



Mission Statement

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School **Policy for Religious Education**

WHY WE ARE HERE

Jesus told us to love God
and love one another.

We do this by showing respect
and by caring for each other.

We want all of us to do our best
at all times and
take pride in ourselves because each of us is special to God.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a welcoming, caring, Catholic community which promotes the Christian values of love, tolerance and forgiveness. Through these teachings, we encourage everyone to grow in their awareness of their role, both within School and the wider community. We are committed to enable everyone to achieve their full potential as unique individuals by providing the best possible education for every child and by fostering a sense of belonging and support.

Jesus said: 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.' The second resembles it: "You must love your neighbour as yourself." (St Matthew Ch. 22 v. 37 - 39.)

St Mary's School intends at all times to make Christ's Commandments central to every aspect of school life. St Mary's School exists to provide a safe, caring atmosphere of mutual respect, in a Catholic, Christian context for all involved in its mission.

Each individual will be led to his or her full potential spiritually, physically, socially and intellectually so that all may grow to know, love and serve God more fully and to value themselves and others.

Rationale of Religious Education

"Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject amongst many, but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life".
(Bishops Conference of England & Wales 1988)

We also recognise that children come from a range of backgrounds and abilities and that our teaching of R.E. will reflect this.

The intent of our Religious Education Curriculum

At St Mary's Religious Education is the foundation of all of our teaching, and our Catholic beliefs and values inspire and unify each and every aspect of our school life. Religious Education is linked to all our teaching and the key areas of the children's learning.

Religious Education is an academic subject in its own right, taught, resourced and developed as any other subject. The ethos of Catholic Education promotes the ideal that children should be able to achieve their full potential as unique individuals by fostering a sense of belonging and support. At St Mary's we believe education is "God's Work" and so, education is religious as it concerns discovering the breadth and depth of God's creation and His creatures. Therefore, whatever area of the curriculum children are studying and actively learning about they are addressing key faith concepts such as;

- The mysteries and wonders of God's creation
- The challenges and discoveries that are presented to them
- The uniqueness and dignity of individual people
- How they can enjoy God's world

The planning of our faith teaching, which is at the centre of our curriculum, becomes the foundation for the National Curriculum, with its aims to promote:

"the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils ... and prepare such pupils for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life."

(Education Reform Act 1988)

For those children from a strong faith background, it will be a chance for their faith to grow and develop. For some, it will be a chance to explore and strengthen their knowledge of their faith and for others it will be the first opportunity they will have had to hear the Gospel message.

Developing an enquiring mind about our purpose in the world, we explore topics based upon our own experience. We meet Jesus in stories from scripture and discover a friend for life by talking to him in our own prayer, collective worship and reflection time. We encourage and support multi-cultural interests through looking at other world faiths and customs. It is important that every person is valued and feels part of our caring community in school, in the parish and the worldwide family of God. The teaching of religion therefore is not confined to the RE lesson but permeates all areas of the wider curriculum, used to stimulate Religious spiritual growth and development, as well as academic and social progress.

At St Mary's we value the role of parents as the first educators of their child and encourage a partnership between home, parish and school. The Parish and the Parish priest, as well as our school, have a key role to play in assisting parents to perform their duties as religious educators. The school accepts its responsibility to support the parents and the parish by helping children to understand their faith and to understand their lives in the light of their faith. Our children are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation by taking part in a parish led programme, under the guidance of the parish priest and Mrs Douglas.

We believe the purpose of St Mary's Catholic Primary School is to:

- Help children to live and learn in a Catholic Christian environment leading to acceptance and respect of others in a diverse school community and wider world.
- Provide an environment in which high expectations will lead to a striving for excellence in all areas of school life.

- Educate and develop each member of the school community by building on their strengths and supporting their weaknesses.
- Foster purposeful relationships with those who learn in, work in and visit our school where diverse views and backgrounds are respected.
- To encourage the development of a personal relationship with God.

The implementation of our Religious Education Curriculum.

In line with Bishops' Conference recommendations, school allocates 10% of curricular time to Religious Education. This does not include Prayer and Liturgy or worship.

Curriculum.

We use a range of resources to fulfil the above aims and to address the four areas of study outlined in the current Curriculum directory – Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ.

Following Diocese guidance we are also implementing the new Religious Education Curriculum Directory to Early Years, Year 1 and Year 3 which addresses; Revelation, Sacred Scripture, Creation and Fall, Covenant, Prophecy and the Good News of redemption. Full implementation and transition will occur as guided by the Diocese.

