

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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RE POLICY

Mission Statement 'Walking hand in hand with Jesus'

Aims of Religious Education

Here at St. Joseph's, we aim to fulfill our Mission Statement through the delivery of the Curriculum and through the delivery of the values we share and which permeate through all areas of school life.

Religious Education for us is not solely about developing each child's religious knowledge. It is concerned with providing opportunities and experiences through which each child can grow and develop in their faith and spirituality. It is also concerned with providing a moral code, based on the teachings of Christ. Furthermore, it is concerned with providing opportunities whereby each child can experience expressions of our Catholic culture and heritage.

The pre-school experiences of our pupils means that for some children 'R.E. will be received as catechesis, deepening and enhancing their personal faith' but 'for others it will be evangelization, the first time that they will have been presented with the main truths of living faith'.

(Introduction: 'Learning and Growing as the People of God').

These aims demand that Religious Education comes before the core curriculum subjects. Indeed these aims are only achieved through membership of the community. Here at St. Joseph's it is the partnership between school, home and Parish which provides the full range of opportunities through which religious experience, faith and knowledge can be developed.

How we meet our stated aims

In order to achieve these aims RE is presented through the following strands:

- a) The RE Programme of Study including Multi-Cultural Education
- b) Religious practice
- c) Sacramental preparation

- d) Pastoral care, behaviour and discipline
- e) Links with other Curriculum areas

a) The RE Programme of Study

RE is allocated 10% of Curriculum time in line with the expectations of the Archdiocese. In Key Stage 2 this is two and a half hours per week and in Key Stage 1 two and a quarter hours.

Collective worship does not constitute teaching Curriculum time; likewise hymn practices also are not part of the allocated 10%. Mass, however, can be included as part of RE Curriculum time. The directive from the Archdiocese is that Mass 'may be considered the equivalent of half-an-hour of RE, but only once in any week'. (Communicating Christ)

Learning and Growing as the People of God

The school follows the model curriculum strategy published by the Archdiocese in response to the Catechism, the Curriculum Directory and as a continuation of the Curriculum Mapping.

How we plan Religious Education

Each class teacher has an R.E. file to help them to plan for R.E. over a four year cycle. The Long Term planning contains the Programme of Study for each Year Group. The Medium Term plan contains the Units to be studied from the Archdiocesan Strategy. The Weekly Plan shows aspects of the Units covered from the Archdiocese Scheme of Work.

How we Assess, Record and Report

The assessment of individual pupils in RE is the responsibility of the class teacher. Teachers report to parents via consultations in the Autumn and Spring Term and by a written report at the end of the school year.

Formative assessment is ongoing through the teachers' marking and through observing children when completing tasks/activities.

A schedule of assessment has been compiled to enable teachers to assess three times a year. They are completed using a traffic light system as detailed below:-

Green - Attainment above the expected standard for their Year Group

Yellow - Attainment at the expected standard for their Year Group

Red - Attainment below the expected standard for their Year Group

Assessment sheets are handed into the R.E. Subject Leader at the end of each Unit.

An important element of Assessment is in the evaluations at the end of each unit. These provide valuable information for present teachers, future class teachers, the Subject Leader, aids the monitoring of the Curriculum, the ordering of resources and the development of INSET. Samples of work are given to the R.E. Subject Leader at the end of each unit one child's work per year group is monitored and moderated once a year and kept in a portfolio to enable progress to be seen over the child's education from EYFS to Year 6.

How we teach Religious Education

Religious Education is taught to all children in the school as below:-

Class 13/14

Elm (EYFS and Y1)
Maple (Y 1 and Y2)
Oak (Y3 and Y4)
Chestnut (Y4 and Y5)
Eucalyptus (Y5 and Y6)

Subsequent years will be determined upon the numbers within the school and how these will be split into year groups.

Multi-Cultural Education

Across the year groups, children are introduced to other religions, festivals and cultures in the Archdiocese's scheme throughout the academic year. During one week of the Summer Term, after First Holy Communion and Confirmation, all children participate in a Multi-Cultural week. Various activities are arranged and visitors are asked to come in, to teach the children about their culture and religion through art, music, dance etc.

