

Policy for Religious Education

Mission Statement

We follow in Jesus' footsteps, as we care for each other when we work, play and pray.

Religious Education is the "core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school (Pope St John Paul II). Placing RE at the core of the curriculum in Catholic schools helps the school to fulfil its mission to educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of their existence, since "Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge but also includes emotional and affective learning. It is in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of what it is to be human truly becomes clear. Without religious education, pupils would be deprived of an essential element of their formation and personal development, which helps them attain a vital harmony between faith and culture." (CES)

Religious Education is regarded with the highest priority in our school. Whilst having specific lesson times it, it underpins the foundation of every subject and extends into the daily life and routines of the school. Through teaching, example, worship and shared Christian values we are helping to foster, in partnership with the family and parish, a living and personal faith in the children.

Aims

Religious Education in our school should:

- Nurture children's faith
- Promote in a gradual way their understanding and appreciation of Catholic teaching and practice
- Develop their involvement with the Church Community
- Develop their ability to show care for others
- Foster pupils' religious, spiritual and moral development
- Develop the skills required to be able to examine and reflect on religious belief and practice, including those from other faiths and cultures
- Enable pupils to develop their mortal qualities harmoniously, in order for them to become responsible and caring members of society
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder

Curriculum Planning

St Joseph's has adopted the Archdiocese scheme, 'Learning and Growing as the People of God.' The scheme provides progression from Early Years to Year Six and it also allows opportunities for monitoring and assessment. The scheme is intended to link in with other curricular areas and it should be resourced by using Bibles, Sacramental programmes, Multicultural resources and other resources appropriate to the programme of study. We make links with as many subjects and life aspects as possible to allow pupils to see their faith in real life experience. This approach enriches our whole curriculum and not just RE.

R.E. Lessons

- R.E. is a timetabled subject covering 10% of teaching time.
- R.E. is taught systematically throughout the school using the Diocesan Scheme "Learning and Growing as the People of God." This provides continuity and progression in each year group.
- R.E. is taught as a subject in isolation and, where appropriate, links are made with other curriculum areas, although the Catholic ethos of the school pervades through all aspects of school life and cannot be compartmentalised (particularly Catholic Social Teachings).
- Children develop an understanding of a range of traditional prayers appropriate to their year group (see Prayers to be Known by Heart document).
- All KS2 children should have a development knowledge and understanding of the Stations of the Cross and the Rosary.
- All children should be provided with the opportunity in their R.E. lessons to pray together as a class, to make up their own prayers in both oral and silent form.
- R.E. written work should be marked in accordance with the marking policy. Special emphasis must be made on the spelling of key words, e.g. "God", "Jesus," ensuring the correct use of capital letters.
- Lesson objectives should be shared with the children and an opportunity for prayer and reflection may be included at the start and end of each lesson.

Teaching and Learning

Children are taught:

- Knowledge and understanding of religious belief
- Knowledge and understanding of how religious beliefs shape life
- Knowledge and understanding of religious language, action and concepts
- To engage with their own beliefs and values
- To engage with the beliefs and values of others
- To engage with questions of ultimate meaning
- To reflect and contemplate

Work is planned to ensure coverage of the three attainment targets:

- Knowledge and Understanding (Learning About)
- Engagement and Response (Learning From)
- Analysis and Evaluation [KS2]

Prayer has an important role in the scheme and is taught both as an integral and a discrete area of study. Each classroom and the school hall should have a religious focal point. A crucifix and a Bible should be displayed in a prominent place. The prayer corners should include colours to represent the Liturgical Season.

Pupils with SEND

Staff are fully aware of the needs of children in their class. Work is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners and all parts of this RE Policy link directly to the aims objectives and processes identified in the SEND Policy.

Sacramental Preparation

The preparation for the Sacraments of Confession, Communion and Confirmation emphasises the co-operation between the school, home and parish. All of these have their part to play in the child's sacramental development.

- Each year, Catholic children in Year 3 are prepared to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Y3 class follows a programme using the 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' supplemented with materials from shared from the parish (requested by Father Michael and Deacon Daniel).
- Each year, Catholic children in Year 6 are prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Y6 class follow a programme using the 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' supplemented with materials from Gifted in the Spirit and other relevant resources.

Parents are invited to Sacramental Preparation evening meetings and prayer services led by the Parish Priest and Deacon.

