


The Aylesbury Vale Academy Trust



The Aylesbury Vale Academy

RESPECT | ASPIRATION | RESILIENCE

Religious Education Policy

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Description:	
Status:	
Policy Audience:	Staff, Students and Parents/Carers
Academy Contact:	Academy Principal
Other related AVA policies and procedures:	
Governor Committee:	Full Governing Body
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Signed:	
Date of Signature:	20.03.2025

In reviewing this policy, the Governing Board has had regard to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged by this policy.

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1. Foreword

At AVA we are proud of our non-selective, fully inclusive status and believe that children and young people, regardless of their background, ability or circumstances can thrive and succeed here. Our aim is to serve the common good by enabling the children, young people, and our wider AVA community to flourish through their experience of education and the opportunities we create. We strive to provide an education which prepares students with the best possible chances for their future, supporting them to discover their role in society, empowering them to make constructive life choices and enabling them to make a meaningful contribution in society.

As a community we have a Christian Vision that guides and influence us. Our vision is rooted in a keen sense of moral purpose that exists to make outcomes better for the families we serve. Service to all is a critical expression of our Christian Vision which is grounded in the belief that

The ultimate worth of each person is grounded in being created in the image of God and in God's love and compassion for each.

Church of England Vision for Education Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good

AVA's Christian Vision is observed in everything we do as a school and is seen in our core values of RESPECT, ASPIRATION and RESILIENCE.

2. Introduction

At Aylesbury Vale Academy, Religious Education plays an important role in expressing the theologically rooted Christian Vision of the school. RE reflects the vision and values that we hold and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and worldviews, whether religious or not. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions.

3. Legal Position

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex and relationship education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (see paragraph below). The school, in accordance with its Trust Deed, provides religious education for all pupils registered at the school. As a Voluntary Aided Church of England Academy, Religious Education is provided in line with the AVA funding agreement. Following advice from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, the governors require that religious education at AVA should be based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus, 'The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022-2027', while also reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019.

The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate RE and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the school and look for evidence of the quality of teaching, progress and assessment, alongside the priority, provision and profile of RE as expressed through the quality of the curriculum. Religious education has the same status and importance as any other subject and, as such, the same high standards are applied to this as to other subjects.

4. Purpose and Aims of RE

The purpose of RE is to teach children about the religious and non-religious worldviews that they will encounter in modern Britain and enable them to engage in meaningful and considered dialogue with those of all faiths and worldviews. We consider this religious literacy.

Therefore, the aims of RE in our school are:

- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking. To engage academically by analysing and evaluating a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- Further to this, and particularly when studied at GCSE and A' level in our Secondary Phase, we see Religious Education as a rigorous and academic subject, which enables students to flourish by engaging academically with a range of religions and worldviews by analysing and evaluating these views.

5. Curriculum and Time Allocation

As a Church of England school, the teaching of Religious Education at Aylesbury Vale Academy is central to our curriculum. Our school is enriched by the diverse community in Aylesbury, and we aim to provide a challenging and enriching curriculum for all students, that reflect the diverse nature of belief in our school.

The RE curriculum at Aylesbury Vale Academy, has been approved by the governors. Christianity is taught in every year group, with key concepts are revisited on a spiral curriculum. At least 50% of the time is devoted to Christianity. Other religions are covered according to the syllabus.

The Curriculum is based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus, 'The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022-2027', and reflects the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019. RE is taught in dedicated lessons throughout the academy and also in cross-curricular settings as appropriate, for example in the EYFS, through visiting speakers and during themed teaching events.

The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship.

In line with the Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus, RE at AVA involves helping pupils make sense of life. By learning about religions, beliefs and ways of living as the vehicle through which they develop their understanding of themselves, others and the world.

The learning process involves consideration of 3 key questions...

1. What does it mean to be me? students' own experience and self-concept,
2. What does it mean to be you? Religious/worldview experience, concepts and content,
3. What does it mean to be human? Universal human experience and concepts.

EYFS

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), teachers provide opportunities for child-initiated learning and plan adult led learning focusing on the background, experience and needs of the children, ensuring that they introduce experiences that help the children in their Understanding of the World.

KS1

In KS1, children explore:

- Christianity and Judaism
- With reference to Hindu Dharma and non-religious perspectives

Context: An exploration of home life and how this influences the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of children and others in relation to their sense of self, belonging and celebrating what is important in life.

