



Axbridge C of E Academy

Together We Inspire, Thrive & Excel

Religious Education Policy

Date of Policy: September 2026

Date to Review: September 2027





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Together We Inspire, Thrive & Excel

Religious Education Policy

At Axbridge Church of England Academy, all policies and practices are rooted in our Christian vision and ethos. Our work as a school community is guided by the words of Jesus:

**"I have come so that you may have life, life in all its fullness."
John 10:10**

This vision underpins our commitment to enabling every child and adult to flourish academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and morally within a safe, inclusive and aspirational learning environment.

Our Christian values of Community, Love and Courage shape the way we live and work together each day. Through Religious Education (RE), pupils are invited to explore Christianity as a diverse, global and living faith, alongside a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, so that they develop knowledge, curiosity, respect and the confidence to engage thoughtfully with the world around them.

Our school motto, "Together We Inspire, Thrive and Excel," reflects our belief that children achieve their best when they feel valued, supported and inspired within a strong and caring community.

Legal and Statutory Framework

Religious Education is part of the basic curriculum and is a statutory entitlement for all registered pupils, including pupils in Reception. It is distinct from Collective Worship and is taught as an academic, non-confessional subject. Parents retain the legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE.

Axbridge Church of England First School Academy is a Church of England academy converter. Its predecessor school was a Voluntary Controlled Church of England school. In accordance with the academy funding agreement and the legal arrangements applying to former Voluntary Controlled schools, RE is provided in line with the requirements for an agreed syllabus. The school therefore follows the Somerset Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025, contextualised for its Church of England foundation and the needs of its pupils.

The curriculum also reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education 2026 and draws on Understanding Christianity to support the teaching of Christianity. The Diocese of Bath and Wells and Somerset SACRE guidance are used to support curriculum development and subject leadership.



In accordance with the statutory framework, the curriculum reflects that religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain. In line with the Somerset syllabus and Church of England expectations, pupils also encounter non-religious worldviews and the diversity that exists within and between religious traditions.

As a Church of England school, Axbridge is inspected through SIAMS. SIAMS evaluates the effectiveness, status and leadership of the RE curriculum with reference to the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Where denominational RE is not being provided, the additional SIAMS inspection question relating specifically to the quality of denominational RE does not apply.

Intent

At Axbridge, RE enables pupils to make sense of religion and worldviews as they are lived, expressed and interpreted by people. It develops religious literacy and supports pupils to become thoughtful, informed and respectful participants in a diverse society.

Our curriculum is designed so that pupils:

- develop secure and increasingly connected knowledge of Christianity and a range of religious and non-religious worldviews;
- understand Christianity as a diverse, global and living faith, rather than as a single uniform experience;
- recognise diversity within religions and worldviews and understand that beliefs and practices may differ across communities, places and individuals;
- develop substantive knowledge (what is believed, taught and practised), conceptual knowledge and disciplinary knowledge (how we find out and reason about religion and worldviews);
- use age-appropriate approaches drawn from theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences;
- ask increasingly challenging questions about meaning, belief, truth, identity, morality, community and how people live;
- learn to explain ideas, give reasons, use evidence and listen respectfully to different perspectives;
- develop awareness of their own assumptions, experiences and developing personal worldview without being required to adopt or disclose any particular belief;
- encounter religion and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, including the distinctive religious and cultural landscape of Somerset;
- are prepared for life in modern Britain through respectful dialogue, curiosity and accurate understanding of difference.

Implementation

RE is planned as a coherent and progressive subject. Learning is sequenced so that pupils revisit and deepen important concepts, vocabulary and ways of knowing as they move through the school. Teaching is objective, critical and pluralistic: pupils learn about beliefs and worldviews accurately and fairly, while being supported to question, interpret, compare and reflect.

2

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Teaching approaches may include:

- teacher explanation, high-quality texts, stories and encounters with sacred and significant texts;
- structured discussion, philosophical enquiry, questioning and debate;
- theological enquiry, including careful exploration of Christian concepts and biblical texts;
- human and social science approaches that explore lived experience, diversity, place, identity and community;
- artefacts, art, music, drama, photographs, maps and appropriate digital media;
- visits to places of worship and encounters with visitors representing religious and non-religious worldviews;
- local studies and opportunities to connect learning with Axbridge, Somerset and the wider region.

Visitors and visits enrich, but do not replace, planned curriculum teaching. Staff retain responsibility for curriculum accuracy, balance and safeguarding, and make clear that an individual visitor represents their own experience rather than every member of a religion or worldview.

Curriculum Time

The Somerset Agreed Syllabus 2025 identifies the minimum discrete curriculum time required to teach RE in sufficient depth and breadth. At Axbridge this is:

- Reception/Foundation Stage: 36 hours per year.
- Key Stage One: 36 hours per year.
- Key Stage Two: 45 hours per year.

This time is separate from Collective Worship. The Church of England Statement of Entitlement expects dedicated RE curriculum time to be no less than 5% in Key Stages 1-4, while aiming towards 10% where appropriate. Christianity is the main religious worldview studied and accounts for at least 50% of RE curriculum time in each phase.

Children in Nursery encounter stories, celebrations, people, places and ideas connected with religion and worldviews as part of their wider EYFS experience. The statutory RE entitlement applies from Reception.

