

**ST MARYS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AND NURSERY**  
(including Happy Days)



**Religious Education Policy**



# Religious Education Policy

## St Mary's Catholic Primary School Religious Education Policy

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### CONTENTS

1. Mission Statement
2. A curriculum statement/ Legal framework
3. Aims
4. The main areas of study
5. How RE should be taught
6. Teaching RE to Non - Catholic children
7. Teaching RE to Foundation Stage children
8. Teaching RE to KS1 children
9. Teaching RE to KS2 children
10. Resources
11. Inset/ Staff development
12. Attainment and differentiation
13. Liaison
14. Monitoring and evaluation.
15. Community Cohesion

## 1. St Mary's Mission Statement

### Our Mission Statement

At St Mary's we will:-

Enable each child to develop a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith, promote respect for religious and moral values and tolerance of other races and religions

Foster the growth of each child's potential through the development of respect for self and others

Promote the individual talents and abilities of pupils to ensure that each child fulfills his or her full potential.

Promote an understanding and care of the environment in which each child finds him or herself.

Promote a close and co-operative relationship between home, parish and school.

In the school community we live by the motto:-

SEQUERE MARIAM IN FIDE  
Follow Mary in Faith

## 2. A Curriculum Statement.

2.1 RE is the process of developing each child's relationship with Christ, according to the truths and practices of the Catholic faith as expressed in our mission statement.

2.2 RE supports, extends and clarifies the faith of the children at home and in the parish. If the children do not experience faith at home their only experience of what it is to be a believer may come from school.

2.3 RE takes into account the age of pupils and their capacity to learn.

2.4 RE is vital for the child's development in moving from an awareness of self to an awareness of others and their needs, becoming an adult, who is a responsible and caring member of society.

2.5 RE is founded in the Gospel values with Christ at the centre of everything we do.

2.6 RE at St Mary's is based on the diocese curriculum strategy 'Learning and Growing as the Children of God'.

2.7 This policy statement is designed to support the RE scheme of work. All staff and Governors have contributed to this policy and will review it every two years.

## **2.8 The Legal Framework**

RE is an entitlement for all pupils (5-19) at school. RE must form part of the school's basic curriculum but it is not part of the National Curriculum.

RE should account for 10% of curriculum time (2 hours for Foundation and KS1, 2 ½ hours for KS2 per week). Once a week Mass celebration may be considered the equivalent of thirty minutes RE.

A central message of the Catholic faith is that although we are all different, God loves each one of us equally, regardless of background, gender or ability. It is therefore vital that we recognise and cater for the individual needs of all children, acknowledging that all children have different gifts and talents and that these should be celebrated.

It is important that children are provided with images and experiences that reflect the multi cultural society in which we live, enhancing their awareness and knowledge of faith and cultures. This is essential in preparing children to take their place in a multi cultural society.

## **3. Aims**

3.1 Most importantly of all to give pupils the opportunity to develop a living and personal faith in Jesus Christ. To bring children to know and love God.

3.2 To develop an awareness of God's presence in individuals' lives and to elicit a response to the presence.

3.3 To develop a well formed conscience allowing the individual to make sound moral judgements in the light of personal commitment to God.

3.4 To enable the children to develop their physical, moral, intellectual and social qualities harmoniously.

3.5 As a catholic school, RE is a core subject of the curriculum and must be allocated appropriate time and resources.

3.6 To encourage parents, family members, friends of whatever faith and parishioners to attend Masses and religious celebrations within the school. To encourage pupils to be involved in parish activities outside of school time

3.7 To promote good links with the Parish of St Mary's.

3.8 To prepare our children, and their parents, with the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the sacraments they receive whilst attending St Mary's..

3.9 To ensure RE plays a central role in school's work on spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

To develop the spiritual life of each child through prayer and reflection.

To prepare pupils for life in a multi cultural society by fostering respect for and understanding of rich cultural diversity.

To provide a program of family life education which conforms to the teaching of the Catholic Church and follows Diocesan guidelines.

#### **4.The main areas of study.**

We follow the agreed syllabus from the Birmingham Archdiocese 'Learning and Growing as the Children of God'. This document covers the four main areas of study identified by the Bishops' Conference in 1996. These are:

**Revelation:** God's self revelation

**Church:** Communion of life in Christ

**Celebration:** Mystery in worship and prayer

**Life in Christ:** The search for holiness and truth.

Each year group has a number of units to study over the year. The units are developmental, building on previous knowledge and experience and taking into account of the children's age and understanding. The topics covered by each year group are as detailed on the curriculum overview.

