



Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship Policy

Mission Statement

‘Jesus light our way on our faith journey.
Be our guide, our joy and our hope, as we learn, live, love and play together’.

1 Aims and Objectives

1.1 The Religious Education curriculum will:

- seek to help each person to live and grow in community in a way that reflects human dignity and purpose;
- make a significant contribution to the child's self-understanding as a human being, capable of responding in integrity and freedom to the invitation of God and the challenges of life;
- promote a gradual opening of mind and heart in the search for truth about God, respect for people of other faiths and a willingness to recognise goodness wherever it exists.

1.2 The Religious Education programme will provide a comprehensive and systematic study of Christianity, so that the children and young people will be enabled to:

- grow in knowledge of, and openness to, the mystery of God;
- become familiar with the person, life and teachings of Jesus, who as Saviour and Lord reveals both the Face of God and the fullness of what it means to be human;
- grow in experience, knowledge and understanding of the Church, her life and teachings, her significance in the world today, and her concerns for peace and justice;
prepare for, participate in and appreciate Personal and Liturgical Prayer and Worship;
- develop a moral and ethical awareness as they reflect on the human condition and on their own lives and the lives of others in the light of the Christian message;
- avail of opportunities to foster their spiritual development;



1.3 Through sound teaching, which reflects children's and young people's capacity for learning and growing, the Catholic School's Religious Education will:

- be informed by a range of teaching styles and a whole variety of ways in which children learn, and will enable teachers to select from or devise appropriate learning experiences;
- affirm all pupils' value and worth, build on their own experiences of living relationships and contribute to the development of positive Self-esteem;
- provide opportunities for pupils to recognise, appreciate and develop their own talents and skills;
- promote the development of independence and autonomy in children and young people so that they are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own learning and are enabled to make ever more full and informed responses and choices in relation to God, Faith and service of others.

1.4 Parents of pupils in voluntary academies are permitted, by law, to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of religious education and/or collective worship given at the school and any such request shall stand until such time that the parent's request is withdrawn.

2 Implementation

2.1 To fulfill our aims and objectives, we use the RE Curriculum Directory, the Diocesan Scheme of Work, the Diocesan Curriculum Mapping for Religious Education, the Diocesan Levels of Attainment in Religious Education and the 'End of Phase' expectations. We incorporate materials from a variety of sources and programmes.

2.2 The programme is followed throughout the school. It provides the core of the spiritual and doctrinal teaching of the Church. It is tightly structured and carefully balanced, drawing on Guidelines on Religious Education from the Bishops Conference 2000 and other recent research into the development of religious and moral judgments. It is based on the proven educational principle of reinforcement, evident at each teaching level. The content and teaching methods take into consideration the children's age and capacity to learn, the doctrine throughout stressing the central truths of the Catholic Faith.



- 2.3** The programme of study contained in the Diocesan Curriculum Mapping for RE is followed in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The four areas of study emphasised at each stage are: REVELATION, CHURCH, CELEBRATION, and LIFE IN CHRIST.
- 2.4** In the EYFS and Key Stage 1, the programme commences by aiming to develop self-awareness leading the child, through his/her experiences and environment to God our Loving Father. As the child moves to Key Stage 2, that self-awareness is developed into an awareness of others and the community in which the child lives. Involvement in the Parish community is emphasised.
- 2.5** Towards the end of the Primary School, this same awareness of being a responsible member of the Community of God -the Church- encapsulates a more living and personal Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It promotes an appreciation of human dignity and the acquisition of values such as truth, beauty, justice and love. It fosters respect for other traditions, values and beliefs within the context of mutual understanding. It raises pupils' awareness of the Gospel values of justice in economic, political, cultural, racial and religious systems. It raises an awareness of God's presence in all of his creation.
- 2.6** This programme incorporates clear guidelines on how to communicate the doctrine outlined in the text. It suggests activities, provides teaching on how to pray, lead penitential services etc. and enables the teacher to approach the main feasts of the Church with meaning and joy. It also gives specific preparation programmes for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. This programme ensures continuity and progression.

3 Process

- 3.1** The process for delivering the RE programme is clearly expressed in the Long and Medium Term Planning. This process enables the Development of Knowledge, Understanding of Religion and Reflection on Meaning.
- 3.2** Time is set aside each half term for staff to reflect and to plan for each unit of work. The Programmes of Study offers a firm framework for teachers, but also gives opportunities for discussion of various ways of presenting the units of work in the manner most suited to each class.
- 3.3** The teaching of RE takes place in the classroom through a selection of differentiated activities such as: storytelling, role-play, painting, discussion, reading and independent research. RE is allocated a minimum of 10% of Curriculum time, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.



RE is a core subject and is also taught in a cross-curricular way in addition to explicit subject teaching.

