

Religious Education Policy



St. Mary's RC Primary School

Mission Statement

We live learn and grow together with Jesus through:

- Showing love to all
- Encouraging friendship to include everybody
- Acting with honesty through prayer
- Being thankful for all God's gifts
- Remaining respectful through our actions
- Forgiving someone when they are sorry
- Displaying patience by being calm and caring
- Demonstrating compassion to everyone in God's family
- Leading in service by supporting our school community

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Policy will be reviewed: Annually

St Mary's RC Primary is a Roman Catholic Primary School where every person is helped to do their best and to succeed in a place of love, peace and safety, following the teachings of Jesus. Religious Education is at the heart of our school, it is the core of the core, and is more than a National Curriculum subject; it is at the centre of what we do, say and believe.

Aims

The Mission Statement of the school allows us to communicate an understanding of the redeeming love of Jesus Christ, underpinning the ethos of the school and its nurturing role. At our school, we offer the children an exciting and faith filled Religious Education curriculum which is absorbed throughout every aspect of school life. Through the outstanding provision we make, we ensure that children leave our school religiously literate and engaged in the world and people around them, filled with knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Through our Religious Education teaching we aim to develop our children's religious growth: to help develop children's own beliefs, values and attitudes through an exploration of Christ's and the Apostles' teachings as found in Scripture, the examination of religious language and symbolism, along with their shared human experience. We appreciate every child's individual relationship with God and strive to give each child the opportunity to explore the language of religious experience through: stories, visitors, religious education visits, artefacts, religious activities, celebration of the Word, I.C.T, drama, outdoor learning, art and music. We work closely together with the home, our Parish Priest and the Parish community of Saint Mary's, so that we can present Christian events, messages and ways of life in a systematic way with regard to each individual child and their potential. For us, Religious Education is for all. Religious Education is as academically respected as other core curriculum areas. Within the classroom, teachers use a variety of styles and strategies, to reinforce the Christian message we as a Catholic school uphold. Our children's experience of belonging to a caring community offers our children a strong sense of self-worth and an awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. With emphasis on Roman Catholic beliefs and practices, we include appropriate materials about other faiths and world religions to encourage our children to be tolerant and respectful towards those with differing beliefs or none and to know the place significance of Christianity and other world religions in the contemporary world, in the surrounding wider and local communities, and within the Parish. Engagement with their own and others beliefs and values will help develop and nurture good attitudes and dispositions so that children are instilled with a love of learning and a desire to go on learning. At St Mary's, we strive to foster a loving relationship between our children, staff and members of the school community. This relationship reflects the commandment of Jesus: 'to love one another as I have loved you.' John 13: 34 – 35 Engagement with difficult questions of meaning and purpose which everyone has to face, enables our children to think critically about their own questions of meaning and purpose. Our outcome for Religious Education, as stated in the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools (2023): 7 To present engagingly a comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith:

- To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively

- To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society
- To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them
- To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life
- To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith
- To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum
- To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.

Curriculum Time Allocation

As recommended by the Bishops' Conference, we dedicate at least 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education. This is 2 hours 15 minutes in EYFS and KS1 and 2 hours 30 minutes in KS2. This does not include Celebration of the Word or Catholic Social Teaching.

Religious Education Curriculum

At St Mary's, we take into the child's age, individual needs and ability. We invest in continuous professional development in order to improve knowledge and understanding and to create engaging and challenging teaching and learning opportunities for each and every child. The curriculum is carefully planned and implemented to ensure progression of knowledge, skills and understanding.

The curriculum has been developed using the scheme 'Lighting the Path', by Oxford University Press (OUP), which is designed to fully support Religious Education Directory (RED) for Primary Catholic RE. We also use Salford Diocese resources in year groups where Lighting the Path is not yet available. These resources also follow the RED.



We endeavour to be creative and use cooperative learning techniques to promote children's progress. The aim of this programme is to explore the religious dimension of questions about life, dignity and purpose within the Catholic tradition. Links are made with the pupil's own experiences and with universal experience. Links are also made with the experience of other faith traditions. The programme is therefore both 'objective' and 'subjective'. For all children the programme will raise questions and provide materials for reflecting on their own experience. It will help them to explore the beliefs, values and way of life of the Catholic tradition and where appropriate, of other faith traditions. The programme does not presume that children come from committed Catholic families. For those from committed Catholic families, it will deepen and enrich

their understanding and living of their faith. For those from other faiths or none, it will provide a means of exploring the beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith.

Overview of Content

Lighting the Path is used as the primary scheme/resource to deliver the RED in our school. It provides structured lesson plans, assessment foci, scripture, tradition, belief, live faith application, and supports progression.

Jesus is at the 'heart of the programme' and also at the heart of all we do in school.

