



# St John's Catholic Primary School

## Religious Education Policy



## Introduction

RE permeates all that we do at St. John's Catholic Primary School. Our Mission Statement is lived out by all members of our school community daily. It is our intention when teaching Religious Education at St. John's that our children acquire the essential knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.

It is our intention to immerse our pupils in the wonder of the world around them and to experience awe in the beauty of God's creation; to uplift them by the worship opportunities created daily and for pupils to experience living and working in a faithful, praying school community so that their spiritual and moral development thrive.

Our aim at St. John's is to ensure that every child develops a deep respect for themselves, and others as made in the image and likeness of God. That they are happy, confident, and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional, and spiritual growth.

We aim for our pupils to fully embrace a holistic approach to education, have a profound understanding of what it means to have a vocation and joyfully offer their gifts and talents in the service of others. That they have an excellent understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding. We aim for our pupils to be alert to the needs of others and to seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. That they all deeply value and respect the Catholic tradition of St. John's School and its links with the parish community and the archdiocese. That our children are able to pray with reverence and reflect deeply with heartfelt response to the Word of God and that they develop the knowledge and understanding of and a deep respect for other faiths.

**Developing our Faith** We will achieve this by

- valuing and encouraging the good things in every person
- adults being role models
- fostering positive relationships
- treating everyone fairly
- celebrating difference through our understanding of other faiths and cultures
- using every opportunity to promote spiritual and moral development
- participating in high quality collective worship and enriching liturgies
- following positive class rules and codes of conduct
- reaching out to the wider community
- delivering enthusiastically a well resourced, well planned 'Come and See' Scheme of Work

**Nurturing the potential of every individual** We will achieve this by:

- giving children the opportunity and encouragement to try new things
- recognising that each individual learns in their own different way, making allowances for preferences
- creating a learning culture, classroom community, collaborative and personalised learning
- building self esteem
- delivering quality INSET to continue professional development enhanced by Performance Management for staff
- valuing effort
- using a range of teaching styles to cater for all abilities and learning styles
- embracing all opportunities to experience the joy of discovery, solving problems and being creative
- offering a wide range of extra-curricular activities

**Working in partnership with home, parish and the wider community** We will achieve this by:

- valuing parents as educators
- valuing an open dialogue between school and home by inviting parents to information evenings and pupil progress meetings
- issuing written reports and results
- embracing new technologies to improve home/school partnership
- involving ourselves in community events
- welcoming parents and friends of the school to celebrations, acts of collective worship and assemblies
- supporting the parish in meaningful preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist
- Supporting those less fortunate through fundraising, e.g. CAFOD, Good Shepherd.

## **Implementation**

At St John's, for several years we have followed the Come and See programme of Religious Education, recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool as our scheme of work. Following much work and reflection, the Archdiocese and the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales, have decided that their schools are to move to using the Religious Education Directory.

From September 2024, to fulfil our aims and objectives we are using the 'To Know You More Clearly' programme from the new Religious Education Directory prescribed by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. This is being rolled out this year across the whole school

For those already engaged in the journey of faith, RE will be a catechesis, and for some children, RE will be evangelisation, the first opportunity to hear the Good News of the Gospel.

Through our programme, our pupils are offered the opportunity to explore scripture as it is there, in the authoritative teaching of the Church, that we meet God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word. Our pupils are taught through Knowledge Lenses of Hear, Believe, Celebrate and Live. These divide the content of the programme of study into four subsections for the study of Catholicism. For the study of other religions and world views we use the Knowledge Lenses of Dialogue and Encounter.

Through these lenses. St. John's children will come and see the wonder of all that is within them and beyond them.

## **The Aims and Objectives of Religious Education**

The overall aims of Religious Education at St. John's are:

- To engage in study of the mystery of God, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold and the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life.
- To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding.
- Through the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society.
- To give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today.
- 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.

These are explored in a manner, which encourages investigation, and reflection by pupils, develops the appropriate skills and attitudes and promotes free, informed, and full response to God's call in everyday life.

