



St Mary & St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Our Mission:

At St Mary & St Joseph's it is our mission to

"Do Everything with Love"

We are committed to this because our faith in God is central and visible in our school, enabling everybody to feel loved and to achieve their very best.

You will see us

- Support and nurture each other, treating everyone with mutual respect
- Provide a learning environment that is engaging, challenging and inspiring so that our children will grow to become resilient, self-motivated learners
- Value every member of our community, enabling them to achieve their full potential

God's love is in everyone and it is the privilege of St Mary & St Joseph's school to create a friendly, warm and happy environment in which children can feel treasured and discover the joy of learning, whilst achieving the highest academic standards of which they are capable.

Rationale:

In our provision of Religious Education, we as a school understand that:

"Religious Education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school"

(Bishop's Conference of England and Wales May 2000)

We also recognise that our children come from a range of backgrounds and abilities:

"The Catholic vision of education promotes the dignity and freedom of every person as created in the image and likeness of God. This vision inspires and encourages the beliefs and values which are lived out in the daily life of the Catholic school. Within this vision, Religious Education is very much a journey of formation involving every member of the school community, together with a pupil's family and parish community.

For all children, Religious Education is a proper subject in its own right in the school's curriculum. For those already engaged in the journey of faith, Religious Education will be catechesis, and for others it will be evangelisation; the first opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel."

(Religious Education: Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools)

Aims and Objectives

The aims of our Religious Education curriculum at St Mary & Joseph's are:

- To provide a curriculum which is based on the values and attitudes which derive from the *Gospels* and which is appropriate to the age and the needs of our pupils in the world today.
- To support the children in their quest for the meaning of life and as their faith deepens to explore the fundamental questions, Who am I? Where do I come from? Why am I here?
- To help children grow in their understanding of Catholic faith and life
- To recognise the value, dignity and uniqueness of the individual child
- To encourage children to see themselves as part of the wider community through parish links as well as contributing to the work of world-wide organisations
- To foster in the children respect for other faith traditions and the ways in which they live their lives

The objectives of our Religious Education curriculum at St Mary & St Joseph's are:

- To develop an awareness and respect of Catholic belief and an understanding of the vital relationship between faith and life
- To give the children a firm foundation which will assist them in developing their faith in preparation for adult life
- To develop skills appropriate to the age and development of the child such as the ability to listen, reflect and discuss; to think critically and question; to investigate and interpret; to evaluate and make informed judgements
- To develop attitudes such as wisdom, understanding, right judgement and courage, as well as fostering a sense of awe and wonder, enabling them to experience God's love for them and for all living things
- To provide children with opportunities to be reflective in prayer and celebration
- To develop and encourage moral values and foster positive attitudes towards each other e.g. respect for truth, respect for the views of others, awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life especially the challenge of living in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society
- To make RE a joyful, memorable experience

Programme of Study

Religious Education at St Mary & St Joseph's is taught according to the rites of the Catholic church and is based on our Mission statement and the view of religious Education stated in the Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools.

In line with recommendations, 10% of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education. This equates to 2 hours a week in Key Stage 1 and 2.5 hours a week in Key Stage 2. This does not include masses, assemblies, class worship and prayer.

To fulfil our aims and objectives we use the 'God Matters' curriculum as prescribed by the diocese. It is a structured programme to ensure that the children make progress from Reception to Year 6. It approaches the teaching of Religious Education in a cross-curricular manner which fits in with our whole school creative curriculum.

There are three key aspects to the delivery of RE using this strategy:

ENGAGE: activities and discussion to actively engage pupils in becoming more involved with scripture

EXPLORE: Children are guided to understand the meaning of the scripture

EXPRESS: Children are enabled to demonstrate their understanding of scripture

A variety of methods are used to teach RE and make the Bible stories and Catholic worship more meaningful. These include:

- Whole class teaching
- Group work
- Individual study and research
- Role play and drama
- Use of ICT
- Film clips
- Visitors e.g. CAFOD rep, Fr Paul,
- Workshops e.g. Judaism
- Whole school theme days
- Quality artefacts, particularly in the teaching of other faiths

The units of work within the 'God Matters' programme correlate to the Church's liturgical year. Within the programme of study are included units which include the exploration of other faiths. The sequence of units to be followed for the academic year 2016-17 are as follows:

Autumn Term 2016:

Creation

Sacraments

Prayers, Saints & Feasts

Islam

Advent

Spring Term 2017:

Christmas

Judaism

Revelation

Lent

Holy Week

Summer Term 2017:

Easter

Pentecost & Mission

Prayers, saint & Feasts

Sikhism and Hinduism

Big Questions of Faith

Assessment

The role of assessment in RE is not to assess the individual child's personal faith or spirituality, but to feed back into teaching and planning to ensure that the teaching builds on children's knowledge and understanding and that children are encouraged in the development of their faith.

