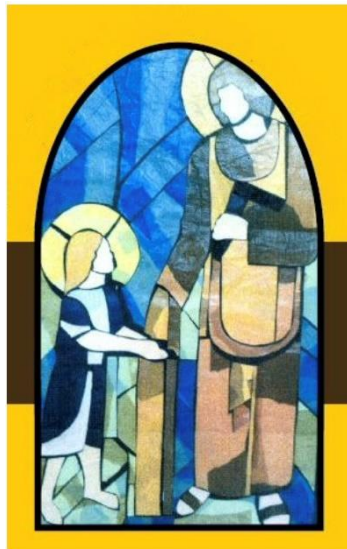


Religious Education Policy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

'We follow in St. Joseph's footsteps, building a community of love, trust, respect and learning.'



Reviewed by Samantha Golding - Headteacher

Approved by:	Local Governing Body	Date: November 2024
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Introduction

St Joseph's is a thriving small Catholic learning community with Christ at the centre. We celebrate the uniqueness of every child and the diversity of our community, we aim to educate and prepare our children to be independent, confident and to live life to the full.

As a Catholic learning community, everything we do serves the Church's teaching of assisting parents as primary and principal educators to fulfil their role. Every decision is made with the children in mind, serving our mission and vision and following Gospel values, Christian principles and British values. St Joseph's is an inclusive school which provides a challenging, stimulating, broad and balanced curriculum in a calm learning environment.

The school is part of the parish of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church through which there are strong links with the Parish Priest - (currently Father Joseph Whisstock who is also a Foundation Governor). Father Joseph regularly visits the school for Masses and other celebrations and the children attend services in the church.

At St Joseph's the school and parish partnership is highly valued.

Mission Statement

'We follow in St. Joseph's footsteps, building a community of love, trust, respect and learning.'

Rationale of Religious Education:

- The primary purpose of Catholic Religious Education is to come to know and understand God's revelation which is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ... in the person of Christ, the deepest meaning of what it is to be human — that we are created by God and through the Holy Spirit united with Christ in his Incarnation — is discovered. This revelation is known through the scriptures and the tradition of the Church as taught by the Magisterium. Religious Education helps the pupil to know and experience the meaning of this revelation in his or her own life and the life of the community which is the Church.¹
- Religious Education is a core subject in our Catholic school.
- For some in the classroom, Religious Education may well be received as catechesis, deepening and enhancing their personal faith; for some it will be evangelisation, the first time they will have been presented, personally, with the truths of living faith. Nevertheless, its primary purpose is the step by step study of the mystery of Christ, the teaching of the Church and its application in daily life. The criteria by which it is to be judged are educational.²
- Religious Education is planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other core curriculum subjects.

¹ *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012, p. 3

² Religious Education in Catholic Schools, a statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2000, p. 8-9

The outcome of 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.³

The Aims of Religious Education

- 1 To present a comprehensive content which engages pupils and is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
- 2 To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
- 3 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;
- 4 To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
- 5 To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;
- 6 To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
- 7 To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;
- 8 To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.⁴

Curriculum time allocation:

In line with Bishops' Conference recommendations, 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 4 areas of study outlined in the Curriculum Directory – Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ - the '*Come and See*' programme is used as recommended by the Diocese.

'Come and See' is based on the theological foundations of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Catechism and the revised RE Curriculum Directory and includes the Catholic attainment levels. The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the search for meaning in life.

This pattern guides the structure of the programme and informs the process of each topic, opened through:

- Explore
- Reveal
- Respond.

Central to the programme is belief in Jesus Christ, The Word and revelation of God.

³ *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012, p. 6

⁴ *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012, p. 6

Methodology

Teaching in Religious Education helps pupils 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. It 'serves in the examination and acceptance of the truths which are contained in the deposit of Revelation.'⁵

A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used from across the curriculum adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of pupils. Classroom teaching of R.E. takes place through a selection of differentiated and adapted activities. For example: discussion, role play, presentations, research, storytelling, written work and celebrations. Teaching methods are varied and appropriate to the age and attainment of the children, who will work as a class, within groups or individually. The children record their work in a variety of ways including digitally. The topics are designed to address a range of skills and attitudes.

Recording of children's work takes many forms: pictorial, written, wall displays, assemblies, discussions, presentations etc. Each classroom has an R.E. display and a prayer table/focal point. All children keep an R.E book for their work and each new topic. A central RE display is maintained in the school hall.

Planning

Each topic is planned using the Come and See year group notes. All planning incorporates the Learning Objectives and considers Success Criteria.

