

Wisbech St. Mary Church of England Academy

Religious Education Policy

“Be the light” (Matthew 5:14-16)

We are dedicated to fostering a safe and nurturing environment grounded in Christian values, where every child is cherished and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Our Ethos

At Wisbech St Mary Church of England Academy, we believe in the importance of personal responsibility and the need to show care and respect for others, our school, and its surroundings. Inspired by Luke 6:31, we strive to treat others as we wish to be treated, embodying the principles of good citizenship.

Our staff are committed to collaborating closely with parents, pupils, and Governors to cultivate a culture of respect, tolerance, and inclusion. We celebrate diversity and ensure that every child feels valued and supported.

We aim to provide a high-quality education that empowers all children to excel and prepares them for future challenges and opportunities. Our inclusive, thoughtful, and sensitive approach ensures that we support every pupil in their journey.

We also recognize the importance of community engagement and partnerships, working together to create a positive and enriching environment for all.

Our Vision

We choose **Be the Light** as our vision because we want to demonstrate the love of Jesus in our world through our Christian values. Jesus told us in Matthew (5:14-16), “You are the light of the world...**let your light shine before all**, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Jesus is the true light that shines from within us (John 8:12). We want all members of our school community to thrive and **Be the Light** in our world, so they make a positive difference today and in the future.

Introduction

Religious Education at Wisbech St. Mary Academy is an important part of our school curriculum. We follow the Cambridgeshire Local agreed syllabus 2023-2028 and Understanding Christianity. As a church school R.E. plays an integral role in all we do.

Aims

Our teaching aims are:

- To acquire and develop an understanding of Christianity
- Develop the ability to explore, reflect on and respond to human experience, drawing on the study of religion
- To develop a respect for religious traditions, beliefs and practice
- To grow and nurture spiritual development
- To develop awe and wonder

- To develop skills and attitudes which support personal, moral, social and cultural development
- To explore questions and issues in the news and in other religions
- To analyse our own beliefs and values
- To reflect on feelings, relationships, experiences, questions, beliefs and practices
- To make links with all religions and to empathise and understand

SEND and Equal opportunities

In the case of SEND pupils, activities and equipment will be modified to allow children to participate and be involved. Individual teachers will consult parent/carer to establish needs and to give regard for health and safety. Children with health care plans are supported.

At Wisbech St. Mary Academy, all children, regardless of age, gender, ability, race or creed will have access to the RE curriculum. The curriculum is matched to the needs of the children and Equal opportunities are in accordance with school policy. All children will have access to the RE curriculum. This encourages children to be sensitive to the needs of others and challenge inequalities and discrimination if these occur.

Provision

At Wisbech St. Mary Academy, we ensure that the school follows at least the minimum number of hours for RE as set out in the Local Agreed syllabus.

Key Stage	What to teach
EYFS	2 terms of Christianity and 1 term split into two other religions & world views.
Key Stage 1	2 terms of Christianity and 1 term split into two other religions & world views.
Key Stage 2	2 terms of Christianity and 1 term split into two other religions & world views including humanism (Year 5) and the spiritual arts competition (Year 6)

Subject Organisation and progression

Our Religious Education (RE) curriculum is effectively implemented through weekly lessons that align with the Locally Agreed Syllabus 2023-2028. This ensures that the entire curriculum collaborates with our RE framework to enhance children's holistic learning experiences. At Wisbech St Mary, we recognize the importance of Religious Education, and therefore all teachers take responsibility for the subject. This fosters a deep understanding among children, staff, and the wider community about the significant impact of religion and beliefs in our lives.

The curriculum is thoughtfully structured, dedicating two-thirds of instructional time to Christianity while devoting the remaining third to exploring world religions. This balanced approach fosters rich and in-depth knowledge, enabling children to engage in reasoned and thoughtful discussions. The leadership team at Wisbech St Mary has strategically implemented a spiral curriculum for key Christian concepts, ensuring that complex ideas such as 'salvation' and 'incarnation' are revisited and explored in depth as students grow and mature.