In the words of the Religious Education Directory, the outcome of Catholic Religious Education is:

*The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.*

Our Mission Statement reinforces this message... 'In God's Love we Shine Together'

The staff at St. John's Catholic Primary School will work to give each child the entitlement of a broad, balanced, differentiated curriculum (irrespective of ability) encouraging every individual a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. All teaching and learning is underpinned by the school mission statement.

The intention of St. John's School is to cater for the individual needs of the children and equip them with a better understanding of the world in which they live.

## **Expectations of Classroom Religious Education**

Classroom religious education in a Catholic school is primarily educational.

Excellence in religious education is achieved by:

- clarity of succinct religious learning objectives,
- key content,
- by appropriate methodologies,
- rigour,
- richness of resources,
- achievement of identified outcomes, accurate methods of assessment

## **St. John's Religious Education is at the heart of the curriculum**

- Religious education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
- Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.
- Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.
- In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

## Curriculum and Organisation of RE

To fulfil our aims and objectives, this year we have moved to the new 'To Know You more clearly' programme for Religious Education recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

### The Process

'To Know You more clearly' teaches the aims and objectives of the Religious Education Directory throughout the year over six themes which are called 'Branches'. There are six branches in 'To know You More Clearly' – one per half term. The branches are:

Each	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
	Creation and Covenant	Prophecy and Promise	Galilee to Jerusalem	Desert to Garden	To the ends of the Earth	Dialogue and Encounter

branch is taught through the knowledge lenses: Hear, Believe, Celebrate, Live

1. Hear (focuses on the word of God which we hear, the Word made flesh)
2. Believe (focuses on the content of the church's own profession of faith, what she believes, professes, defines and teaches.)
3. Celebrate (deals with the liturgy in which the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ)
4. Live (focuses on the impact of faith on how Christians live – the dignity of the human person, freedom, conscience and virtue; law, grace and sin, Catholic Social Teaching)
5. Dialogue (other religions and world views – Church's teaching on the relationship between Catholicism and other Christian traditions, between Catholicism and Judaism, Catholicism and other religions)

Encounter (Discrete study of other faiths)

### Time Allocation for RE

At St. Johns, we ensure that at least 10% of the weekly curriculum in each class is allocated for Religious Education, ensuring quality time is given for effective teaching and learning each week. This does not include time for collective worship.

In Early Years and Key Stage One, at least 2 hours and 10 minutes is spent teaching RE each week.

In Key Stage Two, at least 2 hours 30 minutes is spent teaching RE each week.

Within each lesson there needs to be a balance between input, discussion and activity.

### Annual Cycle

The 'To Know You more clearly' programme follows a one year cycle. As St John's is a small school our RE curriculum is taught over a two year cycle except in Early Years Foundation Stage which is a single class. In 2024-2025 we will teach from the Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 content. In 2025-2026 we will teach from the Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6 curriculum.

## Planning

### Long term planning

The themes and topics framework sets out the programme for the year.

At St John's there are **mixed age groups**, the class teacher needs to work out, in collaboration with other teachers and the support of the Religious Education subject leader, which topic will be explored in a particular class or in a particular year group to ensure differentiation and to avoid duplication. A 2 year cycle will be devised to ensure no duplication takes place. Within all classes, teachers will need to have regard for the attainment levels when developing activities for children of different age groups and abilities. It is important to track individual pupils' experience of the topics to ensure full coverage and to avoid duplication. The school leadership needs to monitor this to ensure the avoidance of repetition.

At St John's Catholic Primary school, the senior management is responsible for:

- Choosing an approach
- Ensuring that 10% of curriculum time is allocated to teaching of Religious Education
- Monitoring of timetables to ensure quality time for Religious Education

### Medium Term Planning

Medium term planning is the responsibility of the RE Lead. The medium term plan details:

- the content and focus of each theme,
- links to the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Religious Education Curriculum Directory,
- key concepts, skills and attitudes
- attainment targets
- Christian doctrine for the term
- The two branches and scripture
- The start dates for each branch

### Short Term Planning

Short term planning is the responsibility of the class teacher. Planning is documented within a planning booklet as designed by the Subject Leader, this must include annotations as it is taught. Short term planning must include a wide range of opportunities for pupils to engage in creative and critical thinking (**discern**) and personal reflection (**respond**) and to make meaningful connections between scriptural texts (**hear**), Catholic beliefs (**believe**), prayer and liturgy (**celebrate**), and the relationship of faith to life (**live**).