## **OBJECTIVES OF RELIGIOUS TEACHING**

### **Objective**

As a Catholic School we base our whole ethos on the teaching of the Catholic Church and the principles of Christianity. These teachings govern everything we do and say in school and are not confined to the teaching of religious education even though this is an important subject in our curriculum.

In teaching Religious Education we aim to foster and deepen the faith of the children, so that they see themselves and all things in relation to God our Father.

To encourage the development of a living active faith, where God is seen as being present in our lives, not separate from us. Something we live out daily with real commitment.

### **Means of Achieving These**

The Curriculum Strategy "Learning and Growing as the People of God" is the Scheme of work.

By the example of their teachers and parents, by praising God for all of creation, by use of the Scriptures. Through fostering a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus his Son, in whom he revealed himself to us.

By adult example and by using particular local situations to demonstrate 'our faith in action' actively driving us to help those in need. Also by learning about others who have used their lives to

glorify God eg. The Saints, Mother Teresa etc.

To foster growth in faith and develop knowledge and love of God, as children mature.

Through the reading of and understanding of the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church.

To prepare children and their families for the reception of three Sacraments:

The preparations for Reconciliation and the Eucharist are based on the Curriculum Strategy "Living and Growing as the People of God" and "Jesus Comes to me."

- i. Reconciliation
- ii. Eucharist

There are meetings for parents to help them, not only with their child's preparation, but with their own faith development and knowledge.

- iii. Confirmation

Learning about the Sacrament of Confirmation is based on the Curriculum Strategy "Learning and Growing as the People of God" and "Gifted in the Spirit." It involves meetings for parents to help them support their children in the commitments they are asked to undertake.

To reach the wider Christian Community through the children and the school.

Through the sacramental programmes of preparation. Through inclusion in and invitations to meetings, discussions, Masses and assemblies and religious Celebrations. Through our yearly multicultural week where other faiths are celebrated.

To create a framework of learning in which a deeper exploration of faith is possible, so that the children develop a positive attitude of enquiry towards religion.

Through religious language, used and explained, through open discussions, through prayer and worship. Through Masses and assemblies when the whole community come together to worship, to praise, to petition and thank God.

To help children to explore the religious dimensions of life both Christian and World faiths, where appropriate.

Through the Curriculum Strategy "Learning and Growing as the People of God" and through the person of Jesus as they come to know him. Through our Family Life scheme. Through studies of

To help each child to acquire a set of moral values, which correspond to Christian morality and will guide his/her personal behaviour.

To help each child to form moral judgements.

To help each child to maintain and defend his/her moral decisions and code, even when in the minority.

To develop in each child a respect for the individual and for the rights and responsibilities of others based on Christian principles.

To help each child become sensitive to others, to respect them as individuals, treat their views and feelings with consideration and to form sound caring relationships with them.

To encourage each child to develop as an individual, to grow in confidence, to know themselves.

To learn how to deal with difficult emotional and social problems based on faith and love.

other faiths and, where appropriate, in other curriculum areas.

By clear and consistent examples and standards set. By reference to Christian codes of behaviour. By discussion of choices and decisions made. By an insistence on acceptable codes of behaviour, in a caring atmosphere. By children and staff making joint decisions about consequences to actions.

The themes in the Curriculum Strategy, "Living and Growing as the Children of God", bring out the importance of living in the way Jesus showed us, living moral lives as a response to God's love. By discussion of incidents which require disciplinary action.

By a constant reference to Jesus and his life and suffering and his faith in his father's love. By adult example.

Through assemblies and lessons looking at the world family and our responsibility for one another. Through supporting a variety of charities, local and worldwide, learning about their work as part of citizenship.

Through mutual respect between pupils and staff, through the maintenance of consistent standards, Through the caring community of the school and parish.

Through teaching methods used. Through prayer and through the person of Jesus.

Through an encouragement to prayer and a real growing relationship with Jesus. Through example and advice built on trust and love. Through implementation of our Family Life scheme.

To help each child understand and acknowledge the need for authority.  
To foster respect for those in authority.

Through the development of a caring authority which they have faith in, based on love and moral standards.

To develop religiously literate children.

Through the R.E. teaching and learning provided. Through staff knowledge and example.

## **Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

The Religious Education provided at this school is intended to help children to know and love God, in order to develop their moral and spiritual nature and deepen their faith.

Children are encouraged to live their faith in an active and positive way, always aware of the presence and love of Christ guiding them. While there is a great deal of knowledge to be gained and skills to be developed in R.E. lessons, it is the growth of understanding and deepening of faith which are the focus of the Religious Education provided here in St Mary's Catholic Primary School. This is to ensure that children properly develop their relationship with God and become religiously literate.

