John Burns Primary School

Religious Education Policy 2026

Date adopted by Governing Body	June 2026
Signatory (Chair of Curriculum Committee)	
Date of Review	**June 2029**

Our Mission Statement:

We are ambitious for our children and for our school. Quality, Creativity and Enjoyment is what we aim to have at the heart of everything we do.

School Motto

Our school motto of: 'Giving our Best, Achieving our Highest' is at the heart of everything we do in school and together with parents, carers, governors and the local community, each and every child is encouraged to follow this principle.

Our Aims:

- To inspire a passion for life-long learning.
- To value ourselves and all members of our diverse community.
- To foster an environment which is caring, safe and inclusive.
- To realise our full potential through quality experiences and opportunities.
- To help children to see the importance of taking responsibility for themselves, their actions and their learning.

This policy has been informed by the Wandsworth Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Curriculum Intent

The UK has a rich heritage of culture and different belief systems and it is vital that young people are given opportunities to reflect on how different beliefs affect them and those around them. Religious Education contributes to education by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. In RE pupils learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. They learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.

Teaching, thus, should equip students with knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews, whilst encouraging them to simultaneously develop their own ideas, values and identities.

RE aims to ensure that all students:

AO1 Learning about religion and beliefs - Know about and understand a range of religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews so that they can:

- Describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices and how these beliefs influence the lives of adherents;
- Recognise the diversity which exists within and between communities and individuals and challenge simplistic representations of religion;

• Identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and the responses offered, by different sources of wisdom and authority;
• Appreciate the nature and significance of the different ways of life studied, explaining why they are important to different individuals and communities.

AO2 Learning from religion and beliefs - Express insights about the nature and significance of different worldviews and gain the skills needed to engage seriously with different worldviews so that they can:
• Explain their ideas about how beliefs and practices influence individuals and communities;
• Express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, meaning and value;
• Appreciate the different forms in which beliefs can be expressed and celebrated;
• Explore how beliefs form a part of individual and communal identities and how moral values are formed from these beliefs;
• Engage in critical study of a range of sources of knowledge, recognizing bias and differences in interpretation;
• Enquire into what enables individuals and communities to live together respectfully in a pluralistic society;
• Develop positive attitudes and values and relate their learning to their own experiences of the world.

Curriculum Implementation

Key Stage 1 and 2 Curriculum

Teachers follow the learning intentions outlined in the John Burns RE Overview (appendix 2) and more detailed Scheme of Work, which gives suggested lesson activities, guidance and resources.

Different beliefs are studied both thematically, such as topics on leaders or places of worship, and discretely, such as a unit on Easter. Pupils should begin to use basic subject specific vocabulary and raise questions, beginning to express their own views about what they have learnt. Teachers should encourage pupils to learn about the place of religion and belief in their local community, recognising diversity and the influence of those religions and beliefs. They should be given opportunities to talk about meaning, purpose and the value of life.

RE at John Burns reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain and our school context, such as Islam, and also different world views such as atheism and humanitarianism.

Children should consider the values behind celebrations, and features of places of worship and religious stories. All the major world religions and Humanism are covered by the end of Key Stage 2.

Most units in the overview span a term. Teachers may block this into a half term to fit their class timetable, taking into account where a unit is planned to coincide with a faith festival. Additional lessons are provided in each unit for teachers to use if they wish to explore concepts further with their class. Units on Easter and Christmas provide variation and progression in content across school.

Where possible, pupils benefit from visiting places of worship or being visited by speakers.

Opportunities to explore places of worship and invite faith speakers in are outlined in the RE overview (see Appendix 1).

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum

The foundation stage describes the phase of a child's education from the age of 3 to the end of reception at the age of 5. Religious education is statutory for all pupils registered on the school roll. The statutory requirement for religious education does not extend to nursery classes in maintained schools and is not, therefore, a legal requirement for much of the foundation stage.

