

# St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy

## Religious Education Policy

**Agreed by the Governing Body: September 2015**

**Review Date: 2017**

**Review Schedule** Annual / **Biennial** / Termly

**Person(s) Responsible** Religious Education Coordinator

### **Mission Statement**

Saint Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy was founded to pass on to the children the faith heritage of the local Catholic Community. Each child is valued as a unique individual, a child of God, made in the image of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In partnership with parents and parish and with God's grace, the school tries to discern and help the child to develop fully as a person with particular gifts and aptitudes. Guided and challenged by Gospel values, the school aims to provide a community in which the child will grow and experience the love of God, self and neighbour.

**"LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU"**

**John Chapter 13 Verse 34**

### ***Aims of Religious Education***

St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy acknowledges that Religious Education is a lifelong process and recognises that the primary years are significant in the lasting impression they make upon our children.

Religious Education in school is concerned with children understanding mankind's search for meaning, value and purpose in life. The religions of the world are classic expressions of this search and, for many people, provide the context within which the experience is to be understood. Through his or her understanding of this search, the child is helped towards a deeper awareness of their identity enabling him/her to grow and develop freely in a world of divergent beliefs and values.

Education is concerned with the development of understanding. Religious Education is concerned with the development of the understanding of religion as a significant area of human experience. 'Understanding' is used in a wide sense, being concerned with feeling and empathetic insight as well as an intellectual grasp of certain information. The child is not simply learning about religion, they are learning from it.

### ***The Religious Education Programme***

To fulfil our aims we use the *Come and See* programme of Religious Education. In accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops' Conference. The children at St Thomas More receive 2.5 hours of Religious Education each week. It integrates the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Levels of Attainment and the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Children explore the mystery of Faith through Scripture and Tradition. Links are made explicitly in planning documents to the resources and plans are adapted to meet the needs of the unique cohort. Lessons are very well resourced with both interactive stimuli, a variety of artefacts and making cross curricular links.

There are three topics taught each term and 2 'other faith' units; Islam, Hinduism or Sikhism and Judaism. *Come and See* meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory.

There is a selection of ritual objects, books, videos and posters in school. Children visit the Leicester Synagogue, Highfield Street LE2 1AS, Leicester Central Mosque, Conduit Street LE2 0JN, Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurdwara, Holy Bones LE1 4LJ and Swaminarayana Hindu Mission, St. James Street LE1 3SU during their school career at St Thomas More.

### ***Planning***

Taking a whole school approach in using *Come and See*, we are confident that the breadth of the curriculum is being taught and that there is good progression from year to year. There is a planning proforma for staff to use for each topic. Please refer to the *Come and See* materials for more detail about planning and curriculum coverage.

The advantages of this approach are:

- appropriate content for each group is ensured
- planning and recording are easy
- continuity and progression across the school are assured
- communal celebrations are possible

### ***Assessment and Record Keeping***

Each teacher has the responsibility for maintaining records for the children in their class. Detailed levelling is carried out through an Assessment Task three times a year focusing on a rolling programme of Attainment Targets and strands.

Assessments are regularly moderated through staff meetings, Trust Meetings and at Diocesan level with other RE Coordinators in the Nottingham Diocese. Regular advice from David Quinn the Diocesan Education Advisor is sought to assist with moderation. Levels are entered by class teachers onto the school computer system. The subject leader then analyses attainment and progress at whole class and group level. This includes the monitoring of vulnerable groups. This information is then used to inform action planning. RE is reported formally to parents in the annual reports.

### ***Home, School, Parish links***

We recognise the importance of parents as the child's first teacher and their role in faith development. Parents and staff do everything possible to work in close partnership. There are many opportunities for parents to engage in school life.

St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy seeks, in partnership with parents and parish, to develop and nurture the Catholic faith of our children. We strive to bring pupils to a fuller understanding and knowledge of the Roman Catholic tradition.

On Holy Days of Obligation (where circumstances permit) the staff and pupils of St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy will celebrate Mass in the parish church. Key Stage 2 children regularly lead 9am Sunday Mass in the Parish Church of St Thomas More. Children in Key Stage 2 have regular class Masses which are prepared by the children and to which parents and members of the parish are invited. Children in F2 and Key Stage 1 prepare and lead class liturgical services to which parents and members of the parish are invited.