Marking

In line with the school's marking policy, the marking of children's religious work should always be positive and supportive to encourage the child in his/her faith journey as well as explaining their next steps in learning and addressing key misconceptions and errors.

Teaching Staff

All teachers at St Joseph's Catholic Primary are either Catholic or are committed to the teaching of the Catholic faith which permeates all aspects of our school life. Through example and teaching, the children are encouraged to develop a loving and trusting relationship with God, an experience which it is hoped will influence their attitudes to life and their relationship with other people. All teaching staff have the responsibility of teaching Religious Education to the children in their class. Non Catholic teachers are supported in their planning and teaching to ensure accurate religious literacy is delivered.

Resources

⁵ *Briefing*, 26 May 1994, quoting *General Directory for Catechesis*, 74b

Basic resources are held in each classroom. All children from Year 2 up have their own individual Bible. Further resources are held in the R.E. cupboards.

Home Links

The school recognises that it cannot teach our children without the cooperation of the parents and the parish. The parents/guardians are the first educators and they support the teachers who have the professional skills and training to help parents in the task of teaching the Catholic faith. We endeavour to do this in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. During the year, parents and friends are invited to join us at many celebrations. Parents are always invited and welcomed to all our school and class celebrations which include school Masses, class Masses and assemblies. The Wednesday Word and termly letters are sent to parents detailing each RE topic to help to keep parents informed.

Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

- Assessment of standards is carried out according to Diocesan guidelines
- Each teacher keeps a class record of assessed work and records of pupils' progress using target tracker.
- Samples of work from each class, for each assessed topic are kept covering a range of attainment.
- An in - house moderation meeting is held termly
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is completed by the Headteacher by lesson observation and monitoring of pupil books
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.

At the end of the summer term, teachers will be responsible for assessing pupils' overall attainment. To support teachers in making effective and consistent assessment, the performance descriptors 'Working Below', 'Working at Age Related', 'Working Above', will be used to measure overall attainment. Assessment is NOT - about faith practice.

Prayer

An essential part of the Catholic ethos of the school is the prayer life. We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. The act of worship is distinct from R.E. lessons. It forms an integral part of school life and is central to Catholic tradition. Staff meetings and Governors meetings begin with a prayer. The most important aspect of prayer for children is that they realise it is their way of communicating with God. Pupils are encouraged to prepare and lead collective acts of worship in their classrooms and for whole school gatherings and assemblies.

Children are encouraged to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development. The Liturgy group has developed a St Joseph's Prayer Booklet which outlines the expected development of traditional prayers to be learnt.

Staff are encouraged to pray with children, and to be an example for them. Through prayer, we endeavour to develop our relationship with God. All classes have a prayer focus area which has displays of children's work. This area changes with the liturgical calendar and is prepared to reflect the appropriate liturgical colour.

Team Saints

All children are assigned a house team that has been named: St Anthony, St George, St Patrick and St David.

Sacramental Preparation

The children are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion from Year 3. The course of preparation is carried out in the parish and the school works in consultation with the priests and catechists. In this way we hope to achieve true partnership between school, family and parish, with the children celebrating their First Communion in their local churches. Pupils in Years 4-6 will have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school during Advent and Lent and The Eucharist is celebrated often throughout the school year.

Policy review

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Headteacher and updated every 2 years.

Management of the subject.

The Subject Leader, who must be a practicing Catholic, has responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education. At St Joseph's RE will be led by a Senior Leader.

Other Faiths

Judaism is taught annually alongside one other faith as set out in the 'Come and see' programme of study.

Right to Withdraw

Parents are permitted to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of religious education given at the school and any such request shall stand until such time that the parent's request is withdrawn. However, the school would hope for a dialogue with a parent who wishes to withdraw their child from religious education in order to understand the basis of the request and to explain the practical implications of such withdrawal.

This Policy links to:

- Prayer and Worship Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy

The Role of the Subject Leader for Religious Education

The Religious Education Subject Leader will be responsible for:

- Working with teachers on monitoring teaching and learning, planning and standards through lesson observations and work scrutinies according to school practice.
- Organising and maintaining a portfolio of pupils' work.
- Organising in-house moderation of standards.
- Self evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Ensuring the curriculum offered is appropriate, suitable and relevant to pupils' needs and interests.
- Attending appropriate training and keeping up to date with current thinking, policy and developments and feeding back to staff.
- Organising and leading in-house staff training and development.
- Identifying training needs of staff to ensure their suitability to teach effective Religious Education.
- Supporting and advising colleagues in the delivery of Religious Education.
- Liaising with Governors, parents, the *Office for Education & Schools* on matters relating to Religious Education.
- Auditing, managing and developing resources within a given budget.