Core Questions:

- How does our background influence who we are?
- How does belonging to a religion or group affect people's lives?
- How should we behave and treat others and the world?

Lower KS2

In LKS2, children explore:

- Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hindu Dharma
- With reference to other religious traditions and non-religious perspectives.

Context: An exploration of what people believe to be important in life and why, and how this is expressed.

Core Questions:

- What is most important in life?
- How do different religions show what is most important to them?
- How does this affect their attitudes and behaviour towards themselves, other people, and the world around them?

Upper KS2

In UKS2, children explore:

- Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hindu Dharma (this is a continuation from LKS2)
- With reference to Humanism and other religious traditions.

Context: A reflective exploration of some of the big questions, beliefs, and concepts about life and what it means to be human, and how responses to these are expressed through ritual and ways of living.

Core Questions:

- What do people believe about life, the world, and the good life?
- Where do these beliefs, attitudes and ways of living come from?
- How are these expressed and lived out in the lives of individuals and communities?

KS3

In KS3, students study:

- Main world religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism)

Philosophy of Religion, God and Art, Sacred Spaces, Religious practice and expression, Humanism

Context: A critical engagement with ultimate questions and global issues, exploring, analysing, and responding to a range of responses to these.

Core Questions:

- What place do religions and worldviews have in the modern world?
- Is it possible to make sense of evil and suffering?
- Does belief in God still make sense?

KS4

In KS4 all students follow a 'Core RS Curriculum' based on The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus.

In addition to this, students can also opt to follow a Religious Studies Full Course GCSE AQA, which focusses on Christianity and Islam, or Short Course which studies Christianity and Buddhism.

In KS4 Core RS Curriculum students explore:

- Christianity and two or three other worldviews in depth, of which one must be non-religious with reference to other religious and non-religious worldviews as appropriate

Context: A critical analysis of questions arising from and issues relating to religious and non-religious worldviews, analysing, and evaluating the impact they have on the modern world.

Core Questions:

- Is there more to life than our physical experience?
- Should we be able to choose when and how to die
- Is equality possible?

KS5

In KS5 all students follow a Core RS curriculum based on The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus.

In addition to this, some students also opt to follow an A level Religious Studies (OCR).

6. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

RE is taught using an enquiry-based approach, that is challenging and robust. Learning is organised to encourage the development of attitudes such as self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder, as well as providing opportunities to engage appropriately with Fundamental British Values. All faiths are treated respectfully, and opportunities will be made to engage in age-appropriate, meaningful discussion. Where possible pupils encounter visits from members of a wide range of communities and visit places of worship.

The curriculum and teaching methods at AVA strive to create a safe environment that enables pupils to flourish through their encounter with Religious Education. We share the Church of England's view that the...

Intrinsic elements of being able to flourish are being safe and being treated well – with dignity and respect - regardless of difference or disagreement.

Flourishing for All: Anti-bullying Guidance for Church of England Schools September 2024

This is reflected in our Rewards and Behaviour Policy (AVA.012), Child Protection Policy (AVA.021), SEND Policy (AVA.042), Equality Policy (AVA.031), Anti Bullying Policy (AVA.044) these can be found at <https://www.theacademy.me/policies>

Our approach enables all children to make progress in RE regardless of their starting points, ability or background.

Assessment procedures in line with the assessment procedures and feedback policy of the school. Assessment is largely be used to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and of teaching and learning. Students engage in a variety of activities which also enable teachers to assess what they have learnt.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE subject leader and SLT will monitor teaching and learning in RE in accordance with school policy. The RE subject leader will observe teaching, conduct book and planning reviews and pupil interviews when appropriate to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and governors will ensure that adequate monitoring takes place and that the impact of such activity is assessed.

8. Resources

The RE subject leader will ensure that RE resources are kept up-to-date and that staff are informed when new resources are purchased or made available electronically. Resources will include source materials (e.g. Bibles, visitors, artefacts) where appropriate and be treated with respect by all staff.

9. The Right of Withdrawal

Our vision sets out clearly our aspiration that RE will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs.

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject.

However, we hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school.

Parents who wish to withdraw their children must provide written notification to inform the Academy Principal or Primary Headteacher to this effect so that school records are accurate.

We always appreciate opportunities to speak with parents and staff who have concerns about RE and strive to continually develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible.

Those students who are withdrawn from RE will be monitored by a member of the school's staff; and parents may provide suitable activities for students who are withdrawn.