The areas of learning at this stage are: communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design. Religious education can make an active contribution to all these areas and, in particular, support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by encouraging children to build respect, work collaboratively, think about issues of right and wrong, developing an awareness of their own needs, and learning about the cultures of others. The subject can also be used to improve communication and language through listening to stories, songs and poems from different sources and traditions, and organising sequencing through discussion of their feelings and the feelings of others.

Withdrawal from the subject

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education although it is against the advice of Wandsworth SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) that they do so, given the numerous benefits of this subject. In such cases, the school has a duty to supervise students, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. At John Burns we provide withdrawn students with tasks that are rooted in learning, such a comprehension questions, open ended projects or maths practice worksheets, which children can complete independently under supervision. Supervision may mean being moved to another year group whilst RE lessons are in progress. If parents or carers wish for their child to be withdrawn from RE, they should ask for this in writing to the head teacher.

Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

All teachers should strive to create a classroom where all students, no matter what their ability or background, are able to achieve. This involves using a range of activities to complement different styles of learning, differentiating work as well as assessment outcomes and creating a classroom environment where all students feel valued and respected. Creating a safe space where students all feel able to share their ideas and achieve is integral to the success of Religious Education.

Inclusion of controversial issues, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, is essential to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding, critical thinking and analytical skills. Controversial issues can be defined as those that cause disagreement in society because people may reasonably hold different views. These include issues such as the legalising of euthanasia, the acceptability of war, and the use of capital punishment. Sensitive issues, such as racism or homophobia, are not controversial by definition but may still arouse strong feeling and teachers should be prepared to deal with this effectively.

Creating a safe space: Teachers must set clear ground rules for students, including the need to respect the right of others to hold a different opinion, and to respond sensitively to personal information. Students should be able to opt out of activities that are particularly sensitive. Teachers should try their uttermost to get to know their students and be aware of any circumstances that might make particular lessons very difficult for a student, such as lessons on death or on crime. For controversial and sensitive issues, it is important to consider the resources that are being used: for instance, very shocking images are not necessary, especially where the topics themselves may be shocking.

Resources: In Religious Education, there is plenty of scope for using resources that harness the knowledge of students in the classroom. Many children may not wish to take part in this way, but others may offer to play the part of an 'expert' during a 'hot-seating' or quiz activity. Starter and plenary activities can be used to ask students about their own experiences, such as asking about life-changing experiences they have had before studying the Hajj. Students may wish to opt out of sensitive activities but much of the time are likely to be more engaged as a result of having been able to talk about themselves. Materials used should also reflect the diversity of social, cultural and religious groups, from the pictures that are presented to students to the groups that are studied in class.

When studying a religion, it is important that children are not involved in an act of worship. This does not mean the children don't have the opportunity to explore religious songs, prayers or stories, but where religious practices are displayed or modelled, it needs to be made clear to children that they are 'finding out about' about the worship of a religion, not worshipping. Teachers should anticipate tasks that children may not be comfortable with if it does not align with their own religious beliefs, such as drawing God/Allah. In these cases, teachers should offer an alternative activity, such as drawing a symbolic representation like a crown or writing sentences about what God means to them.

Neutrality

Teachers must ensure that they do not present opinions as if they are facts or set themselves up as the sole authority on any particular subject. Students are more likely to avoid stereotypes themselves if teachers avoid presenting different belief systems as homogeneous. When trying to remain neutral, teachers should not reveal their own preferences through facial expressions or tone of voice, and ensure that all opinions are subjected to rational criticism. On some topics, teachers may wish to share their view but, when doing this, must make it clear that it is their own opinion and that it is subject to criticism.

Questioning

Questioning is key to the success of Religious Education. Questioning should be used to promote empathy, to encourage problem solving and reflective observation skills, to encourage skills of analysis and evaluation and to improve levels of verbal literacy. Questioning may come from the teacher but can also be student-led since students are also sources of knowledge in the RE classroom.

Questioning should also be differentiated, depending on ability or stage in the lesson. Recalling basic facts and asking students to define key terms is generally regarded as low level questioning, whilst asking students to apply, analyse or evaluate requires higher order thinking skills.

