

**St Joseph's**  
**Catholic Primary School**  
**Religious Education Policy**

This policy has been developed within the spirit and context of our Mission Statement.

Together in faith we nurture, encourage and inspire each other to achieve excellence and become all that Jesus calls us to be.



## Aims and Objectives of Religious Education

In the life of faith at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Religious Education plays a central and vital part. At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education. Therefore Religious Education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic Religious Education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school.

The aim of Religious Education at St Joseph's encompasses all children from whatever background providing collaborative activities which respect and promotes the child's innate capacity for wonder, awe, reverence, and imagination for the spiritual.

### **We aim**

- To foster a love of God through knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith from scripture and doctrine.
- To encourage the development of a personal relationship with God.
- To help children examine their own feelings, views and responses in the light of their understanding.
- To help children to an awareness of who they are - a unique person made in God's image
- To be aware of and respect other faiths.
- To study, investigate and reflect.
- To develop thinking and listening skills.
- To develop respect for truth and for the views of others.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School believes that Christian worship in a Catholic school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

### **Teaching and Learning in R.E.**

It is the policy of the school to give 10% of the timetable to the teaching of Religious Education. We view the total curriculum in our school as based on the values of the Gospel and we see all education as revealing the mystery of God.

We follow the Religious Education programme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life', as adopted by the Shrewsbury Diocese. Two topics per class are studied each term.

We aim to provide a rich and creative curriculum for Religious Education that engages all children through a range of teaching strategies and approaches. We believe it is important to understand and recognise the children's own context and provide opportunities for their knowledge and understanding to grow in the light of their experience. We are fully committed to providing opportunities for all children to know, love and serve God, in such a way that will enrich their own lives and help them to understand their Catholic faith traditions, in an ever changing world and within the multicultural society they live in

Teaching and learning in Religious Education at St Joseph's takes into account the needs and abilities of the children ensuring learning opportunities are matched accordingly. Work may be differentiated in terms of activity, teacher support or outcome according to the needs and abilities of the children and the learning outcomes. We aim to develop links across the curriculum so that children are able to make meaningful connections across their learning. Discussion, drama, art and design are incorporated into the teaching of RE in ways that engage children as well as promote deeper and lasting understanding.

In lessons 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 involves opportunity for reflection and discussion, encouraging the children to develop their moral and spiritual consciences.

Our parents are kept well informed about teaching in RE through our Religious Curriculum letters which are sent out each half term, detailing the new topics to be covered, and through our school newsletter. They also attend our The Way, The Truth and The Life assemblies which are led by each year group at the end of a topic.

### **Assessment** in Religious Education

At St Joseph's we monitor and assess the children's skills, concepts and attitudes which have been taught in RE. This is undertaken in accordance with guidance provided by the Diocese using the criteria set out in the Levels of Attainment booklet agreed by the Bishops' Conference.

Teachers continually make informal assessments using strategies such as:

- Looking at children's recorded work and marking.
- Teacher observations of children during role play, carpet time etc.
- Speaking and listening contributions during lessons.
- Discrete observations during prayer and circle time.

Formal assessment of children's work includes planned termly assessments against identified attainment targets for RE. The formal assessment for each term is levelled by the class teacher. Moderation meetings take place termly to ensure consistency and accuracy of judgments.

Assessment recording sheets are completed at the end of each topic to evaluate which pupils are emerging, expected exceeding with regard to the attainment targets. These

enable teachers and the RE team to evaluate progress and levels of attainment for individual pupils and cohorts and this information is used to inform future planning.

In EYFS detailed baseline assessments are undertaken on entry to the Foundation stage to identify children's prior knowledge. This information is used to inform future planning and teaching. Pupils' progress in Foundation 1 and Foundation 2 classes is tracked and evaluated at the end of each topic.

At the end of the year this assessment information is used to determine RE attainment levels in accordance with agreed level thresholds.

Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.

### **Monitoring of teaching and learning**

Monitoring of teaching and learning in Religious Education forms a central part of the School Monitoring and Evaluation cycle. It is undertaken by the RE leadership team and includes lesson observations, observations of daily collective worship, together with scrutiny of pupils' work and teacher planning. Pupil focus groups provide further opportunities for school to evaluate pupils own enjoyment of, and learning in Religious Education

### **Prayer**

Prayer is at the heart of our school life and is a key part of every school celebration. It includes our daily collective worship, formal prayers and children's own informal prayers. Staff and pupils pray together developing and enhancing opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth.