Equal Opportunities

At St. Joseph's all children have equal access to the RE Curriculum, regardless of gender, religion, culture or Special Educational Needs. Wherever possible full participation in all aspects of RE is expected and encouraged. However, parents have the right to withdraw their children from these.

With regards to the Sacraments, all children in Years 3, 5 and 6 are involved in preparatory lessons and are invited to the relevant Parish celebrations.

- Those who are not able to receive Communion may receive a blessing. Those not able to receive absolution are able to have a few private moments with the Celebrant during Reconciliation services.

b) Prayer life of the School

It is through the observance of and participation in acts of prayer, worship and celebration of the Liturgy that the child has the opportunity to express their faith and to develop their relationship with God. School, for many of our pupils, is their first sustained experience of the Catholic tradition. Thus we provide a range of opportunities where the faith can be practiced.

- Formal Prayer: morning, afternoon, at mealtimes, end of the school day.
- Reflective Prayer in the form of guided meditations.
- Class prayers.
- Collective Prayer in the form of class assemblies, School Assemblies led by the Head based on the Liturgical Year, Saints and through the Scheme 'Open the Book', as well as Celebration Assemblies.
- Celebration of Mass: whole school at the beginning and end of the School Year and on Holy Days of Obligation; Classes attending Mass every other week at Church (except Foundation, who attend later in the school year).
- Observance of Feasts, Saints' days and the Church calendar.
- Weekly Hymn Practice.
- Retreat at Alton Castle on an every other year basis.

c) Sacramental Preparation

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist currently take place in Year 3 on a yearly basis.

The parents are invited to attend a meeting given by the Headteacher, the Parish Priest and Chair of Governors before the programme begins. The children and their families participate in two presentation Masses (one for each Sacrament). Opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation are during the Advent season in December and the Lent season in March/April. These come in the form of the Parish Priest meeting with the children individually in school after a school Mass. The children are prepared for this Sacrament by the Chair of Governors, who is a Sister of Providence, and the class teacher.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation takes place in Years 5 and 6. This is taught by the Class Teacher in collaboration with the Parish Priest, according to the Archdiocese strategy. The Headteacher and Parish Priest lead a meeting for the parents and their children before the programme begins. The children and their families participate in both a presentation Mass and a Mass of thanksgiving. Confirmation usually takes place on a yearly basis and is led by the Episcopal Vicar.

d) Pastoral Care, Behaviour and Discipline

Involvement with Parents and the Parish Community

The parents and Parish are positively encouraged to involve themselves with the religious life of the school. They are invited to all school Masses via the weekly newsletter and the Parish newsletter.

There are two parents evenings each year when the children's progress can be discussed. The annual reports also detail the progress made.

The school encourages the children to attend Mass on Sundays where they can participate in the activities led by the Children's Liturgy Group.

All Masses that the children attend have Parish members present. Members of the Parish are invited to have refreshments with the Headteacher and Parish Priest afterwards.

During Sacramental preparation the school asks the Parish members to act as prayer sponsors for the children.

Many of the children are servers and assist at both school and Parish Masses.

The school and Parish are linked by several fund-raising events that take place during the year, e.g. CAFOD, Dr. Barnados, NSPCC, the Father Hudson Society.

e) Links with other Curriculum Areas including Information and Communication Technology

Religious Education has close links with other Curriculum areas. Firstly, many of the skills that are developed in RE are skills which are transferable to other subjects. For example, research gathering and referencing skills are used in all academic areas. Likewise the varied writing skills developed in Literacy can be practiced and developed within the RE Curriculum. Secondly, as an academic subject, RE has strong links with both History and Geography. It involves the study of the Reformation. Finally, IT can be used for word processing and also as a tool for research.

Health and Safety

Teachers should follow the current procedures when crossing the roads to Church (Health and Safety Policy). It is advised that teachers do not go into church with their class unless another adult or the Parish Priest is present. Any matches kept in classrooms must be kept securely out of children's reach. The teacher is responsible for the lighting of candles and ensuring that lit candles are used safely and extinguished properly.