Programme of Study

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Reception, children explore religion and worldviews through stories, celebrations, special people, places, objects, first-hand experience, sensory exploration and purposeful talk. Learning promotes curiosity, awe and wonder and gives children language with which to notice similarities, differences and what matters to people. Planned workshops, visits and special experiences complement the sustained RE curriculum across the year; they do not replace it.



Key Stage One

In Key Stage One, pupils build from their own experiences towards increasingly explicit study of religion and worldviews. In line with the Somerset Agreed Syllabus, pupils study the diversity within Christianity, at least one other religion and knowledge of a non-religious worldview. At Axbridge, Judaism provides a principal comparative focus alongside Christianity. Pupils also develop early philosophical thinking and encounter age-appropriate ethical questions. Discussion, respectful listening and the use of evidence are central to learning.

Key Stage Two (Years 3 and 4)

In Years 3 and 4, pupils deepen their understanding by revisiting prior learning through more demanding inquiry questions. In line with the Somerset Agreed Syllabus, pupils encounter the diversity within Christianity alongside at least two other religions and knowledge of a non-religious worldview, together with philosophical thinking and ethical enquiry. Axbridge pupils study Christianity alongside Judaism, Islam and Hinduism across the school's long-term plan. Teaching increasingly enables pupils to make connections between belief, practice, texts, identity, place, time and lived experience.

The curriculum includes explicit opportunities to understand non-religious worldviews, including Humanist perspectives where appropriate, and to recognise that people who identify with the same religion or worldview may interpret and live it differently.

Assessment

Assessment in RE is integral to teaching and learning. It identifies what pupils know, understand and can do in relation to the planned RE curriculum; it does not assess the strength, sincerity or correctness of a pupil's personal beliefs.

Teachers use formative assessment throughout units, including questioning, structured discussion, observation, pupil voice, retrieval, written and creative outcomes and purposeful reflection. Assessment considers pupils' developing substantive, conceptual and disciplinary knowledge and informs future teaching.

Assessment is informed by the school's use of SOLO taxonomy, supporting pupils to move from surface knowledge towards deeper, connected and extended understanding. SOLO is used as a tool to support progression and thinking rather than as a substitute for secure subject knowledge.

Where pupils are unable to record their understanding effectively in writing, teachers use oral responses, observation and professional dialogue to capture learning accurately. Pupils with SEND are supported to access an ambitious RE curriculum, with reasonable adaptations and assessment that recognises meaningful small steps while maintaining high expectations.

Parents and carers receive information about pupils' progress and achievement in RE through the school's normal reporting arrangements.



The Right to Withdraw

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of Religious Education. They do not have to give a reason, and the school will respect the request. The right of withdrawal applies to RE lessons; it does not extend to religious matters that may arise incidentally in other curriculum subjects.

To ensure that any request is clear and informed, the Headteacher will offer parents the opportunity to discuss the school's RE curriculum, its educational purpose and the specific content from which they wish their child to be withdrawn. Parents may be asked to confirm the extent of the withdrawal in writing for administrative clarity, but withdrawal is not dependent upon attending a meeting or gaining approval from the Local Partnership Board.

Where a pupil is withdrawn, the school will make appropriate arrangements for supervision. The school is not required to provide additional teaching as a consequence of withdrawal.

Because Axbridge is a former Voluntary Controlled Church of England school, a parent may also request that their child receives Religious Education in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England. Where such a request is made, the academy will make appropriate arrangements unless special circumstances would make this unreasonable, in accordance with its funding agreement and the relevant statutory provisions.

Equality, Inclusion and Respectful Dialogue

RE is for all pupils. Teaching is adapted so that pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with differing prior experiences can participate meaningfully and achieve well. Resources and teaching avoid stereotypes and present religions and worldviews accurately, respectfully and with appropriate internal diversity.

The classroom should be a safe space for thoughtful discussion. Pupils may share personal views where they choose to do so, but no pupil is required to disclose or defend a personal religious or non-religious position. Staff model and explicitly teach respectful disagreement, careful language and the use of evidence.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Recording and Reporting

The Local Partnership Board, acting within the Trust's scheme of delegation, has responsibility for assuring itself that RE is appropriately prioritised and that provision reflects the school's Church of England foundation, statutory requirements and the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the quality, statutory compliance and resourcing of RE. The RE subject leader supports this through the school's agreed quality assurance cycle.

Monitoring is proportionate and may include:

- review of long- and medium-term curriculum planning, including curriculum balance, sequencing and time allocation;



- work scrutiny/book looks, learning visits and discussion with teachers;
- pupil voice to establish what pupils know, remember, understand and value about RE;
- review of assessment information and the progress of pupils, including pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged;
- checking that Christianity, religious and non-religious worldviews are represented accurately, fairly and with appropriate diversity;
- evaluation of visits, visitors, resources and staff subject knowledge.

The subject leader keeps abreast of developments from the DfE, Somerset SACRE, the Diocese of Bath and Wells and the Church of England; identifies staff development needs; supports colleagues; manages resources; and maintains an appropriate subject action plan. Findings from monitoring inform curriculum refinement, professional development and reporting to leaders and the Local Partnership Board.

Reference framework: Somerset Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025; Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education 2026; current DfE guidance for RE in academies; current SIAMS framework; Understanding Christianity; and Diocese of Bath and Wells RE guidance.

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