Children are prepared for Holy Communion at the parish church of St Thomas More. Christmas and Easter celebrations take place in the church in consultation with the parish.

Our Friends of St Thomas More are a group of parents and carers who give generously of their time and raise sums of money for the good of our children.

Our Statements to Live By are shared with parents and with parish through newsletters.

***Parents are:***

- given a warm welcome when they visit our school.
- given termly curriculum overviews which inform them of the topics covered in class, as well as ways they can support their child's learning. This includes the Statements to Live By.
- given an opportunity to give support/input with their child's RE homework.
- given regular newsletters.
- given a verbal report on their child's RE development during Parents Evenings.
- given a written report on their child's RE development at the end of the year.
- given opportunities to be involved in all charity activities during the year for school or for the wider community.

***Monitoring and Evaluation***

The school's provision of worship will be evaluated regularly through observation, parents, pupil and staff surveys and feedback to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

***The Religious Education Subject Leader***

The first purpose of the RE subject leader's role is to help improve the quality of the teaching and learning that the pupils receive in Religious Education.

The subject leader is responsible for:

- writing and keeping relevant documentation up to date
- co-ordinating the teaching throughout the school by encouraging collaboration between year groups or key stages
- being involved in the process of assessment, recording and reporting

- monitoring the quality of teaching, the progression and continuity of Religious Education throughout the school.
- offering support and advice to colleagues
- identifying resource requirements
- maintaining a strong relationship between the school and the Diocese, and with the school's Diocesan advisor
- maintaining the high status of worship within the school
- with the headteacher, completing the Religious Education action plan and using it to inform the School Improvement Plan
- keeping resources well stored, catalogued and available.
- ensuring that the Curriculum Directory is understood and being followed.

### ***Environment and Display***

From the moment you enter St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy, the school environment says loudly and clearly that we are a Catholic school. There is a special area devoted to prayer and worship in our entrance hall including child written books of prayers and reflections. Here you will see our School Mission statement clearly displayed as well as the current Statement to Live By.

Each classroom has a prayer area in a prominent place of the classroom and a display dedicated to current learning in Religious Education. As you move around the school, there are a number of displays showing the children's religious art work, statues of saints and The Holy Family and prayer boards and prayer areas.

### ***Resources***

Each class has an RE Prayer box with objects and fabrics suitable for all seasons of the liturgical year.

Each class has a set of resources to support child-led worship - Let Us Pray.

RE resources are stored in the room adjoining F2. Each class has Come and See planning resources and access to the bank of interactive resources.

Mission Together resources are ordered and distributed during Lent and Advent each year.

### ***Holy Areas***

Each class has a holy area for prayer focus, which is in an area all children can see when they pray. The theme of the prayer focus should relate to the season of the liturgical year. The holy area should feature a cloth reflecting the liturgical year or a feast day and some ritual objects. Cloths for the holy areas in each class reflecting the liturgical year are kept in each class.

Ritual objects may include pictures, icons, stones, bibles, flowers, bark, holy water, rosary, seashells or candles.

Cloths and ritual objects are stored in each classroom in the Prayer Box and are the responsibility of the class teacher.

### ***Wider Community***

We at St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy encourage involvement with the community. At the heart of a vibrant and caring community, St Thomas More

Catholic Voluntary Academy's close network of local partners help to drive exceptional outcomes for children. Partners are also invited to our special events such as Masses, the Christmas nativity, the carol service and summer concert. We hold special celebrations and assemblies annually to thank our partners.

Across the curriculum, we aim to deliver full engagement and learning for each child. As well as promoting cohesion, community and partner engagement enhances our children's progress, resilience and resourcefulness by facilitating:

- a curriculum that is constantly challenging and innovative;
- a richer school environment;
- direct mentoring support;
- a range of encounters with possible professions;
- a learning culture giving the freedom to experience, experiment and discover.

### ***Spiritual, Moral and Social Education***

The *Come and See* programme encourages the children to think about their relationships and act responsibly. Year 5 and 6 children take on specific the roles and responsibilities within our school to develop their sense of community including helping with younger children at play times, reading with partners to improve confidence and fluency and performing regular housekeeping duties to support the school family. Our behaviour policy is founded on the principles of restorative justice.

