the children's ability and experience. There is the opportunity for all pupils to contribute to and take part in lessons. Where the need arises, lessons and tasks are varied to suit the needs of the individual.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils regardless of religious tradition, race or gender have access to Religious Education. The scheme embraces a variety of cultures and countries, especially in relation to the study of other world faiths. A particular emphasis is given to Judaism, Hinduism and Islam.

Resources

Teaching and learning is enhanced by the use of ICT, books, pictures, artefacts, visits and visitors. Our local clergy play an important role in this. Each Year group has a file on Staff Share which contains their relevant section of the Religious Education scheme of work. There are also centrally stored resources in the RE cupboard in the hall and the RE Leader's office to support the Religious Education curriculum in Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

Assessment and Recording

Teaching activities are planned in order to challenge pupils at the appropriate level. Children's learning about and learning from religion is assessed throughout the topics with relevant tasks set to enable them to achieve the objectives. Assessment, at the end of each topic, should be recorded. At the data collection points during the year, the outcomes/levels achieved in RE for each child will be recorded on the Academy's assessment system. Samples of work will also be kept. Regular moderation meetings will ensure levels are accurate.

Evaluation and Assessment

Teachers will use short term/daily assessment to monitor and plan next steps for pupils' learning using the RE unit outcomes as a guide.

Teachers will have the opportunity to assess and moderate pupils' work termly against the broader assessment outcomes for RE.

Teachers will have the opportunity to assess and moderate RE outcomes for each pupil at the end of the year against the broader assessment outcomes for RE.

These assessments and outcomes are analysed by the RE Leader. Standards and outcomes are reported to the Senior Leadership Team.

Books will be monitored for standards and progression by the RE Leader and RE Governor and by teachers working together as part of whole Academy monitoring procedures.

The Principal, RE Leader and RE link Governor annually monitor RE teaching.

Parental Rights of Withdrawal from Religious Education

Parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education as they may in any Academy.

"The Worship and Religious Education provided by the Academy is in accordance with the Church of England and Catholic Church Foundation. This foundation is also reflected in the curriculum and the whole life of the Academy community. Since the conduct of the Academy as a whole reflects the Church of England and Catholic Church ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and / or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate them from the religious life of the Academy."

If such a request for withdrawal is made, the Principal will explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an accommodation.

1. Roles, Functions and Responsibilities

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for Religious Education throughout the Academy but shares this responsibility with the RE Leader and teaching staff.

RE Leader

The R E. Leader has responsibility for:

- ❖ keeping the RE syllabus for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 under review
- ❖ organising the liturgical activity throughout the Academy
- ❖ being involved in the arrangements for preparation of children to receive the Sacraments
- ❖ being involved in staff development work
- ❖ attending appropriate training
- ❖ monitoring resources required to support the teaching of RE and the liturgical life of the Academy, acquiring new resources when needed, with the approval of the Principal.

Classroom Teachers

The classroom teacher will be responsible for the following: (unless other arrangements are made by the Principal)

- ❖ to deliver the Academy's Religious Education Scheme to the children in their charge
- ❖ display RE work in their classrooms and around the school in keeping with its status
- ❖ prepare worship for the children in their charge
- ❖ develop the prayer lives of their pupils through daily prayers

Whole Staff

The whole staff is responsible for working to provide an atmosphere based on the principles of the Christian family.

Curriculum and Staff Development

Staff meetings relating to Religious Education take place regularly, and inset days are also used to develop staff knowledge and understanding, and to provide opportunities for staff spiritual development.

2. Teaching and Learning Strategies

Planning

St Francis has adapted the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth agreed RE syllabus 'God Matters', Understanding Christianity and the Hampshire agreed RE syllabus Living Difference IV.

Teachers will work in year groups to select the most appropriate material from the St Francis Scheme of Work for RE in order to tailor the topics closely to the needs of their pupils. Teachers will use other resources to support this work as required.

Teachers will plan and teach using the cycle of enquiry – Communicate, Apply, Inquire, Contextualise and Evaluate. Classroom displays will reflect this cycle.

Teachers will use support materials from the Dioceses to assist with planning and give further guidance.

Time Allocation

The Academy follows the wish of the Bishops that at least 7 ½ % of the Academy curriculum is given to RE. This is timetabled weekly but may also be part of a cross-curricular topic. In addition to this, there will be time taken for Whole Academy Collective Worship, Class and Key Stage Collective Worship, prayer and hymn practice.

Lesson Structure

As RE is a core subject and the foundation of the entire educational process, the quality of teaching must engage pupils' intellect, heart and imagination.

Lessons are generally structured as follows:

Introduction ⇨ Main Teaching Activity ⇨ Group/Paired/Individual Activity ⇨ Plenary

However, a combination of different teaching and learning approaches in RE are adopted. These include story, class/group discussion, drama, music, art and song. Participation and co-operative enquiry are always actively encouraged. These activities generate children's art and written work which is regularly displayed in the Academy.

Teachers will plan and teach using the cycle of enquiry – Communicate, Apply, Inquire, Contextualise and Evaluate. Classroom displays will reflect this cycle.

Skills that are learnt in other literary subjects are applied to RE and pupils are encouraged to investigate faith with the same enthusiasm and rigour as other subjects.

3. Professional Development in RE

The Academy is committed to providing RE in-service training for all staff to support the delivery of high quality teaching and learning. This will take place in a variety of ways:

- Shared inset days with other Church schools and Academies.
- Specific training provided by the Diocesan RE services
- In house training and development sessions

Opportunities exist for staff to come together in prayer and reflection through:

- Prayer and reflection during RE inset sessions, Development Days and staff meetings
- The annual Diocesan masses and leavers' services at the end of the Academy year

Moral Values

We recognise the atmosphere of the Academy is very important for personal and moral growth. An atmosphere of love, respect for others, sympathy and forgiveness, contributes to the children's self confidence and self acceptance, and develops their capacity to relate to others and to God.

We encourage children to develop the moral qualities of self-discipline, perseverance, determination, patience, fair play and consideration for others. The Academy has a high standard of behaviour and follows an assertive discipline policy. This helps the children to acquire self-control, to appreciate the rights of others and to realise that there are limitations to their own freedom.

Conclusion

To meet the rationale, purposes and guidelines of this policy we endeavour to ensure that all our pupils receive a range of well planned and progressive Religious Education lessons with opportunities for spiritual reflection and celebration. For the most part these are planned and delivered by the class teacher following the scheme of work. Responsibility for the co-ordination of Religious Education is given to a senior member of the Academy's teaching staff who leads the process of planning, progression, assessment and recording and the promotion of staff development. Religious Education is discussed at regular meetings of the Governing Body and the Christian Distinctiveness Group.