- 3.4** Lessons are planned and taught in-line with the school's 'stages of teaching' strategy. This is with the intention of improving pupil knowledge, so that they know more, remember more and, in turn, do more using the knowledge, which they have acquired.
- 3.5** Where possible, lessons should allow pupils the opportunity to develop their thinking, in-line with the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is carried out through planned questioning / activities, which allow pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to more challenging, theological issues (relevant to their age).

4 Assessment/Record Keeping/ Evaluation

- 4.1** Recording of children's work takes many forms – photographic, recorded, pictorial, written, wall displays, assemblies etc. Wall displays can be seen in each classroom around the focus of the liturgical year and centered on the prayer area. All children keep a Religious Exercise Book throughout the year. Display themes in the School Hall are connected to work done in each class, and focus on different aspects, which have a religious theme, or focus.
- 4.2** Children are assessed on the Levels of Attainment and End of Phase Expectations in RE each term. Three children per class are 'tracked', one from each ability group. Their books are reviewed and monitored regularly and EPE grids are kept in the back of their workbooks and are updated as the different units of work are covered.
- 4.3** Staff endeavour to ensure that all children have equal access to the RE Curriculum and plan so that the activities are differentiated to meet the needs of the individual children.

5 Resources

- 5.1** Each teacher has a copy of the Diocesan strategy 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' appropriate to their year group.
- 5.2** Staff and children alike have easy access to a selection of resources, which are centrally stored in the RE Resource area, to augment those in the classrooms. There are Bibles for both Key Stages and a collection of prayer books, posters, crucifixes, rosary beads and other religious symbols and artefacts, which we use to enrich teaching in religious education.
- 5.3** Our resources are regularly reviewed and updated.



- 5.4** We recognise that people are our greatest resource and that teachers “take the place of Christ” in relation to the children’s education in the Catholic Faith. Therefore, we work to promote respect, love, understanding, compassion, kindness, dedication and personal growth. St. Joseph’s have at least one retreat day each year for the whole staff. It is in these that we are able to renew our vocation and strengthen our own Faith.

6 Staff training and Development

Staff meetings are held to discuss the teaching of Religion and Spiritual Development in school. The RE coordinator attends meetings provided by the Diocesan Team when appropriate and other relevant courses e.g. on Liturgy, Collective Worship etc. They communicate to staff the content of the courses and whatever is relevant to the teaching of RE. Each term one INSET takes place on an aspect of RE/Spiritual development of staff. Staff take part in spiritual retreats during the academic year. In addition, there are termly meetings of the RE Co-coordinators from the ‘Caritas Christi in Urbe’ group of schools, and those in the Central Diocesan cluster.

7 Worship, Prayer and Liturgy

- 7.1** In his letter about lay people, Pope John Paul II stressed how our daily lives and our faith cannot be separated. He wrote:

“Only in the unfolding of the history of our lives is the eternal plan of God revealed to us. It is a gradual process, one that happens day by day. There cannot be two parallel lives in our existence; on the one hand the so-called secular life, that is, life in a family, at work, in social relationships, in the responsibilities of public life and culture. Every area of our lives enters the plan of God.”

(Christifidelis Laica, par 58,59)

The prayer life of the school is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who lives in each baptised person. Therefore, education in ways of praying is an intrinsic aspect of the religious formation of children. In order to achieve this aim, young people are guided to explore meditation, reflection on the Word of God, listening to music, formal prayer etc. Individual, as well as group, ways of praying are experienced in formal and informal settings.

- 7.2** Each day begins and ends with a meaningful and appropriate time of prayer. Each classroom has a focal point for prayer decorated with children’s work e.g. prayers, poems, drawings etc. Each class takes time during the week for more personalised prayer. In KS2, the Angelus prayer is said at 12pm each day.



Monday morning assemblies begin with the Act of Contrition, so that a new week begins with the forgiveness of our sins.

- 7.3** Prayer & Liturgy is a gathering of all or some of the school community, which aims to foster the spiritual, moral and cultural development of all those present. Prayer and Liturgy will take place in the Hall for the whole school on Mondays, led by the Headteacher, Deputy Head Teacher, or Assistant Head Teacher.

Key Stage 1 Assemblies are held on (usually) Tuesdays, led by a class teacher; Key Stage 2 Assemblies are held on (usually) Thursdays, led by a class teacher; Mass is celebrated every Wednesday afternoon in school. Special Assemblies are held during important times in the Liturgical year: Advent, Lent, Christmas and Easter.