Resources we use to help deliver our curriculum:

- The Way the Truth and the Life series
- Vines and Branches
- CAFOD Resources

Teaching and Learning in Religious Education lessons:

The curriculum in St Mary's is underpinned by our School Mission Statement which is founded on Gospel values and as we see **all** education as playing a part in revealing God in our lives, we recognise two aspects of Religious Education in the school:

1. Implicit – those opportunities which arise in the course of a school day to lead pupils, through differing aspects of the curriculum not directly associated with R.E. or through relationships, to a religious understanding of their implications. It is the policy of the school to use such opportunities as they arise.

2. Explicit or Curriculum Education – timetabled or planned periods of time given over to explicit consideration of Religious Education in the classroom.

Curriculum RE currently follows "The Way, The Truth and The Life" and "Vines and Branches" which are both programmes recommended by the Diocese of Lancaster. Both programmes in Key Stage 1 and 2, provide clear, concise statements of key learning objectives for all pupils, and ensures continuity and progression between the key stages. The supporting syllabus and the theology are based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and Catechism of the Catholic Church.

"The outcome of religious education is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life."

(Religious Education Curriculum Directory 1996)

A range of teaching methods and learning strategies are used throughout lessons, depending on the needs and abilities of the children and the nature of the activities being undertaken. To deepen the children's

relationship with God we do this by “Learning about” and “Learning from” religion. Therefore, during each lesson it should be clear whether the children are learning about or learning from our faith.

Lessons are carefully planned to ensure they are fun, exciting, engaging and, meaningful. We feel children learn best this way. Work is differentiated in terms of activity, support or outcome according to the needs and abilities of the children and approaches will include whole class teaching, group activities and individual work.

Children have opportunities to work individually as well as co-operatively and collaboratively, developing their own knowledge and expertise as well as sharing their experiences with others. All work will involve thought provoking reflection and discussion, encouraging the children to develop their moral and spiritual consciences. We are lucky to have fully supportive staff, who are encouraged to make cross-curricular links when planning RE, incorporating opportunities extended learning where appropriate.

Presentation of work:

High expectations and standards are something we pride ourselves upon in St Mary's. Work is presented in a range of ways across school including oral and written form. In written work children understand and show the expectation of producing work as they would in English and other subjects. There is the expectation that it will be neat, clear and well structured. Throughout topics children are encouraged to engage and actively listen and interact with others to discuss ideas and form opinions. Drama is highly popular and effective, allowing children the opportunity to develop a sense and understanding of empathy and how others may feel. As mentioned earlier, work is depicted through all areas of the curriculum including Art, Computing, writing and classes engaging with the new RE directory curriculum have chosen to present using floor books.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion:

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we will support our children to enable them to reach their full potential, thereby empowering them to be caring individuals, capable of critical independent thought.

- 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 children, acknowledging that all children have different gifts and talents and that these should be celebrated.
- Learning tasks are matched to the abilities of the children to enable them to achieve success, helping them to develop to their full potential and to develop a positive self-image.
- We aim to ensure that resources do not reinforce any kind of stereotypes and that they do reflect our own school community.
- It is important that the children are provided with images, which reflect the multi-cultural society in which we live, enhancing their awareness and knowledge of other faiths and cultures, respecting the rights of the individual at all times. This is essential in preparing children to take their places in a multi-cultural society.

No child is disadvantaged, whatever the stage of their own faith journey or if they belong to another faith background.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN):

In line with all of our other school policies we fully recognise that all children have needs. We continually strive to ensure all children meet their full potential and develop their faith and spiritual understanding no matter what their educational need is. Teachers know their classes and their individual children, they are experienced and equipped to move their learning on. Children on the Special Educational Needs register (SEN) will be working on targets within their Individual Education Plan. (IEP)

Assessment, monitoring, Recording and Reporting:

It is impossible to assess the level of a child's personal faith and it should not be attempted. However, we are able to assess a child's knowledge skills, concepts and attitudes that have been taught in RE through Assessment for Learning opportunities. These can be demonstrated through discussion with the child, class or group contributions, written and art work and role - play and drama.

- End of Module Assessments are part of the RE Programme and this enables achievement and progress (individual and year group) to be tracked according to the Attainment Strands and expectations of the 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' scheme.
- Each teacher keeps a class record of assessed work and records pupil progress.
- Progress and attainment in RE is discussed termly and has the same rigour as other core subjects.
- In-house moderation takes place once termly. Cluster moderation takes place annually where individual year groups are moderated.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) complete a baseline assessment as soon as they start school and at the end of their time in EYFS.
- Marking is undertaken in accordance with school policy. However, Key Words for each topic should be corrected so that children can learn and use these words in future.
- Written comments, in relation to the learning intention or success criteria should be affirming, encouraging, thought provoking and challenging, above all being sensitive to the children's needs.
- Comments relating to RE provision and achievement will be made for each pupil on their annual report.
- In order to monitor RE teaching and learning, the RE subject leaders review planning throughout the school once a term. Criteria for monitoring and any resulting targets for improvement will be shared with staff at the first available staff meeting.
- The RE subject leaders will observe RE teaching at least once a year, across the whole school. Any common points for improvements will be shared at the first available staff meeting and individual feedback on the observation will be given to teachers.
- The RE subject leaders in conjunction with class teachers and SLT will carry out a work scrutiny and pupil conferencing activity once a term and report their findings at the first available staff meeting.
- Our RE Governor regularly visits school, carrying out focused activities such as; pupil voice, staff voice, Collective Worship, lesson visits and feedbacks effectively to all staff.