Inclusion

Teachers should be sensitive to, and aware of, the distinctive needs of individual students, including those that have special educational needs (SEND), those for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL), Greater Depth Standard students (GDS), and those who are eligible for Free School Meals. The curriculum should build on, and be enriched by, the differing experiences of the students and meet the needs of all students and resources should always be adapted to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. For some students, for instance, emphasis will need to be on sensory experience, such as the colours involved in a festival, and not on the more critical aspects of the subject.

Cross-curricular education

When taught well, the RE curriculum should complement the work of all subject teachers in promoting literacy and numeracy skills in young people. Literacy can be promoted in all lessons by providing opportunities for reading, writing and oral literacy, whilst numeracy activities should also be mapped across the RE curriculum. In addition, the use of ICT in lessons can complement learning, preparing students for the wider world and offering alternative means of presenting student ideas.

Curriculum Impact

Community Cohesion, Fundamental British Values (FBV) and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Schools are required to actively promote the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of their pupils. Teaching should respond to the particular needs of students, ensuring they achieve their potential, and should prepare young people for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life in the UK.

Through their provision of SMSC in RE and in the wider curriculum, John Burns aims to:

- enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- enable students to distinguish between right and wrong;
- promote respect for the law and the democratic processes that underpin its creation;
- encourage young people to positively contribute to the lives of others;
- and promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by providing opportunities for learning about the value of different cultural practices including their own.

These aims are echoed in the guidance on Fundamental British Values (FBV) which require teachers to promote ‘the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.’

Religious Education is well-placed to contribute to these whole-school aims: ‘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.' Through developing students' knowledge of different groups in society and promoting shared values, the subject may encourage an appreciation of different faiths and cultures.

Reviewed: June 2026

Review date: June 2026

Signed at Curriculum Committee_____

Date _____

Appendix 1: Religious Educational Visits

Opportunities for educational visits, including virtual visits, to places of worship are outlined in the yearly overview for Years 1 to 5. These link with the RE subject overview for each year group.

Year Group	Term	Place of Worship	Suggested Contact Details	
1	**Spring**	Islam **Mosque** Christianity **Church**	**Islamic Culture & Education Centre** (Battersea Mosque), 73 Falcon Road, London, SW11 2PF Email: info@icecbattersea.org.uk Website: https://icecbattersea.org.uk/ Phone: 07898 071178	**Greek Orthodox Church of St Nectarios** 19 Wycliffe Rd, Battersea, London SW11 5QR Email: fatherchristodoulos@yahoo.co.uk Mobile: (+44) 07595 531 523 Tel: (+44) 020 7228 4278 ***This is next door to the school.***
2	**Summer**	Judaisim **Synagogue**	**Wimbledon and District Synagogue** 1 Queensmere Road, off Wimbledon Parkside, London, SW19 5QD Phone: 020 8946 4836	
3	**Autumn**	Hinduism **Mandir**	**Hindu Society Centre** 664 Garratt Lane, London, SW17 0N Phone: 020 8944 0251	
4	**Spring**	Sikh **Gurdwara**	**Khalsa Centre,** Tooting Gurdwara, 95 Upper Tooting Road, Tooting, London, SW17 7TW Phone: 0208 767 3196	**Sikh Gurdwara S.London**, 142 Merton Road, London, SW18 5SP Phone: 020 8542 3713
5	**Spring**	Buddhism **Buddhist Temple**	**The Buddhapadipa Temple** 14 Calonne Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 5HJ Email: buddhapadipa@thai.com Website: http://www.watbuddhapadipa.org/ Phone: 0208 879 7542	

A full directory of places of worship in Wandsworth can be found here: https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/places-of-worship/