Marking and Feedback in RE

Comments should encourage children to reflect, analyse and should be interactive. Teachers are asked to provide challenge or consolidation in RE through deeper gap questions or clarifying questions to ascertain knowledge and also gather assessment information for the more analytical aspects of the attainment descriptors. We respond to prayer but we do not critique these very personal, shared outpourings from the children that express their faith journey (unless to challenge a factual inaccuracy).

Assessment

Teachers, using their professional judgement, are continually assessing children's progress, knowledge and understanding, through discussion, written responses and other class RE work. Such assessments are used to plan future learning activities.

The Monitoring and Assessment Focus follows a four year rolling programme, set by the Diocesan Education Service on the following themes:

- The Liturgical Year;
- Scripture;
- The Sacraments;
- Living as Christians.

End of Unit assessments are carried out by Class Teachers three times a year as identified in the Assessment schedule and on the Long-term plan. Assessments are recorded on the Excel document, shared with all staff on Google Drive, and are monitored by the RE Subject Lead and SLT.

Age Related Standards: Three focus children are selected for each class. Class Teachers assess pieces of work throughout the year against the Diocesan Age Related Standards for the relevant phase using the appropriate Diocesan template. Opportunities are provided through dedicated staff INSET to moderate samples of work, and at the end of the academic year, an overall assessment judgment is made for each of the focus children.

Reporting to parents: Each child's progress in RE is reported to parents during parental consultations in both the Autumn and Spring terms (a strength and a target is identified for each child on their mid-term report), as well as in the form of an end of year report to parents.

Monitoring

- RE is moderated through regular book trawls, planning scrutinies and learning walks, carried out by the RE Subject Lead and members of the SLT.
- Each Class Teacher has copies of the relevant assessment proformas, which are monitored by the RE Subject Lead.
- The RE Subject Lead has management time to implement monitoring strategies; lesson observations, book trawls, teacher planning, display monitoring, learning walks and staff and pupil voice.
- Regular staff meetings allow feedback, moderation and discussions to be held.
- The RE Subject Lead monitors the availability of Professional Development and informs the relevant teachers.
- Assessments are monitored and a comprehensive data analysis reported is created at the end the academic year and is shared with staff and Governors.

Resources

St. Joseph's has an extensive selection of resources: statues, posters, teacher and pupil books, photocopiable material and research material to supplement the scheme 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'.

There are Bibles for both Key Stages and a collection of prayer books, posters, crucifixes, rosary beads and other religious symbols and artefacts, which are used to support and enrich teaching in RE. Our resources are continually reviewed and updated. All staff are invited to make suggestions for purchases.

RE Displays

In order to highlight the importance of Religious Education and the Catholic ethos of the school, displays of a religious nature should be evident in each classroom throughout the year. Similarly, such displays are evident in corridors and in the school entrance. An RE / Prayer focus area forms an essential part of the classroom. This area should have the appropriate liturgical colour, a crucifix and a candle. Statues, artefacts and posters are prominently displayed whenever possible and changed on a regular basis. Prayer areas are regularly monitored by the RE Subject Lead and the Mission Team.

The Roles of the Religious Education Subject Lead

- The RE Subject Lead leads the staff in developing their teaching of RE 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.
- The RE Subject Lead, with the support of staff, develops and extends the Catholic Ethos of the school in relation to Prayer and Liturgy, Scripture, Assemblies, CST, the Mission Statement and the general life of the school.
- The RE Subject Lead plays a role 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 Subject Lead encourages 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.
- The RE Subject Lead organises the Mission Team, a selection of children across KS2 who have particular roles within school, to carry out monitoring of liturgical areas throughout the school, leading lunchtime prayer groups, e.g. praying the Rosary during the months of October and May.
- The RE Subject Lead trains and supports new members of staff on how to deliver the RE Curriculum.
- The RE Subject Lead monitors and evaluates assessment and progress.

Parents and Parish

Many opportunities arise to strengthen the partnership between the school, parents and parish:

- Whole school masses – advance notice is given in the school newsletters and parish bulletins.
- Family Masses celebrated at Holy Trinity at the first Mass of each month (9am) where the children are invited to take part.
- Annual celebrations: Induction, Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Thanksgiving Mass
- Children's reception service of the Sacraments of First Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation
- Class-led assemblies
- School's newsletters and Website which keeps parents informed and up to date with school matters
- The parish priest and deacons visit the children to support their learning.

Link Governor

The Parish Deacon (Deacon Daniel) is Link Governor and regularly meets with the RE Co-ordinator.

Monitoring and Review.

This policy will be reviewed in line with annual school development plans on a two yearly cycle, or earlier if curriculum changes need to be implemented.