The RE subject leader actively participates in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) offered by the Diocese of Ely, ensuring that vital insights and resources are disseminated to all staff members. All educators also engage in regular RE-focused CPD, facilitated by both the RE lead and external trainers, to continuously enhance their expertise and impact on student learning. To meet the recommended teaching time and enrich our curriculum, we organize annual RE Enrichment Days,

ensuring that our students receive comprehensive and engaging educational experiences in Religious Education.

In selecting the wider faiths we teach, we have made thoughtful decisions that reflect the demographic composition of our local community in Peterborough. For instance, we have integrated Islam into our curriculum for Years 1, 2, 4, and 6, recognizing that 12.2% of our local community identifies with this faith. This approach not only acknowledges the rich diversity of beliefs in our area but also helps our students develop a meaningful understanding of the experiences and perspectives of their peers.

Additionally, we have included Humanism in Year 5 to ensure a comprehensive exploration of belief systems. After seven years of focusing on faith and religion, we believe it is crucial for students to have the opportunity to engage with secular worldviews. Introducing Humanism empowers children to seek answers to questions they may have about life, morality, and ethics beyond religious frameworks, preparing them for thoughtful citizenship in a diverse society. By embracing a wide array of beliefs, we support our students in becoming open-minded individuals who can appreciate the complexity of human experience.

Children work in RE books in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 but floor books are also used to showcase evidence for dramatised activities and to capture children's voice.

Approaches to RE teaching used in School

RE is taught through stories, cross-curricular themes, topics, festivals and whole-school topics, as well through discussions. The use of knowledge organisers and key vocabulary is key to sequenced approach that is planned throughout the whole school.

Teaching methods are stimulating and engaging and use a number of styles and methods. All these are focused to give children maximum opportunities to be involved and learn.

Spiritual development in RE

Spiritual development is about being aware of the relationships we have with ourselves, with others, with nature and with God. Ofsted define spiritual development as being the "development of the non-material element of a human-being which animates and sustains us". Religious Education can serve to broaden every child's spiritual development by:

- Encouraging pupils to consider their own values and attitudes
- Encouraging reflection on questions about religion and the meaning of life
- Explore their own and other peoples' beliefs
- Encouraging pupils to consider and discuss their own beliefs
- Developing a sense of awe and wonder
- Promoting ways that beliefs contribute to individual and group identity
- Providing opportunities to view things from another person's perspective

We also encourage our children to have 'mirror moments' by thinking about themselves; have 'door moments' by thinking about others; have 'window moments' by thinking about the beauty of the world and 'candle moments' that encourage our children to think beyond the things they can see.

Resources

There are a range of resources to support the teaching of Religious Education in school. Resources are regularly audited to see if they are up to date and relevant. Knowledge organisers are also a key resource. The R.E. subject leader is responsible for managing the purchase and maintenance of resources.

We also use the local church community as an important resource in RE. Contributions from the St Mary Church, provide a valuable link in the delivery of RE within the school.

Assessment, Evaluation and Monitoring.

We closely monitor the progress our pupils make in religious education, ensuring they retain key knowledge and facts that empower them to engage reflectively in lessons. Our assessment methods include Book Looks, Pupil Voice, and thorough summative data analysis to ensure that we are effectively supporting students' learning. At Wisbech St Mary Academy, our staff are thoroughly trained in assessment practices to ensure that each piece of assessment is relevant and specific to the outcomes being measured. We believe that nothing is left to chance; every assessment is purposefully planned to align with our educational objectives and the students' learning needs. This strategic approach allows us to effectively monitor progress, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and ultimately support each child in their journey toward flourishing in their religious education. It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment pupils through evaluation of work, in whatever form that may take (discussion, questioning, quizzes and prior learning). Over the course of each termly/half term unit there should be a balance of assessments looking at knowledge and understanding as well as looking at the questions asked. Where work is recorded, feedback is given in line with the school's marking and feedback policy.

The Right of Withdrawal from R.E.

At Wisbech St. Mary Academy, we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education.

Reviewed: September 2024

Date for next review: September 2026