Appendix 2: Religious Education Year Group Overview

Year 1

<table>
<tr><th>Autumn</th><th>Spring</th><th>Summer</th></tr>
<tr><td>What festivals do people celebrate?
To explain the nature and purpose of festivals and celebrations
To describe how life events are celebrated
To compare different religious festivals
To describe why/how Christians celebrate Harvest
To explain the importance of giving (in religion)
To retell the story of Ruth
To describe how Christians/ different religions say thank you
To think about what I am thankful for</td><td>What makes a place special?
To describe why places of worship are special and sacred places
To think what makes a place special
Why is the Mosque special to Muslims?
To describe why Christians/ Muslims go to church/the mosque
To imagine what the church/mosque will be like
To explore my local church/ mosque
To describe my thoughts and feelings on the visit
To describe what I learnt from the visit
To compare similarities and difference between two places of worship</td><td rowspan="3">What does ‘belonging’ mean?
To describe the meaning of belong and consider the different communities people belong to
To explain what it means to belong
To describe how religions welcome someone one new*
*This learning intention can be broken down further into focusing on specific religions, eg: To describe how Muslims welcome a new baby.
To investigate what it means to belong to a religious group.
To think about how our actions reflect our values.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Autumn 2</th><th>Easter</th></tr>
<tr><td>To explain the meaning of Diwali
To describe how the Hindu festival Diwali is celebrated
To describe different ways in which Christmas is celebrated
KS1 Nativity</td><td>Giving up something for love
To consider what is important to me
To describe which values were important to Jesus
To retell they Easter story
To explain why Easter us important to Christians</td></tr>
</table>

Year 2

Autumn **1**	Spring	Summer
How do we look after the world? • To find out what religions say about nature • To describe aspects of the natural world • To explain how nature makes me feel • To retell Creation stories • To describe what Muslims feel about the environment. • To explain why Jewish people celebrate Sukkot • To explain how Christians show they are thankful	Why am I here? • To consider the ultimate questions raised by the natural world • To identify 'big' questions • To discuss how different types of questions make us feel/think • To describe my thoughts on God • To think about if life has a meaning • To identify my values and skills • To think about good and bad choices • To explain my thoughts on life after death	Which stories are important to you? • To know about special books, both personal and religious, hear a range of stories from them and talk about their meanings. • To learn about the Torah and why it is holy and precious for Jewish People • To explain which books are holy in different religions • To explain why the Torah is precious for Jewish people • To explain the meaning of a story from the Torah • To identify the rules which guide Jewish people/ To explain the importance of the Ten Commandments • To explore my local Synagogue • To discuss my thoughts and feeling on visit
Autumn 2	Easter	
How do we look after others? • To understand about how and why religious people show care and concern for humanity • To explain the importance of giving for religious faiths • To explain the importance of giving for humanists • To understand the importance of zakat in Islam • To decide how we can help others • To organise a charity event • To understand why Christians give gifts at Christmas	Why is Easter important to Christians? • To retell/perform the Easter story • To understand events at the Last Supper • To explain why Easter is important to Christians	

• To discuss the value of giving ***KS1 Nativity***		

Year 3

Autumn	Spring	Summer
What do Hindus believe about God and the world? • To know what God means to Hindus • To explain the symbolism in Hindu deities • To understand the importance of Shrines for Hindus • To describe how Hindus worship • To explore a Mandir • To reflect on learning about worship in a Hindu family • To explain the importance of Diwali • To analyse the Hindu belief of reincarnation • To describe how Hindus care for living things **KS2 Harvest Festival**	Who was Jesus? • To learn about events in Jesus' life. • To understand the importance of Easter to Christians • To create a profile of Jesus • To consider the meaning of (insert story) for Christians • To infer motivation and emotions of characters from a biblical story. • To discuss the importance of forgiveness • To describe how Jesus was tempted • To describe how it feels to be tempted • To explain how and why Christians celebrate and Lent and Easter	Who was Muhammad? • To reflect on what I already know and what I would like to learn • To describe Muhammad's life • To identify how Muhammad's life changed • To explore Muhammad's relationship with Allah. • To explore how the life of Muhammad affects Muslims today. • To discuss my views on God • To explore how Muslims refer to God
Christmas		
Messengers – Angels sending news at Christmas • To consider my own views on angels • To discuss how the shepherds felt • To think about the importance of giving		

messages (at Christmas)		