### ***Equal opportunities***

Religious Education cannot proceed on the assumption that all pupils will, or should, have positive religious convictions or commitments. St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy should however, foster the search for meaning, value and purpose since these are implied by the very concern to educate the whole person. It is therefore a legitimate part of the pupil's education that he/she should be encouraged to consider his/her own response to such issues.

### ***Marking***

Work should be marked in accordance with the school marking policy (see policy). Work should be marked in relation to the learning intentions. Key words must be corrected. Comments should encourage children to reflect, analyse and should be interactive.

## **APPENDIX 1**

**Colours:** purple for penance, red for Holy Spirit and martyrdom, white, gold for important feasts, green for the ordinary times of the year, blue is associated with Mary.

### **Other special focus times**

Some months of the year have special foci.

**October** is the month of the Rosary – blue

**November** is the month when the Holy Souls (the deceased) are prayed for especially,

**May** is the month when Mary is especially remembered – blue

**June** is the month of the Sacred Heart when we remember especially the great love Jesus has for us.

## APPENDIX 2

Prayer Box Contents

Green, Red, White, Purple table cloths

Small Crucifix

Purple candles

Blue candles

White candles

Glass candle holder

Matches

Large Battery operated candle

Advent wreath with 3 purple and 1 pink candle

Glass Beads

Book of traditional prayers for Key Stage 1 and 2 including regular morning, lunchtime and home time prayers.

## APPENDIX 3

### RE Websites

Worship:

[www.-leed-dicoese.org.uk](http://www.-leed-dicoese.org.uk) (go into R.E. then primary noticeboard

[www.culham.ac.uk](http://www.culham.ac.uk) The site of the Culham Institute

[www.schoolassemblies.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.schoolassemblies.btinternet.co.uk)

[www.assemblies.org.uk](http://www.assemblies.org.uk) (excellent)

[www.catholic-forum.com](http://www.catholic-forum.com)

This site has links to all things Catholic (mainly in the U.S. – schools, colleges, discussion groups.

[www.christusrex.org](http://www.christusrex.org)

[www.jesuit.ie/prayer](http://www.jesuit.ie/prayer)

[www.tasc.ac.uk/cc/](http://www.tasc.ac.uk/cc/)

This is the official site of the RC Church of England and has some useful links with other sites across the country.

[www.theresite.org.uk](http://www.theresite.org.uk)

This is the site of the national RE Council's own directory of RE related organisations

Online-d@[www.online-direction.com](http://www.online-direction.com) for spiritual direction online

Teaching:

Come and See [www.comeandseere.co.uk](http://www.comeandseere.co.uk)

Dottie and Buzz [www.dottieandbuzz.co.uk](http://www.dottieandbuzz.co.uk)

RE-Quest [www.request.org.uk](http://www.request.org.uk)

RE ONLINE [www.reonline.org.uk](http://www.reonline.org.uk)

The Professional Council for Religious Education

[www.refit.ucsm.ac.uk](http://www.refit.ucsm.ac.uk)

The Religious Education Exchange

[www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/schools](http://www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/schools)

The Religious Education Site

[www.theresite.org.uk](http://www.theresite.org.uk)

Religious Education at the Virtual Teachers' Centre

[www.vtc.ngfk.gov.uk/resource/cits/re/](http://www.vtc.ngfk.gov.uk/resource/cits/re/)

Teaching Resources and Materials

[www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/schools/cupboard/](http://www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/schools/cupboard/)

The Bible Gateway  
[www.gospelcom.net/bible](http://www.gospelcom.net/bible)  
The Sikhism Home Page  
[www.oneworld.org.uk](http://www.oneworld.org.uk)  
Welcome to Virtual Jerusalem  
[www.virtual.co.il](http://www.virtual.co.il)  
The Hindu Universe  
[www.hindunet.org/home.shtml](http://www.hindunet.org/home.shtml)  
Farnborough Abbey  
[www.farnboroughabbey.org](http://www.farnboroughabbey.org)  
Park Minster Monastery  
[www.parkminster.org.uk](http://www.parkminster.org.uk)  
Tyburn Convent  
[www.tyburnconvent.org.uk](http://www.tyburnconvent.org.uk)  
Andy Bird's Religious Education Resource Centre  
[www.ajbird.co.uk](http://www.ajbird.co.uk)  
Campus World  
[www.campus.bt.com/CampusWorld](http://www.campus.bt.com/CampusWorld)