

St. John's CE Primary Academy

Beliefs and Values (Religious Education) Policy

Reviewed by: N. Brennan

Date: June 2025

Next review date: June 2026

Executive Principal: M. Seex

Chair of CLAC: Z. Heath

Agreed by CLAC: 10.7.25

Policy Statement

At St John's CE Primary Academy, Beliefs and Values is regarded as a core subject and plays a significant role in supporting the Christian character of the school. Through the study of Christianity and a range of other religions, beliefs and worldviews, pupils are encouraged to develop religious literacy, explore questions of meaning and purpose, and deepen their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them.

Beliefs and Values contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and reflects our commitment to enabling all members of our community to flourish.

School Vision

Our Academy is More Than a School—We're a welcoming and nurturing family, who love and support one another. As a school community we are inspired by the message and example of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and seek to live as people of hope and hospitality. We shine with resilience, strive for excellence, and embody agape—unconditional love, welcoming and enabling all to flourish.

Our REACH Values

- Resilience
- Excellence
- Agape
- Community
- Hope

Our Christian vision underpins all aspects of school life and directly influences the teaching and learning of Beliefs and Values.

Why Do We Call Religious Education "Beliefs and Values"?

St John's serves a diverse community with a wide range of faith backgrounds, cultures and lived experiences.

We use the title Beliefs and Values because it reflects our commitment to inclusion and encourages all pupils to engage confidently with learning about faith, belief and worldview. The title helps pupils understand that everyone holds beliefs and values which influence how they live their lives.

Whilst we use the title Beliefs and Values, the subject remains Religious Education and fully meets the expectations of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement and the requirements for Religious Education in Church schools.

Legal Framework and Statement of Entitlement

Beliefs and Values is taught in accordance with:

- The Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- Understanding Christianity.
- Guidance from the Diocese of Lichfield.
- Relevant national legislation.

Religious Education is a statutory subject and forms part of the basic curriculum for all pupils.

In line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement, Christianity forms no less than two-thirds of curriculum content and is taught as a living and diverse faith. The teaching of Christianity is therefore at the heart of the Beliefs and Values curriculum.

Beliefs and Values is given equal status to other core curriculum subjects in terms of leadership, resourcing, monitoring and professional development.

At least 5% of curriculum time is dedicated to the teaching of Beliefs and Values in line with diocesan expectations.

Aims

Through Beliefs and Values, pupils will:

- Know and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people around the world.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of a range of religions, beliefs and worldviews.
- Develop religious literacy and use appropriate religious vocabulary.
- Explore theological, philosophical and ethical questions.
- Develop the ability to think theologically and engage in theological enquiry.
- Reflect upon their own beliefs, values and experiences.
- Develop understanding, respect and appreciation of diversity.
- Explore questions of meaning, purpose and truth.
- Contribute positively to life in modern Britain.
- Develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.
- Understand how the school's Christian vision influences relationships and daily life.

Curriculum Organisation

Beliefs and Values is planned progressively across the school to ensure that pupils build knowledge, understanding and skills over time.

The curriculum is delivered through Understanding Christianity, the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus and additional high-quality resources where appropriate.

Christianity

Christianity forms the majority of curriculum content and is studied as a living faith.

Pupils explore:

- God
- Creation
- Incarnation
- Gospel
- Salvation

- Kingdom of God
- The Church
- Christian worship and practice
- The life and teachings of Jesus

Other Religions and Worldviews

Pupils also study a range of other faiths and worldviews, including:

- Islam
- Hinduism
- Judaism
- Humanist and non-religious worldviews where appropriate

This enables pupils to understand the diversity of beliefs represented within modern Britain and the wider world.

Teaching and Learning

Beliefs and Values is taught through a range of approaches including:

- Enquiry-based learning
- Big Questions
- Discussion and debate
- Exploration of sacred texts
- Reflection opportunities
- Visits and visitors
- Collaborative learning
- Independent research
- Creative and experiential learning

Teachers create an environment where pupils feel safe to ask questions, explore ideas and respectfully challenge viewpoints.

Learning opportunities are designed to encourage curiosity, reflection and deeper thinking.

Spiritual Development

Beliefs and Values makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

Pupils are provided with opportunities to:

- Experience awe and wonder.
- Reflect on questions of meaning and purpose.
- Explore identity and belonging.
- Consider faith and belief.
- Reflect on relationships with themselves, others, the world and God.

Through discussion, reflection and enquiry, pupils develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their place within the world.

Inclusion

Beliefs and Values is accessible to all pupils.

Teaching is adapted to ensure that pupils with SEND, EAL and other additional needs are able to access learning successfully and make progress.

The curriculum values and celebrates the diversity represented within the school community and promotes dignity, respect and inclusion for all.

Outcomes for Pupils

By the end of their time at St John's, pupils will be able to:

- Talk confidently about Christianity as a living faith.
- Compare and contrast key beliefs and practices of religions studied.
- Use appropriate religious vocabulary accurately.
- Ask thoughtful and respectful questions about religion and belief.
- Reflect upon their own beliefs and values.
- Engage in informed discussion about life's big questions.
- Demonstrate respect for people with different beliefs and worldviews.
- Show increasing religious literacy.
- Explain how beliefs influence the lives of individuals and communities.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning.

Teachers assess pupils through:

- Discussion and questioning.
- Written work.
- Reflection activities.
- Retrieval practice.
- Big Question responses.
- Observation of learning.

Assessment information is used to inform future planning and support pupil progress.

Progress and attainment in Beliefs and Values are reported to parents through the school's annual reporting procedures.

Leadership and Management

The Beliefs and Values Subject Leader is responsible for:

- Leading curriculum development.
- Monitoring standards and progression.
- Supporting colleagues with planning and delivery.
- Organising and auditing resources.
- Leading professional development.
- Monitoring teaching and learning.
- Evaluating standards and outcomes.
- Contributing to SIAMS self-evaluation and development planning.

Senior leaders, governors and Trust leaders ensure that Beliefs and Values maintains a high profile within the curriculum and contributes effectively to the Christian character of the school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of Beliefs and Values is monitored through:

- Lesson visits.
- Learning walks.
- Work scrutiny.
- Assessment analysis.
- Pupil voice.
- Staff discussion.
- Curriculum reviews.

Monitoring outcomes inform school improvement priorities and future curriculum development.

Right of Withdrawal

At St John's CE Primary Academy we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education on the grounds of conscience, without giving a reason.

Parents wishing to exercise this right are asked to write to the Trust Headteacher who will invite them into school to discuss their concerns, clarify the nature of the Beliefs and Values curriculum and explain the options available within current legislation.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from Religious Education, the school will make appropriate arrangements in accordance with statutory guidance.