



**St. Joseph's Catholic Primary
School**

Religious Education Policy

“It is and has been, from her beginning, the belief of the Church, that she has an obligation to provide an education for her children by which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ.”

Gravissimum Educationis
Second Vatican Council 1965

Mission Statement

Each one of us has been created by God for a special purpose and is therefore uniquely special.
Together we pray, grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus.

Rationale

- The Mission Statement for our school is reflected in all aspects of school life. It is at the heart of what we do.
- Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the Church.

‘At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education.’¹

- Religious Education is ‘the core of the core curriculum.’

‘Therefore Religious Education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school..... All pupils have the right to receive an overall education which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope which is within them. Religious Education is, then, the core subject in a Catholic school.’¹

- Religious Education is the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ and is a rigorous academic subject in its own right.

Religious Education is regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines.² As such it is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.

“Excellence in religious education, then, will be characterised by a clarity of succinct religious learning objectives and of key content, by appropriate methodologies, rigour, richness of resources, achievement of identified outcomes and accurate methods of assessment. Classroom RE will be a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material.”³

- The outcome of classroom Religious Education is:

“religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life”.⁴

- Whilst evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school for some pupils, the specific contribution Religious Education makes to the Catholic Life of the school is primarily educational and will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects.

The Aims of Religious Education as stated in the RE Curriculum Directory

- To present engagingly a comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
- To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
- To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society;
- To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
- To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;
- To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
- To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;
- To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.⁵

Particulars

- To respect and promote pupils' innate spiritual capacity
- To provide questions and materials for children to reflect on their own experience of life
- To help children explore the beliefs, values and way of life of the Catholic Faith
- To help children learn about beliefs, values and ways of life of other Faiths
- To explore the religious dimension of questions about life, dignity and purpose within the Catholic Faith
- To encourage and facilitate children's personal analyses of their own beliefs and values
- To provide opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection in implicit and explicit ways
- To provide children with the language of religious experience
- To provide a systematic presentation of Christian events in the Catholic tradition, messages and way of life in ways appropriate to the development of the child
- To ensure that Religious Education permeates all aspects of school life and takes place at many different levels, including teaching within class lessons and the development of expectation regarding attitudes and conduct.
- To provide a collective act of worship each day. This may take the form of: prayers in class; hymn practice; KS1 assembly; KS2 assembly; whole school assembly (during which individual classes give a short presentation based on a relevant theme, once a term).
- To attend Mass in the Church on Holy Days and special occasions during term times and to strongly encourage attendance at services outside of school times. The children will be prepared in advance for the Mass and will participate where appropriate with singing, readings, bidding prayers, serving and offertory procession. Masses, Liturgies and Services are also held in school, either in the classroom or the hall.
- To teach the R.E. curriculum throughout the school using the "Come and See" Scheme.
- The Leader of Learning for R.E. meets with the Parish Priest to organise Masses, class visits and any other pertinent matters and to discuss elements of liturgy and faith as relevant and necessary.

Religious Education - Curriculum Time Allocation

10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This does not include Collective Worship.

Programme of Study

To fulfil the above aims and to address the four areas of study outlined in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory, 2012 – Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ - the ‘Come and See’ programme is used as recommended by the Diocese.