- 7.4** Displays in the Hall will be based on work connected to teachings of the Catholic Church around our role as part of God's family – 'Caritas in Action' focuses will showcase work completed by pupils on topics such as: Dignity of the Human Person, Solidarity and the Common Good, and Families and Community, to name a few.
- 7.5** The school Mission Statement is regularly reviewed and recited by pupils during times of Prayer and Liturgy. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn about the mission statement through house retreats, where they develop their understanding of what the words mean to them.
- 7.6** Each year group takes turns preparing the Mass for the school each week. Masses are also celebrated on Holy Days of Obligation and at other significant times in the School year. Year 6 have a special Leavers Mass each year. Parents, Parishioners and Governors are invited to take part in all School Masses.

8 Role of the RE Co-ordinator

- 8.1** The RE Co-ordinator leads the staff in developing their teaching of Religious Education by example through good practice; by support and advice offered at staff meetings and in informal conversations; by ensuring that the resources needed are available to staff and children; suggesting cross curricular links; involving staff in-service with regard to planning, record keeping and assessment.
- 8.2** The Co-ordinator, with the support of staff develops and extends the Catholic Ethos of the school in relation to Worship, Prayer, Scripture, Assemblies, the Mission Statement and the general life of the school.



- 8.3** In strengthening the links between Home, School and Parish and endeavouring to build up a truly Christian Community, united in the love of God and the teachings of Christ, the RE Co-ordinator plays a significant role.
- 8.4** To encourage the involvement of Parents, Governors, Staff and Parish Community in the preparation of children for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- 8.5** Together with other members of staff, the coordinator organises displays and opportunities to celebrate children's achievements in Religious Education.

9 Role of the Liturgical Team

- 9.1** To plan Masses with children, music ministry and Father Solomon. Also to prepare for adoration.
- 9.2** The Deputy Head to lead the Spiritual Council. (House Captains, Vice Captains – Children from Y1 –Y6)
- 9.3** The RE Co-ordinator to be part of the liturgical team.
- 9.4** The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher to deliver training to new members of staff on how to deliver the RE Curriculum.
- 9.5** All the members of the SLT to be members of the liturgical team to renew assessment and progress, curriculum, Collective Worship, Prayer Life and Catholic Life of the school.

10 School and Community

- 10.1** Parents and Parishioners are invited to participate in School Masses and Assemblies.
- 10.2** We try to develop in the children a sense of care and concern towards other people in the community. We do this by involving the children in charity fund raising events throughout the year, the most notable being our Harvest Thanksgiving Mass and the CAFOD Lenten Appeal. At Harvest time, the children bring gifts of food, which are then distributed to needy people after the Thanksgiving Mass. During Lent, the children collect money for CAFOD and other Charities. St. Joseph's has strong links with the local St. Chad's Sanctuary.
- 10.3** Through these and other activities, the children become aware of the needs of other people both near and far and develop sensitivity, generosity and a sense of responsibility towards their neighbours.



11 Preparation for the Sacraments

- 11.1** The Sacraments are a celebration of the presence of Christ permeating every moment of our lives. Growing in understanding of the Sacraments is a complex interaction of a variety of experiences and celebrations in which the children take part during the years they spend in school.
- 11.2** In preparation programmes for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation, parents have a very vital and important role in supporting their children. We aim to enable parents, the parish priest and teachers to work closely in unison. Parents are invited to attend a series of meetings during the preparation period. This is to ensure that they are fully informed and to enable the priest, teachers and parents to share knowledge, experience and faith together appropriate to the Sacramental experience of their children and their own lives. Parishioners support the preparation through prayer, support and interest. Parents are asked to take their children to Mass on Sunday and those who do not do so are continually encouraged to begin again.
- 11.3** Year 3 is the first year when children follow a more specific course of instruction in preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Parents are asked to take part in the preparation alongside their children. Reconciliation is held in St Joseph's School, during a special service, which is attended by staff, family and parish members. Further times for Reconciliation are offered during times of the Liturgical year, such as Advent and Lent.
- 11.4** Years 5 and 6 are prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Parents are again involved in the preparation. During this time, regular meetings are held in the Parish or School to inform the parents of the process of preparation and to enable them to give more help and support to their children. Before the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is held in school, giving children the opportunity to experience God's forgiveness.

12 Spiritual, Moral, Social, Vocational and Cultural Development

- 12.1** Through teaching religious education in our school, opportunities for spiritual development are integrated into the whole process e.g. daily prayer, reflection, etc. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life and our eternal destiny. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions in the light of the teachings of Christ and of the Church. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in doing so, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.



Note

This Religious Education Policy should be read in conjunction with the Pastoral Care Policy, the Multi-Cultural, Equal Opportunities Policy, the Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship Policy, and the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.

‘All aspects of this policy will be evaluated in line with point 9 of the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy’

Signed: C. Caffrey – RE Lead and DHT

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