Assessment of standards is carried out using the criteria in the Levels of Attainment set out in the diocesan guidelines. Each teacher formally assesses 1 topic per term and keeps a class record of the assessed work and records of the pupils' progress. Assessment levels will be given to the RE co-ordinator termly.

The topics to be assessed for the academic year 2016-17 have been agreed as a staff team:

Sacraments (Autumn Term)

Revelation (Spring Term)

Pentecost & Mission (Summer Term)

Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of the academic year.

Marking

Teachers mark pupils work in line with the whole school marking policy. Teachers focus on the learning objective and liturgical words in each topic, and mark accordingly. Positive and interactive marking takes place. Pupils also reflect and evaluate their work in line with assessment for learning strategies. Children are given time in lessons to respond to questions raised from marking.

Role of Subject Leader

RE is a core subject and enjoys the same status as English and Maths.

The RE co-ordinator is responsible for the monitoring of teaching and learning in Religious Education across the school.

Across the year the RE co-ordinator will undertake

- Work scrutiny: children's books and class big books
- Pupil interviews
- Lesson observations
- Learning walk
- Planning scrutiny
- Monitoring of displays and Focal Points

A summary for any monitoring will be given to the Head teacher, identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Along with the Senior Management team, the RE co-ordinator leads the staff in developing their practice of Religious Education by;

- Providing support and offering advice at staff meetings and in informal conversations
- Ensuring that the resources needed are available to staff and children
- Providing advice with regard to planning, record-keeping and assessment
- Extending the Catholic ethos of the school in relation to Worship, Prayer, Scripture, Assemblies, the Mission statement and the general life of the school
- Strengthening the links between home, school and parish

The RE Leader will attend termly meetings organised by the diocesan advisor

Prayer and Worship

An essential part of our day at St Mary & St Joseph's is prayer and worship.

Morning, lunchtime and end of day prayer takes place in all classes across the school. Spontaneous prayers or reflections are also considered important and children are encouraged to give praise and thanks to God in ordinary everyday situations as well as being given opportunities to say sorry and experience forgiveness. Prayer should be seen as very natural, as well as a special way to talk to God.

All acts of worship are regarded as a call to prayer. Worship is organised on both a Key Stage and whole school basis and is led by members of staff, Father Paul, visitors and the pupils themselves.

Monday: Whole School Assembly

Tuesday: Key Stage Liturgies Y1/2, Y3/4, Y5/6

Wednesday: Class-based Act of Worship

Thursday: Class-based act of Worship

Friday: Whole School Achievement Assembly

The celebration of mass takes place half-termly, alternating between the church and the school hall. The whole school attends these masses, with individual classes taking on a role. All parents and parishioners are warmly invited to attend.

Displays and Focal Points

In each class a focal point of prayer is set up to compliment the Religious theme being studied or the Liturgical season. The focal point should be visible, prominent and appropriate to the age of the children.

Focal points could include:

Drapes, Candle, Cross/crucifix, Bible, Objects brought in by the children, stones and other natural objects.

Children should have ownership of their class focal Point and should be involved in it's creation.

The classroom display of work should be related to the current RE topic. It should be interactive and use a variety of resources. Key words from "God Matters" should be added.

Preparation for Sacraments

The celebration of Sacraments is central to the Catholic faith tradition.

Knowledge and understanding of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are an integral part of the teaching in 'God Matters'. What is done through the programme in school will support catechesis offered at home and in the parish. Families of children in Year 3 and above, who have been baptised catholic, are invited to attend the preparation programme for Reconciliation and the Eucharist. The preparation classes are held in the parish of St. Joseph's and led by Father Paul and run every other year. As a school we celebrate this special event with the parish community in the summer term.