THEMES & TOPICS	EARLY YEARS 1 & 2	YEAR 1 & FS 1	YEAR 2 & FS 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
Domestic church family	Myself God knows and loves each one	Families God's love and care for every family	Beginnings God at every beginning	Homes God's dream for every family	People The family of God in Scripture	Ourselves Created in the image & likeness of God	Loving God who never stops loving
Baptism/confirmation belonging	Welcome Baptism; a welcome to God's family	Belonging Baptism an invitation to belong to God's family	Signs & symbols Signs & symbols in Baptism	Promises Promises made at Baptism	Called Confirmation: a call to witness	Life choices Marriage commitment and service	Vocation & commitment The vocation of priesthood and religious life
Advent/Christmas loving	Birthday Looking forward to Jesus' birthday	Waiting Advent a time to look forward to Christmas	Preparations Advent; preparing to celebrate Christmas	Visitors Advent: waiting for the coming of Jesus	Gift God's gift of love & friendship in Jesus	Hope Advent; waiting in joyful hope for Jesus; the promised one	Expectations Jesus born to show God to the world
Local church community	Celebrating People celebrate in Church	Special people People in the parish family	Books The books used in Church	Journeys Christian family's journey with Jesus	Community Life in the local Christian community: ministries in the parish	Mission Continuing Jesus' mission in diocese [ecumenism]	Sources The Bible, the special book for the Church
Eucharist relating	Gathering The parish family gathers to celebrate Eucharist	Meals Mass; Jesus' special meal	Thanksgiving Mass a special time for saying thank you to God for everything, especially Jesus	Listening & sharing Jesus gives himself to us in a special way	Giving & receiving Living in communion	Memorial sacrifice The Eucharist the living memorial of Jesus' sacrifice	Unity Eucharist enables people to live in communion.
Lent/Easter giving	Growing Looking forward to Easter	Change Lent a time for change	Opportunities Lent; an opportunity to start anew in order to celebrate Jesus' new life	Giving all Lent a time to remember Jesus' total giving	Self discipline Celebrating growth to new life	Sacrifice Lent a time of aligning with the sacrifice already made by Jesus	Death & new life Celebrating Jesus' death & resurrection
Pentecost serving	Good News Passing on the Good news of Jesus	Holidays & holydays Pentecost: feast of the Holy Spirit	Spread the word Pentecost a time to spread the Good News	Energy Gifts of the Holy Spirit	New life To hear & live the Easter message	Transformation Celebration of the Spirit's transforming power	Witnesses The Holy Spirit enables people to become witnesses
Reconciliation Inter-relating	Friends Friends of Jesus	Being sorry God helps us to choose well Sacrament of Reconciliation	Rules Reasons for rules in the Christian family Sacrament of Reconciliation	Choices The importance of examination of conscience Sacrament of Reconciliation	Building bridges Admitting wrong, being reconciled with God and each other Sacrament of Reconciliation	Freedom & responsibility Commandments enable Christians to be free & responsible	Healing Sacrament of the Sick

Process

Religious Education is taught through the process of *Explore, Reveal, Respond*. This follows the pattern of: the human **search** for meaning, God's initiative in **Revelation** and the **response** in faith. This pattern is outlined both in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in the Curriculum Directory.

As the Directory states:

'Teaching in Religious Educationshould help people be attentive to the meaning of their experiences, illumined by the light of the Gospel, so that they may respond to God more fully. Experience can also make the Christian message more intelligible.' ⁶

Methodology

A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used from across the curriculum adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of pupils.

Inclusion

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme.

Other Religions

Two other religions are taught from EYFS to Year 6 following the programme of study in 'Come and See'. These are Judaism, which is usually taught in the Autumn Term, and a rotation of other religions, taught in Spring term. At least one week's teaching and learning time per year is given to each.

It is an important aspect of our faith and Religious Education programme that children are brought to respect other faiths, cultures and beliefs. In addition, as part of our Community Cohesion commitment, we promote religious and spiritual tolerance.

The teaching of other faiths focuses on the key teachings of one faith at a time. This is not a multicultural approach. The multicultural approach is threaded through the entire curriculum, including R.E. and is demonstrated in the choice of music, art and literature. This reflects the multicultural diversity of Christianity which is found in our Catholic schools and in society.

We are aware that, at times, we may have in our school, pupils who are not Baptised Catholics or Christians. Our policy is that these pupils are expected to respect our faith and values, however, in line with statutory guidance, we make parents/carers aware of their right to withdraw their child(ren) from Religious Education.

Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

- Assessment of standards is carried out according to Diocesan guidelines using the criteria set out in Levels of Attainment in R.E. agreed by Bishops' Conference.
- Target Tracker is used as a tool for recording assessment outcomes.
- Moderation meetings are held termly, both in-house and with the other Catholic Schools of the Deanery.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning takes place as per the school monitoring timetable. R.E. lessons are observed and work scrutinies are carried out in the same way other lessons are observed according to the monitoring timetable.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to Governors.

Management of the Subject

Alex Hinton (DHT), the Leader of Learning for Religious Education has responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education.

Withdrawal from Religious Education

The school ensures that parents who want to withdraw their children from R.E. are aware of the R.E. syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs.

Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the R.E. curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

(See 'Legal framework, rights and responsibilities', p.10, for the legal requirements.)

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents, and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need to be given. Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from R.E. without influence from the school, although a school should ensure parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the R.E. syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.

Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where R.E. is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. If pupils are withdrawn from R.E., schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost.

Pupils will usually remain on school premises. Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for R.E. of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable R.E. is provided if this is reasonably convenient. If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of R.E. that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external R.E. Outside arrangements for R.E. are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed and presented to the Governing Body every 3 years.

Last Reviewed: June 2023

Next Review: June 2024

¹ Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 4

² Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.3

³ Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 7

⁴ Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.6

⁵ Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.6

⁶ Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.7