Additional prayers in FS, KS 1 & 2 include prayers at the beginning and end of the school day and prayers before meals. Each day the Angelus bell is rung at 11.55 and all classes sing or say the Angelus prayer together in their classrooms. Children have the opportunity to use and experience a range of prayer styles. Informal prayer has a very important place in the spiritual life of our children and includes the everyday language of praising, thanking, asking and saying sorry. Informal prayer encourages reflection by all pupils on their everyday life.

### **Liturgical worship**

The Church seasons are focal points in the life of the school. Through Mass, Services, celebrations, assemblies and collective worship we aim to join the work of home and parish in developing the spirituality of the children and to develop the concept of worship as an integral part of school life. We also aim to develop an understanding of different forms of worship and to reflect the multicultural nature of our children in various acts of worship.

**Ways in which we provide opportunity for different forms of worship:**

- School masses.
- Special liturgical services to celebrate feasts of the Church's year
- Class masses
- Family Masses
- Service of Welcome for our Reception class
- Services of Reconciliation during Lent
- Easter Assemblies
- Separate Key Stage Assemblies, Celebration Assembly
- Classroom Worship supported by focal areas where the children can reflect and pray. These are set up in each classroom to reflect changing topics.
- Stay and Pray sessions
- Advent and Lenten prayer trails in Church, to allow children to draw nearer to God.

Please refer to Collective Worship Policy for more detail.

Pupils play an integral part in school and class masses, and parish family masses that take place throughout the year.

Pupils take part in and lead class assemblies and are part of the planning process. They take great joy in sharing these assemblies with the school, parents and governors.

Pupils have many opportunities to plan and lead collective worship. Pupils take it in turn to work collaboratively to plan, set up and lead the liturgy for class collective worship. Pupils enjoy participating in and leading these sessions.

**Sacramental Preparation**

Our school Sacramental programme fully involves school, family and parish working closely together to support children and families in preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. This preparation takes place when children reach Year 3 but also provides opportunities for older children to be included.

We believe that the school alone cannot undertake a child's religious education. The parents are the child's first teachers and support the child with his/her first religious experiences. Working alongside parish catechists we provide a programme of meetings for parents to attend with their children to help them prepare for the sacraments. These sessions encourage the involvement of children alongside their parents through reflective and interesting activities and periods of reflection. In addition we provide lunchtime groups to further support children's preparation for the sacraments.

## **Resources**

Resources for RE are kept in the classrooms and the RE resource area and are accessible to all staff. Resources (including artefacts, icons, books etc.) are constantly reviewed and updated and include multi-cultural materials. Artefacts, icons, statues, candles etc. are also displayed throughout around the school. Each class is resourced with Bibles suitable to each age group, artefacts, prayer books, Collective Worship resource box, as well as personal resources.

## **Other Faiths**

We aim to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of other faiths and promote a willingness to empathise with people who hold beliefs that are different from our own. We help the children to learn from other religions as well as about religions. Pupils also learn about other faiths across other subject areas including as part of our PHSE curriculum. Special focus days or topics throughout the year deepen children's understanding of the tradition and practices of other faiths.

## **Management of Religious Education**

The Religious Education Team is led by Helen Airey and Rosy Lyon under the guidance of the Headteacher, Maria Hollis and Deputy Headteacher Anna Boekweit-Hughes.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Religious Education Coordination Team**

#### **The Religious Education Team will be responsible for:**

- Promoting, developing and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school.
- Promoting and developing strong links with the school, home and parish Community.
- Promoting and developing links with other Catholic Schools to promote joint working and the sharing and development of good practice in Religious Education.
- Promoting links with other faith schools in the local area to extend opportunities for joint working.
- Self-evaluation of all aspects of Religious Education to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Setting School Improvement Priorities for Religious Education ensuring progress is monitored and evaluated at least termly.
- Reporting to the school Governing Body on Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school
- Monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education through lesson observations, planning and work scrutinies and pupil focus groups.
- Developing robust and effective systems for assessing progress and attainment in Religious Education.
- Organising in-house moderation of standards meetings.

- Ensuring the curriculum offered is appropriate, suitable and relevant to pupils' needs and interests.
- Attending appropriate training and keeping up to date with current thinking, policy and developments and feeding back to staff.
- Organising and leading in-house staff training and development.
- Identifying training needs of staff to ensure their suitability to teach effective Religious Education.
- Supporting and advising colleagues in the delivery of Religious Education.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, Governors, parents, the *Office for Education & Schools* on matters relating to Religious Education.
- Auditing, managing and developing resources within a given budget.