Year 4

Autumn	Spring	Summer
How is light symbolic? • To investigate the meaning of symbols (in religion) • To identify what light and darkness signifies • To explore light within religious art • To understand the importance of light in places of worship **KS2 Harvest Festival**	Who were the Gurus? • To describe different Gurus in Sikhism and how they influence the lives of Sikhs today • To understand the symbolism of the 5 Ks • To explain the origin of the five Ks. • To understand why Guru Nanak is important to Sikhs. • To describe how precious the Guru Granth Sahib is to Sikhs. • To identify how Sikhs show gender equality • To know about Vaisakhi (Sikh new year) • To consider which values are shown through Langar	What is the ummah? • To describe the meaning of ummah and how Muslims work to help others in the world today • To describe how Muhammad was a good leader • To explain the events of Hajj • To describe the importance of Ramadan for Muslims • To consider why charity is important to Muslims • To investigate the five pillars of Islam • To understand how and why Muslims celebrate Eid
Autumn 2	**Spring 2**	
Unit continued: • To explain how light is symbolic in Hannakah (Jewish festival) • To research the significance of the advent wreath (or Christingle) • To investigate how light is used in the nativity story	Linking Langar to Easter How did Jesus share his last supper? • To find out about the Last Supper • To consider who we would want to share a meal with • To research Easter food	

Year 5

Autumn	Spring	Summer
How are people motivated by their beliefs? • To explain the importance of religion for different people • To research people who were influenced by Jesus (eg Max Kolbe and Mother Teresa) • To discover how Ganhi's beliefs affected his actions • To describe how Martin Luther King opposed discrimination. • To consider what would make the world a better place today. • To consider which values are most important to us **KS2 Harvest Festival**	Who was the Buddha? • To explain who the Buddha was and how he influences the lives of Buddhists today • To identify how Buddhists live their lives • To describe the qualities of enlightened human beings • To reflect on the life of the Buddha • To explain how Buddhists try to follow Buddha's example • To explore the value of meditation • To understand the importance of Buddhist temples to Buddhists. • To describe the life of a Buddhist monk	What is Humanism? • To explain some Humanist beliefs • To explain Scientific understanding of how the world began • To research influential thinkers who changed how others saw the world • To identify key beliefs of influential thinkers • To describe humanist rites of passage • To explain what happens at a humanist funeral/ wedding etc • To explore which values are important to humanists • To investigate human rights • To consider the motivation and actions of humanists
Christmas Sacred and secular • To evaluate the values of Christmas • To describe the difference between a sacred and secular Christmas • To describe the importance of Christmas for Christians		

• To debate the celebration of secular Christmas		

Year 6

Autumn	Spring	Summer
How do Jews remember God and the Torah? • To describe Jewish beliefs about God, the Patriarchs and the Torah • To reflect on what I already know about the Jewish religion • To consider how the ten commandments influence Jewish people • To explain the significance of the story of Passover • To explain how the seder meal symbolises the story of Exodus • To describe the significance of Rosh Hashanah • To reflect on themes and key figures in Jewish stories. Unit includes optional PSHE/ history themed lesson(s) on Anne Frank to link with WW2 **KS2 Harvest Festival**	How did the world start? • To explore creation stories and the ultimate questions they raise • To consider what makes an 'ultimate' question. • To discuss the concepts of faith and evidence-based knowledge • To compare Creation stories • To consider the impact Darwin had on people's understanding of the world • To research how Jews celebrate the Sabbath • To illustrate my beliefs on creation • To create an antithesis to Creation • To explore if humankind is caring for creation	Who is God to you? • To describe characteristics of God • To explain how different religions view God • To discuss my beliefs • To listen to the beliefs of others with respect • To describe the Christian belief in the Trinity • To learn the story of Pentecost.
Christmas		

Pagan and Christian traditions • To research different festivals from ancient religions • To research how different Christmas traditions began • To explain why the winter solstice was important to druids • To explore different interpretations of Santa Claus (could include looking at traditional tales like Babushka) • To justify what items might represent (symbolism of Christmas items)		