Prayer:

An essential part of St Mary's school life is daily prayer and prayer life. Children and staff understand that this is their way of communicating with God and enables them to become closer to him. Children are encouraged to pray in a range of ways – according to their age. These may include;

- Reciting daily prayers personally or together
- Quiet reflection
- Writing their own prayers
- Praying through music
- Learning traditional catholic prayers

All staff are encouraged to pray alongside the children and to be a positive role model for them. All classes have a display area and display children's work. This area changes and reflects the liturgical year and the topic being studied to stimulate further work or to celebrate the activity that has been undertaken.

Each class has a designated prayer area to stimulate and facilitate reflection and prayer, and all classes pray together at least four times a day. It is expected that all classes will say a prayer;

- At the beginning of the day
- Before lunchtime
- After their lunch
- At home time
- A display in the entrance foyer and hall will be changed according to the liturgical year, or highlighting particular issues or themes from the current RE topic.
- Other displays around the school will celebrate RE work done in each Year Group or Key Stage group.

Home/School/Parish Partnership:

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 parish to enrich the lives of our children.

We send out a termly summary which informs parents about the forthcoming R.E. topics and we notify parents in newsletters of Masses and Liturgies both in the school and the parish.

Our school regularly supports parish events and fund raising e.g. CAFOD, Bishop's Lenten Appeal, Mission Overseas (Children helping Children), Operation Shoebox. All classes have identified a class charity which they work throughout the year supporting.

Our school supports parish events and each class are encouraged to celebrate Mass at least termly. We have started to celebrate family masses at the weekend and invite all children and their families to attend and participate.

Every Friday we have a celebration assembly where our weeks mission is celebrated. Children selected as Prayer Leaders for that week lead the whole school in the end of the day prayer.

Growing to love and understanding Mass is an essential part of our teaching here at St Mary's. We attend weekly Mass as regularly as possible where the children write their own bidding prayers and select the hymns.

During the school year different classes take the lead for certain liturgical events which include; Advent, Christmas, Holy Week and each class has a Saint allocated to their class. On the feast days it is the responsibility of the class to lead the worship on that day.

Communication with our school and parish community is very important to us. Over the past year we have endeavoured to find ways to further strengthen this communication and relationship. We now have weekly newsletter shared with the parents and the parish. We Share and celebrate events on our school website, school Facebook page and the Parish page.

Sacramental Programmes.

Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation are undertaken by Mrs Douglas with support from the Parish and staff within school.

Resources

Each class has the relevant 'The Way, The Truth and The Life / Vines and Branches teachers' handbook and pupil books, or with resources and books appropriate to that class. All other resources are kept in the resources cupboards and shelves throughout school. These include:

- Books for Assembly ideas
- Information books on people, places, feasts and festivals
- Story books
- Bibles
- Posters
- Artefacts both Christian and of other faiths

The Role of the Subject Leaders

- To produce and update as necessary the policy document on Religious Education within the School
- To keep up to date with developments with "The Way, the Truth and the Life" and "Vines and Branches" scheme and feed back to staff, parents and governors
- To attend appropriate in-service courses
- To arrange in-service activities on an individual or whole school basis
- To monitor standards with the school through use of a School Portfolio
- To monitor the teaching of R.E. through work sampling, pupil /staff conferencing, classroom observations and planning scrutiny
- To manage the purchase and deployment of resources
- To organise Masses and Liturgical Celebrations within school
- To develop and sustain strong communication and links with the wider community

Role of Class Teacher

- To undertake to use "The Way, The Truth and The Life" or "Vines and Branches" scheme as the main part of the religious teaching
- To actively promote the life and ethos of the school within the Mission Statement
- To ensure that there is an area in the classroom which acts as a focal point for prayer and worship
- To have an appointed display area for religious work
- To ensure that, at a time to suit the teacher, there is an opportunity for "collective worship" to be undertaken within class

Signed: Headteacher:  Mrs D Douglas

Signed: Chair of Governors:  Mr P Glaister

Date: Reviewed January 2024