### **5. How RE should be taught**

5.1 RE should be taught through the use of 'Learning and Growing and the People of God', the Archdiocese of Birmingham curriculum strategy for RE.

In his introduction to the document, Vincent Nichols Says, 'This document is the curriculum strategy for the Religious Education in Catholic Primary schools in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. It lays out clearly the steps to be taken in RE at each stage of every term in the nursery and primary years. For schools it is essential guide and norm. For families and parishes it makes clear what is being tackled in the RE classes. It provides, therefore, the foundations for the improved partnership between school, home and parish, a partnership that lies at the heart of Catholic Education.' The scheme also incorporates units of work for the Sacramental preparation in the primary years.

5.2 There are many opportunities for incidental teaching from daily life situations at home and at school give rise to many and varied teaching opportunities e.g. birth, death, illness, family problems, sharing and working together in the class and on the playground, living and working in a multi-faith society.

5.3 Work on RE topics should be displayed - children's work/ posters/ religious artefacts in the classrooms and communal areas of the school.

5.4 Through religious practice, upholding church traditions of prayer and worship.

5.5 Through celebrations of Mass, feast days, Holy days and collective worship.

5.6 Through celebrations of appropriate liturgical seasons

5.7 Through retreats to Alton Castle/Colwich Abbey.

5.8 Through the use of visits and visitors in school to enhance the RE curriculum.

5.9 Through the participation in fundraising events for Catholic charities such as CAFOD and Father Hudson's society.

A range of teaching strategies will be employed depending on the needs and abilities of the children and the nature of the activities being undertaken.

Approaches will include whole class teaching, group activities and individual work. Children will have opportunities to work individually as well as co operatively and collaboratively, developing their own knowledge and expertise as well as sharing experiences with others.

#### **6. Teaching RE to Non Catholic children.**

6.1 Non- catholic children are made to feel welcome and valued as full members of our school community.

6.2 Non- catholic children take an active part in all religious celebrations.

6.3 Their religious beliefs and practices are respected and where possible discussed.

6.4 All pupils in classes preparing for the sacraments will complete the required work; Non-Catholics will be encouraged to partake in the celebration of the sacrament.

#### **7. Teaching RE to Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children's work in the early years is stated in section 4.

In both Nursery and Reception classes, pupils will have the opportunity to:

- Take part in charity fundraising events
- Take part in Masses with the rest of the school.
- Experience collective worship (both in class and during whole school or key stage assemblies)
- Work on displays for their classroom and communal areas of the school
- Have a focal point for prayer in class- a prayer table with appropriate cloth representing the liturgical colour for that season.
- Learn simple hymns and prayers.
- Take part in class assemblies presented to the whole school and parents.

#### **8 Teaching RE to KS1 children.**

Children's work in KS1 is stated in section 4

By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils will have the opportunity to:

- Attend Masses in Church.
- Take part in charity fundraising events.
- Taken part in offertory processions
- Read and write bidding prayers
- Take part in class assemblies presented to the whole school and parents.
- Take part in class liturgies.
- Work on RE displays
- Have a focal point for prayer in class- a prayer table with appropriate cloth representing the liturgical colour for that season
- Work, care and worship together

## **9 Teaching RE to KS2 children.**

Children's work in KS2 is stated in section 4

By the end of KS2 pupils will have the opportunity to:

- Lead collective worship
- Charity fundraising
- Events in the wider community eg Masses celebrated in the Parish Church on Sunday, Leavers assembly.
- A visit to Alton Castle
- Sacramental preparation
- RE displays
- Have a focal point for prayer in class- a prayer table with appropriate cloth representing the liturgical colour for that season
- Working, praying, caring and worshipping together.

We also run family life and sex education in Y5 and Y6 using the Archdiocese programme 'All that I am'

## **10. Resources**

Resources for RE are placed in a central store located in staff room. All books and videos are stored on shelves. Class teachers have their own resources stored in their classrooms. The Re Leader has an annual budget to replenish and broaden the resources in RE.

## **11. Inset - staff development**

11.1 Details of courses run by the Diocesan department for religious education are made available to those members of staff who will benefit from attending.

11.2 If any member of staff expressed an interest in studying for the certificate in religious education they would be encouraged to do so.

11.4 RE is part of the school's annual allowance of in house INSET training days.

## **12. Differentiation and attainment**

Differentiation is provided in RE in a number of ways, according to a child's particular needs and development.

