

# St Augustine's Academy



## Religious Education Policy

Approved by:

Date: 08.05.25

Last reviewed on: 05.06.23

Next review due  
by: May 2027

'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven.'  
*Matthew 5:16*

## **Purpose**

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with an eye upon you.” Psalm 32:8*

Religious Education (RE) and the development of our pupils’ Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education (SMSC) are both integral parts of St Augustine’s Academy’s Curriculum. Religious Education impacts directly on our SMSC which helps children develop the personal qualities which are valued in society e.g. respect for self, others and the environment; dignity, compassion, honesty and independence. At St Augustine’s Academy we seek to teach these qualities across the curriculum and throughout school life.

Through specific Religious Education lessons, we believe that we should try to help children to understand the beliefs and worldviews of others so that they can readily relate to those they meet. Religious Education is also crucial in helping each individual to examine and develop their own spirituality and beliefs.

## **Education Reform Act Guidance on Religious Education**

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a Foundation subject. The 1988 Education Act states that, “Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils.”

St Augustine’s Academy’s curriculum meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. However, the ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from Religious education lessons and parents/carers need to give written notice to the Governing Board. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach Religious Education, they must give notice of their intention to the Governing Board.

## **Aims**

‘The principal aim of RE is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.’ Identities, Meanings and Values – The RE Agreed Syllabus, SACRE 2024 – 2029, Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton.

Through Religious Education, at St Augustine’s Academy we also aim to:

- Provoke challenging questions - These will be about the meaning and purpose of life, belief, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examines these questions. We aim to foster personal reflection and spiritual development.
- Encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (religious or non-religious) – This will be in the light of what they learn as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics. We will encourage them to express their responses and build resilience towards anti-democratic or extremist narratives.

- Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging – This will help them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- Teach pupils to develop respect for others – this includes people of different beliefs and worldviews, considers ‘Valuing All God’s Children’ and helps to challenge all prejudice.
- Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities – This should be towards themselves, their communities and wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- Help children to learn from religions as well as about religions.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which ‘promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.’ Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society, helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

### **Personal development and well-being**

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

### **Community Cohesion**

RE makes an important contribution to a school’s duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people’s understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

### **Curriculum**

Following the Education Reform Act (ERA), when RE was confirmed as a compulsory part of the curriculum, it became a statutory requirement for every Local Authority to appoint a SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education). St Augustine’s Religious Education curriculum is based on the Central Bedfordshire Local Authority’s Agreed Syllabus and The Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools (February 2019). The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are mainly Christian and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teaching and practices of other major religions.

The current RE syllabus was introduced in September 2018 and its coverage at St Augustine's Academy is detailed in the table below.

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
EYFS	<p>RE makes a strong contribution to the Early Learning Goals with particular importance played in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world</p> <p>Why is the word "God" so important to Christians?            Why is Christmas special for Christians?            Why is Easter special for Christians?            Being special: where do we belong? (At least two religions)            Which places are specially valued and why? (At least two religions)            Which stories are specially valued and why? (At least two religions)</p>		
Year 1	<p>Who is a Muslim?            Why does Christmas matter to Christians?            How and why do we celebrate special times?</p>	<p>What makes some places significant? What makes some places sacred to believers? (Christian, Muslim and/or Jewish)            Why does Easter matter to Christians?</p>	<p>What do Christians believe God is like?            What do Muslims believe and how do they live?</p>
Year 2	<p>How and why do we celebrate significant times? What makes some celebrations sacred to believers? (Christian, Muslim)            What can we learn from sacred books and stories? (Christian, Muslim)</p>	<p>How do we show care for others? What does it matter? (Christian, Muslim)            How do we show care for the Earth? Why does it matter? (Christian, Muslim)</p>	<p>Who is an inspiring person? What stories inspire Christian and Muslim people?            What is the 'good news' Christians believe Jesus brings?</p>
Year 3	<p>What is the 'Trinity' and why is it important for Christians?            What kind of world did Jesus want?</p>	<p>How is faith expressed in Hindu communities and traditions?            Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'?</p>	<p>How do festivals and family life show what matters to Jewish people?            How do festivals and worship show what matters to Muslims?</p>
Year 4	<p>Where, how and why do people worship? (Muslims, Jewish people, Christians)            Why do some people think life is like a journey?            How and why do people mark the significant events of life? (Christians, Hindus, Muslims, non-religious people)</p>	<p>How is faith expressed in Sikh communities and traditions?            For Christians, what was the impact of Pentecost?</p>	<p>How and why do people try to make the world a better place? (Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, non-religious people)            What are the deeper meanings of the festivals? (Muslims, Jewish people, Sikhs, non-religious people)</p>

<b>Year 5</b>	What does it mean if Christians believe God is holy and loving? Values: what matters most to Humanists and Christians?	How is faith expressed in Islam? How and why do some people inspire others? Examples from religions (Hindus, Sikhs, Jewish people, Muslims)	Justice and poverty: why does faith make a difference? (Christians, Muslims, non-religious people) What will make our community a more respectful place? (religious and non-religious ideas)
<b>Year 6</b>	How do Christians decide how to live? 'What would Jesus do?' Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?	What helps Hindu people as they try to be good? What do Christians believe Jesus did to 'save' people?	Why do some people believe in God and some people not? (Christians, Muslims non-religious people) How does faith enable resilience? (Christians, Muslims and/or Jews and/or Hindus, non-religious people)

## **Inclusion**

We are an inclusive school and aim to ensure that all pupils, whose parents/carers agree, are able to access our RE curriculum and its associated activities.

## **Training and Resourcing**

St Augustine's Academy staff have access to high quality training through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Diocese of St Albans. Courses such as 'Understanding Christianity' help teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and understanding of Christianity and to explore significant, Christian theological concepts. The school has a range of teaching and learning resources including Bibles and religious artifacts.

## **Visits and visitors**

Children's knowledge and understanding can be enhanced through enrichment activities such as visits to religious places of worship and by meeting people of different religions and faiths. We aim to build experience-based learning into the Curriculum for every child.

## **Feedback and Assessment**

Feedback is given to pupils in-line with the school's Feedback Policy and Assessment is carried out in accordance with the school's Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy. Attainment and Attitudes to Learning in RE are reported to parents/carers on both pupils' Interim and End of Year Reports.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring ensures that teaching and learning is strong across the school, and where it is not, support is given to raise quality. The monitoring of RE takes the form of

lesson observations, monitoring of children's work and teacher feedback files. Discussions with pupils and staff also form part of the monitoring process.

Monitoring is also provided by external professionals such as a School Improvement Advisor and School Improvement Partner. Our SIAMS Inspection Report – June 2022 – states, "Religious education (RE) is a key strength as the bespoke curriculum enables pupils to flourish within lessons."

## **Support**

The school engages support from a range of sources to ensure quality first RE teaching and learning. This includes support from the following:

- Diocesan Board of Education
- Local clergy (especially St Augustine's Church)
- The school's Governing Board
- Other Church of England Schools