Branches

Units/branches in RED are organised in a sequence ("branches" or other structural divisions used in Lighting the Path) which build progressively across Early Years through Year 6. We adopt this sequence to ensure coherence and cumulative skill/knowledge development. The themes are:

- Creation and Covenant
 - Prophecy and Promise
 - Galilee to Jerusalem
 - Desert to Garden
 - To the Ends of the Earth
 - Dialogue and Encounter
- Dialogue and Encounter World faiths are included in the branch.

Knowledge Lenses

The knowledge lenses represent the focus of study for pupils, outlining what they are expected to know by the end of each age phase (5 7, 7 9, and 9 11). There are six knowledge lenses:

- Hear
- Believe
- Celebrate
- Live
- Dialogue
- Encounter

Ways of Knowing

The ways of knowing describe the skills pupils develop as they progress through the RE curriculum. The three ways of knowing are:

- Understand
- Discern
- Respond

Lessons are designed to help pupils understand Catholic teaching, discern its meaning, and respond thoughtfully in their own lives.

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) offers a way of thinking, being, and seeing the world. It provides a vision for a just society in which the dignity of all people is recognised,

and those who are vulnerable are cared for. It consists of Catholic social thought and principles which can be used to reflect on and guide how we relate to one another in our local and global communities. The CARITAS in Action programme is used to teach CST, along with other learning opportunities and resources. It is taught outside of the dedicated 10% curriculum time.



BIG questions are important to our Religious Education, and raise awareness to develop critical thinkers and encourage our citizens of the future to continue to build God's kingdom in our ever-evolving world. Within each class there is a focal point where key words and children's work are displayed, along with the current BIG question and the liturgical calendar. Each class use Bibles to learn and to develop understanding of the Word of God and to link it to their lives. The age and maturity of the children have been considered when purchasing class Bibles. Other Faiths are an important part of Religious Education at St Mary's. The teaching of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism are planned and delivered at different times throughout the year. Enrichment opportunities are sought to enhance learning, including the learning of other faiths.

Assessment

Children are assessed on End of Year Expectations, which are linked to the Lighting the Path scheme and Salford Diocese resources and to specific 'Driver Words' for each attainment target and year group. These expectations and driver words are set out by Salford Diocese and are used regularly to inform our planning and delivery of lessons. The End of Year Expectations are split into three strands: Attainment Target 1, 2 and 3. Recording and assessment of learning takes many forms including art, writing, displays, assemblies and liturgy participation. The high standards and quality of Religious Education learning can be seen in children's work in books and on display, and can be heard when you talk to our children about their faith and in their actions: the way that they treat and care for others, including our common home and brothers and sisters. Teachers track RE data on our internal tracker and this is analysed by the RE and Assessment Lead regularly.

“Real education comes through much more than the transmission of facts and knowledge. Education is a lived reality where facts are translated into decisions and demonstrated by action.” The Right Rev John Arnold, Bishop of Salford

Parents and Parish Community as Educators

The weekly newsletter has a link to the monthly, a Parent resources for Ten:Ten coverage. This enables parents to support their child at home, when their child is asking searching questions and so that they can complement the academic and spiritual journey the child is engaging with at home. Through the parish priest, the children and their families are encouraged to appreciate, understand and participate in the liturgical cycle and the sacramental life of the church. Parents, carers and other family members are invited to our monthly GIFT Team Family Worship. The pupil GIFT Team also make resources for this which are shared with all families. We have regular Masses in church too, which develop children's understanding of the liturgical cycle further (See the Prayer and Liturgy Policy).

Worship

We provide many opportunities and a wide range of experiences that will help everyone to participate in individual and shared prayer, liturgy and celebration of the Word, supporting each person's own journey of faith. See our Prayer and Liturgy Policy for more details.

PSHE & Relationships and Sex Education

There is a separate PSHE & RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) Policy which was written through consultations with Salford Diocese, parents, school staff and governors. We are created by God in his image – male and female (Gen. 1:27). Thus, our sexuality is an integral part of our individuality. In order that children may grow healthily towards maturity, they need to be taught the implications of their gender and sexuality. (Cf. CCC §1604; § FC37).

A Journey in Love and Caritas in Action resources are used, as well as other materials.

Staff Induction

New teaching staff are given:

- A copy of the “Lighting the Path” programme for Religious Education and Caritas in Action
- A schedule outlining topics to be covered during the year along with starting and finishing dates for topics
- The long term plan
- A copy of the Prayer and Liturgy Policy
- A copy of the PSHE & RSE Policy
- CPD is organised according to individual teacher needs

Monitoring

The SLT (Headteacher and school Governors, including the Subject Link Governor) with the R.E. subject leader monitors and evaluates the teaching and learning of R.E.

work termly. This evaluation will help the Religious Education subject leader to focus staff in their means of evaluating and reflecting upon the delivery of Religious Education and how to move forward in order to enhance and facilitate children in their spiritual growth and development.