- Written / discussion work can take place in small groups or pairs rather than the whole class
- Support with the work from the class teacher or support assistant.
- By differentiated tasks
- By differentiated resources
- By presentation of texts with different levels of difficulty.
- By outcome
- Emotional support if necessary

Attainment

- The curriculum provides an attainment framework at the end of each unit, allowing for assessment at average, below average and above average expectations.
- There is an assessment programme in place in the school which assesses in detail a particular strand of the curriculum on a rolling four year programme.
- A system for child self assessment at the end of each lesson is in place.

- Learning intentions are shared with children at the beginning of each lesson.

### **13. Liason**

We believe that the school alone cannot undertake a child's religious education. Religious education begins at home at Baptism; the parents are the child's first teachers and support the child with his/her first religious experiences. The school works in partnership with parents and the Parish to enrich the lives of our children.

#### **Liaison with our parish**

- The head teacher/RE Co ordinator meets in the September of each year with the parish priest to organise dates for Masses and Sacraments for the coming year.
- On a Thursday each week the whole school attends Mass in Church. These are parish Masses and the children read, sing, serve and bring the offertory gifts.
- Parents are welcome Masses as well as meetings about Sacraments their child will receive.
- The Parish priest and Deacon visit school frequently and often supports teachers in class to deliver parts of the RE strategy.

#### **Liaison with parents**

In requesting a Catholic Education for their children, parents have made a commitment to the teachings of the Catholic Church and are therefore frequently asked to participate in the religious life of the school parish. They are encouraged to attend programmes of preparation for the sacraments of the Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation and are encouraged to help children to complete relevant work at home. Parents are also invited to attend all religious celebrations including Mass, assembly and other religious celebrations. The documentation for Religious Education and Family Life Education is available for inspection by parents.

As the first and most important teachers of their children, parents are urged to witness to their faith by their own commitment to the sacraments, by example in their daily lives and by their willingness to participate in the religious education of their children.

Non-Catholic children and their parents are invited to be part of all the religious activities of the school. Whilst they are not able to participate in the reception of the Sacraments, they are invited to share the celebration.

Parents are invited to-

- Open evenings twice a year
- Regular celebration assemblies where we celebrate the children's achievement.
- Class assemblies
- Weekly school Mass
- Parents meetings for the family life and sex education classes.
- Parents meetings for sacramental preparation in Year3 and Year 5/6
- Parent of children who enter Reception class are given a brief overview of the RE curriculum during the new parents meeting. They are also given

suggestions of how to help and encourage their child in RE during their time at St Mary's and a list of prayers encouraging them to pray together at home.

Parents also receive:

- Access to the schools website
- An annual report on their child's work, behaviour and progress.
- Details of Masses and assemblies

Liaison with other local catholic schools

- We have recently become a multi academy with our Stafford family of schools and our feeder school- Blessed William Howard.
- The RE co ordinator meets with the RE advisor and other RE co ordinators at cluster group meetings each term.

#### **14. Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring is a crucial issue for our school to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Our monitoring cycle includes:

- \*Regular meetings between the Head teacher, Parish Priest and link Governor to discuss RE issues.
- \* Regular meetings with the RE advisor
- \* Completion on an annual basis of the RE SEF form
- \*Regularly update and review the policy
- \* Carry out regular audits of resources
- \* Learning walks
- \* Lesson observations
- \* An annual RE budget
- \* Regular RE INSET days
- \* Review of Re assessment in class assessment folders by RE Co ordinator.
- \*Book scrutinies.
- \* Pupils interviews.
- \* Link Governor responsible for RE
- \* Annual reports to parents contain comments on RE
- \* Use of attainment targets for levelling RE

#### **Cross Curricular Links**

Religious Education is taught as a discrete subject in R.E. lessons. However, as a Catholic school, the content and delivery of every other subject is influenced by Catholic doctrine and the teaching of the Catholic Church. Every opportunity is used to reinforce Catholic doctrine. Links between R.E. and other subjects are made wherever possible. Links with other faiths are made in accordance with the scheme, "Learning and Growing as the People of God".

#### **15. Community Cohesion**

The Church has been very proactive in its engagement with the national debate on community cohesion. As Catholics our starting point is not what can be done for me but what I can do for others. Community then is the starting point.

At St. Mary's school we are always looking for new ways to develop links within the community by looking at

- The school community.
- The community within which the school is located.
- The UK community
- The global community.

**Signed:**

**Mrs B Corbett**  
**Executive Headteacher**

**Date: October 2017**

**To be reviewed: October 2019**

**Signed:**

**Mrs A Geoghegan**  
**Chair of ARC**

**Date: October 2017**