

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



*In the Light of Jesus
we Learn to Shine*



*St. Alban
Catholic Schools'
Partnership*

Religious Education Policy

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School our Mission Statement underpins all that we do. We strive to live out the Catholic ethos and mission of our school, fostering the important partnership between home, school and parish. Working and growing together we aim to provide the best education for all our pupils in all areas of the curriculum. Religious Education is the foundation upon which all other areas of the curriculum are built. Every member of staff within the school has a responsibility for fostering Religious Education, it underpins the philosophy of everything we teach. By living the Gospel values we aim to:

- value every member of the school community and develop the potential of each individual;
- create an educational environment in which we are encouraged to enjoy our work whilst aspiring to the highest standards of achievement and behaviour;
- give children the experience of being part of, and active members in, a Catholic community which celebrates through word and deed the unique, God-given nature of each individual;
- support parents and parishes in developing the children's knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
- develop a caring community which recognises that each member is equally deserving of respect, tolerance, understanding and opportunity regardless of ability, gender, race, age or creed.

Implementing the Mission Statement

We believe that every member of our school community is unique and this is reflected and experienced in the quality of relationships: "Love one another as I have loved you."

We work closely with our parents and parishes. Together with them and the children we aim to create in St Joseph's a community of love where Gospel values are witnessed to and where all we do is based on the teachings of Christ. We encourage each child's unique and individual growth and development, as they progress along their life journey.

Our aims and objectives for Religious Education are based on the new Come and See programme and the two key documents for Catholic Education, Attainment in RE and the RE Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. We aim to promote:

- Knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life.
- Knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about life, its origin and purpose.
- The skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.

Aims

- To work together to create a community in which the Catholic ethos of the school is fostered at all times.
- To introduce the children to the teachings of Jesus and to develop their knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and Jesus Christ; of the Church and of the Catholic faith.

- To encourage study, investigation and personal reflection to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively and relate it to their daily life.
- To present a clear vision of the Church's moral and social teaching so that children have a deeper understanding of contemporary culture and society.
- To raise children's awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them.
- To enable children to relate the knowledge gained through RE to their understanding in other curriculum areas.
- To foster and develop in all children a respect for the relationship between faith and life and between faith and culture.
- To provide a caring, secure and stimulating environment in which each child can grow in a community which daily celebrates the gospel values in practice.

Objectives

- To lead children to explore the Gospel values of the Catholic faith.
- To promote the spiritual and moral development of each individual within our care.
- To value each other in all situations, both children and adults, with adults presenting a positive role model by working harmoniously together at all times.
- To extend the school community into the wider world through school, home, and parish links.
- To be aware of the differing needs of each individual child in their own faith journey.
- To encourage participation in liturgical celebrations.

The purpose of Religious Education in our school is to help our children to grow in a knowledge and understanding of their faith. We will explore the religious dimensions of questions about life, dignity and purpose within the Catholic tradition. We promote the spiritual and moral development of each individual within our care. Links are made with the children's own experience in the local church, community, wider world and also with the experience of other faith traditions so that pupils recognise the presence of Christ in everyone, to acknowledge the contribution each person can make to our community.

We share the experience of a worshipping community through:

- Prayer, enabling the children to explore a variety of methods of both private and communal prayer;
- Liturgy, providing opportunities for celebration of the mass and other forms of liturgical experience e.g. penitential services;
- Assemblies, providing opportunities to meet together as a Catholic community in regular acts of worship.

Teaching Strategies and learning Outcomes

Religious Education is central to the daily life of the school and all pupils receive their statutory entitlement of 10% curriculum contact time. The pupils are taught through the 'Come and See' programme using a range of teaching strategies and resources to meet the need of all pupils and ability groups.

We aim to provide the pupils with a variety of learning experiences through a wide range of learning and teaching styles:

- direct instruction;
- encouraging reflection and prayer;
- discussion and questioning;
- music, drama, role-play and creative activities;
- making special books, artefacts and using ICT;
- links to other curriculum subjects;
- reinforcement of the children's knowledge and understanding of the sacraments covered in the 'Come and See' programme;

Presentation

The children are expected to demonstrate respect for their RE work and encouraged to present it in a variety of ways:

- through written work and discussion;
- using pictures, painting and displays;
- visual presentations including power points, role play, drama and class assemblies
- through celebration and liturgy.

Planning

As with other subjects Religious Education is planned by staff working together in year groups. Planning and examples of the children's work is monitored by the SLT and staff moderation sessions are planned to:

- to provide opportunities for staff to demonstrate pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills;
- to identify in planning other key aspects of RE e.g. prayers, assemblies, visits, links to other curriculum subjects.