At St John's Catholic Primary School, each class teacher is responsible for:

- Selecting appropriate activities to ensure the achievement of the learning focuses and overall learning outcome
- Stating the days on which these activities are to take place
- Indicating groupings to show how the differing needs and abilities of children are to be met
- Planning time for formal assessments as necessary
- Evaluating own teaching
- Hi-lighting the activities chosen for formal assessment of one topic per term
- Following the school tracking procedures for information gathered during on-going assessment
- Completing the Record of Attainment sheet at the end of each term
- Passing on assessment data to the Religious Education Coordinator
- Passing on the Record of Attainment sheets to the next class teacher

## **Foundation Stage approach**

The Foundation Stage describes the phase of a child's education from the age of 3 to the end of reception at the age of 5. In the foundation phase religious education drives the whole curriculum. Through engaging, practical, integrated activities, children can learn more about themselves, other people and the world around them and develop their religious knowledge, skills and understanding. Religious Education makes an active contribution to the areas of learning outlined in the curriculum for foundation phase but has a particular and important contribution to:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Literacy
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Throughout the programme in Nursery and Reception, the process will be divided as follows:

- Whole class core Input; (teacher led).
- Adult directed group activities and; (teacher or assistants work with groups of children).
- Continuous provision (child centred learning across the areas of learning in the foundation stage).

## **Differentiation**

As with all other areas of the curriculum the purpose of differentiation in religious education is:

- To enable children to succeed in the set task or activity and to challenge them to take the next step in learning;
- To challenge children to be self-motivated and to take responsibility for their own learning;
- To enable children to recognise and celebrate their achievement;

Children learn in different ways, so as with other subjects, it is necessary to provide a range of learning activities using a variety of media. In each topic there are attainment level indicators, attainment level summaries and symbols showing the possible ability required by the activity.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment is focused by the overall aims and objectives of Religious Education. In 'To Know You more clearly', it is related to the concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed through the exploration of the themes and the learning outcomes for each topic. Assessment establishes what pupils know, understand and can do. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith. Assessment in Religious Education emphasises a wide range of achievement.

At St. John's it involves:

### **Informal Assessment**

- General observation of children engaged in general tasks and activities.
- Observation of contributions made to classroom displays.
- Review: end of task, activity, lesson and topic
- Marking of work, according to school's marking policy.

### **Formal Assessment**

One activity per branch, chosen at the discretion of class teacher. Judgements by the teacher is based of evidence against learning outcomes, expectations and attainment targets for each topic. Moderation of assessment will take place in staff meetings, by all teaching staff, and by the RE lead in local Cluster Group meetings.

### **Recording**

Recording provides evidence of achievement. It involves pupils in self-assessment and progress in dialogue with the teacher. It takes many forms:

- Notes from observations
- Written comments in pupil's books
- Visual evidence – photographs of displays, drama, celebration
- RE lead assessment data and evidence file.

### **Reporting**

St John's Catholic Primary School fulfils each of the four dimensions to reporting in Religious Education. Reporting:

- provides feedback to pupils on their achievements and progress
- informs teacher colleagues of the achievement of individual pupils and the areas studied by a class and year group
- informs parents of the progress and achievement of their children
- informs parents, governors, parish and external agencies of the content and quality of Religious Education being provided and the achievements of the pupils.

## **The School in the Community**

Parents and other visitors are invited to participate in our celebration masses and assemblies (see Collective Worship Policy). The school has a close relationship with the Parish, taking part in services and celebrations. Family Masses, Sacramental Programme for Year 4.

As a Catholic School we aim to develop in the children concern and charity towards others in the community. We involve the children in charity fundraising events throughout the year including: Lent, NSPCC, Marie Curie, Cafod, Fairtrade, Children in Need, cancer charities, local hospices. We also raise issues connected to the Environment and Fair Trade by inviting guest speakers and running workshops in order that the children develop sensitivity, generosity and a sense of responsibility to others.

**For further information, please refer to the RE Handbook, the Yearly overview for RE, the Medium Term Plans for RE,, the half termly newsletter for RE file and training materials kept by the coordinator.**

**Signature: C. Smith**

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