Assessment

Levels of attainment in Religious Education are used in order to measure end of year attainment in RE and to monitor pupil progress, against national standards. Assessment informs planning more effectively as staff adapt their plans to meet the identified needs of pupils:

- Staff use the RE end of year standards. They draw on a wide range of evidence including observations, written work, group activities, discussions and responses in class, personal reflection, artwork, photographs, etc.
- Progress is tracked on individual pupil sheets.
- Through feedback and marking, and the use of key driver words, pupils are aware of the end of year expectations.

Formal Assessment

Pupils work is assessed in accordance with Diocesan guidelines for every 'Come and See' topic. As pupils progress through the school they are encouraged to carry out an end of topic individual response as part of the 'Respond' lesson. Topics begin with a reflective question 'The Big Question', which is then revisited at the end of the topic.

Marking

Overall judgements should not be made on one piece of work and need to be taken into account over a period of time. Marking work in RE will:

- encourage high standards and be in accordance with school policy and age and ability of the child;
- be positive and constructive so that it affirms and celebrates success and encourages future learning;
- challenge and encourage children to reflect on their learning;
- be about the progress in understanding of the teaching of the Church covered in each theme and relate this to the learning focus.

Resources

- Every teacher has access to the resources on the 'Come and See' website, including 'God's Story' 'Church Story' for the appropriate year group.
- Each class has a selection of Bibles, prayer books, religious books for children, candles, artefacts etc.
- Further resources are available in the staffroom and RE cupboards and include a range of assembly/drama books, posters and artefacts for other faiths.

Religious Education in the wider Community

- The RE subject leader regularly attends the St. Alban's Catholic Schools' Partnership RE co-ordinator meetings.
- Diocesan INSET meetings led by NORES are attended by all teaching staff.
- Liaison between the RE Subject Leader and NORES advisory team.
- The RE subject leader makes NORES news available to all staff.
- Diocesan religious education training available to all staff and governors.
- The Family Workers incorporate prayer and reflection into sessions and workshops for parents.
- Parents, staff and governors are invited to take part in liturgical celebrations and reflective prayer sessions at key points in the liturgical calendar e.g. Liturgies during Advent and Lent.
- Visits from outside speakers and organisations, to develop a greater understanding of the wider church.
- Close links with the parish priest to promote the children's spiritual well-being.
- Priests from the deanery support the school in the celebration of liturgies.
- Masses at St. Joseph's Parish Church e.g. Year 2 and KS2 pupils attend 1st Friday and Parish Masses.
- School choir sing for elderly people in the community.
- We support a number of local and national charities through various fundraising events.
- Fair Trade Status and related activities.
- Termly newsletters to inform parents of our RE programme and guidance for supporting children at home to develop their spirituality.

Future Development

- To provide more opportunities to experience other faiths in the community.
- To continue to develop parish links through the role of the Faith Ambassadors.

Staffing and Responsibilities

The particular duties of the Subject Leader will be:

- to co-ordinate the development of Religious Education throughout the school;
- to meet with the Head teacher to ensure consistency in curriculum delivery through strategic planning within the School Plan.
- to attend RE subject leader network meetings and establish links with the Diocesan Religious Education Advisors;
- to monitor the teaching and learning in RE by scrutiny of work and lesson observations; to advise and support colleagues with the planning and teaching of Religious Education;
- to maintain an audit of resources and update/replace as necessary using the appropriate budget and assist colleagues in their use;
- to support new and non-catholic members of staff in school, and organise, where possible, relevant training;
- to keep up to date with changes and developments in the Religious Education curriculum and inform staff through regular staff meetings;
- to maintain a subject leaders file;
- to assist the Head teacher in the development of the liturgical prayer life of the school community involving staff, pupils and local clergy;
- together with other members of staff organise displays and opportunities to celebrate the children's achievements;
- to encourage and foster links between home, school and the wider community;
- to lead the Chaplaincy Team in the development of the Catholic life of the school and wider community.

Class Teachers will:

- prepare plans with year group colleagues and deliver the Religious Education curriculum;
- create stimulating and interesting displays and a prayer focal point;
- prepare class assemblies and year group worship e.g. Advent and Lent services, parish mass;
- introduce children to the liturgical feasts and seasons of the Church;
- help to develop the children's knowledge of God and their relationship with Him through scripture, prayer, reflection and meditation.

As teachers of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we will strive daily to live out the school's Mission Statement of: *'In the Light of Jesus we Learn to Shine'*.

Planning monitoring and evaluation

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to agree and then monitor the school Religious Education Policies. The committee of the governing body for curriculum does this together with the Head teacher and RE subject leader. The Head teacher will report to the Governors in the termly report on issues relating to this policy. The school regularly updates the Self-Evaluation Report for the Diocese and an annual report for Governors is prepared by the RE subject leader.