



ST. JOSEPH'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL
'LEARNING TO LOVE, LOVING TO LEARN'

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Mission Statement

'St Joseph's vision is that together we are the architects of the future, building lives on the firm foundations of the Gospel.'

'Inspired by Christian values we aim to provide love and security within a curriculum designed to meet the complex needs of all individuals, in order to prepare them to take their place in the ever-changing world of today and tomorrow.'

Religious Education and Worship

Religious education and worship support and flow from our Mission Statement, which was created by the whole school community and permeates all areas of school life. They are essential for the children's spiritual and moral development. They also contribute to the children's growing ability to form personal relationships and to their understanding of the curriculum as a whole. Our curriculum at St Joseph's is broad, balanced, relevant, meaningful and inclusive. It recognises that each child is unique and is created in the image of God and which we believe deepens and enriches their relationship with God, the creator and his creations. Our RE curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home, to the dignity of every human person and the common good in society.

We believe that the responsibility for children's religious education is shared by the parents, school and parish. The RE programme in school constantly refers to these links and begins with the children's religious experiences within the home, leading them towards a greater awareness of their parishes and the wider role of the church in the world.

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and draw on all aspects of the children's lives and encourages their offering of their best to God and invokes his blessing on their future learning. Parents and members of St Thomas a Becket parish are invited to masses and assemblies and they are included in as many aspects as possible of the life and work of the school.

Leadership of Religious Education and Responsibilities

"Catholic Religious Education is the 'core of the core curriculum' (Pope St John Paul II) and the foundation of the entire educational process."

Governors

- To preserve and develop the religious character of the schools;
- To ensure that R.E. has a high profile and is taught as a core subject, within the curriculum and is well resourced and monitored.
- To regularly review the identity of the school as a Catholic Community and to ensure that the Section 48 Self-evaluation is regularly reviewed and updated.
- To appoint as R.E. Subject Leader a practising Catholic and to ensure parity of status and remuneration with the leaders of other core subject areas.

Headteacher

- To ensure that the school's management style supports the Catholic ethos.
- To ensure that R.E. has a high profile, and is taught as a core subject, within the curriculum and that 10% of the timetable is designated to the teaching of R.E.
- To enable members of staff to enrich their own spiritual lives.
- To foster and maintain parish links.
- To liaise with other Catholic schools in Wandsworth L.A.

Co-ordinator

The named person responsible for leading curriculum Religious Education is Doris Yohannes, who is a practising Catholic. The Education Commission is aware of the name of the postholder.

- To take part in the induction of all new teachers in matters concerning RE and worship.
- To ensure regular and comprehensive monitoring of curriculum Religious Education which clearly demonstrates the impact the subject has on the school.
- To provide support for all teachers with regard to planning and assessment of RE.
- To ensure that the Religious Education curriculum is well resourced, both in regard to content and the continuing professional development of those teaching the subject;
- To ensure resources are easily accessible, utilised and respected and kept up to date.

INTENT of Religious Education

At St Joseph's School it is our intention to provide faith development and religious knowledge for our children in a setting which is inspired by and seeks to live out the values of the gospel.

We do this by:

- Providing a systematic presentation of the Catholic faith
- Providing opportunities for our children to develop a personal relationship with God and support as they continue on their faith journey.
- Providing for our children the experience of belonging to a faith community
- Explicitly teaching Gospel values and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- Enabling the children to become familiar with religious language, symbols, signs and gestures of worship and prayer

- Helping children, according to their age, to respect and appreciate other faiths and to be aware of similarities and links between the Catholic faith and other faiths. To foster a reverence for God, deepening understanding of the mystery of God and our Catholic faith:
- To facilitate personal growth and development.
- To work collaboratively with parents and parishes to bring about a growing commitment to faith.
- To fulfil our duty to devote 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education.
- To endeavour for children to enjoy their RE lessons which should be faith-filled, enjoyable lessons where each child feels they belong to our school community.
- To facilitate learning to understand that everyone is respected for their beliefs and expressions of faith, but where, ultimately, everyone can achieve.

The school endeavours to help children understand that religion is not only for learning but for living.

“The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and 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 are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.”

(Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19) for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales 2012).

IMPLEMENTATION of Religious Education

The Religious Education Curriculum

Through following the CTS scheme, *The Way, The Truth and The Life*, children will:

- Become familiar with the prayers of The Catholic Church and grow in understanding of prayer and its importance in our lives.
- Develop confidence with the responses in the new translation of the Mass.
- Engender appropriate attitudes which reflect a growing awareness of moral responsibility; a developing spirituality; and an understanding of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life-in a multicultural, multi-faith society. We will invite speakers from Other Faiths and charities to speak about their belief and work.
- Our school will reflect the values of the Gospel within the tradition of our Catholic Faith. Children will be encouraged to develop a loving relationship with God which will result in appreciation, understanding, tolerance, respect and care for each other and all aspects of His Creation.
- Improve knowledge and understanding of their faith and develop their ability to reflect on and respond to their own and others’ experiences in the light of their learning about religion and to relate their learning to the wider world.

We have adopted a whole school approach to implementing the programme, where each year group follows its own programme of six topics which form part of the syllabus for each Key stage. We supplement the programme with other resources such as those from ‘Come and See’, appropriately.

Cross curricular links are frequently made to enhance learning and understanding.

Teachers are encouraged to explore a variety of approaches to the teaching of R.E. i.e., integrated with other curricular areas, topic based, subject specific lessons and through Circle Time.

Teaching about the Sacraments is carried out through “The Way, The Truth and The Life”. Time is also allocated to teach aspects of the Mass and to reflect on the Sunday Gospel Readings. All children are encouraged to read and reflect on the weekly “Wednesday Word”, which is posted on Google classroom for children to share with their families and to deepen their understanding of the Faith.

Other materials to be taught include the liturgical year, the Rosary, major feast days and devotions and aspects of the lives of some saints, especially those connected to the school such as St. Joseph and our House saints St. Patrick, St Francis, St Bernadette and St Teresa of Avila.

The Teaching of Other Faiths

It is important that children respect, appreciate and understand other world faiths, therefore the teaching of other world faiths is integrated into the scheme of work and is taught through twice-yearly focus weeks.

These include Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islamism and Buddhism. Recognition and respect for other faiths is addressed through the provision suggested in “The Way, The Truth and The Life” and in Key Stage 2, the children study the Jewish and Muslim faiths and make visits to the local Mosque and Synagogue.

The explicit teaching of Christian Values and Catholic Social Teaching

Every month the whole school learn about and apply to their daily lives the “Value of the Month”. A central display captures in a range of forms the work happening across the school and is linked to critical thinking, engaging the pupils to deepen their thinking and enquiry.

We explicitly teach 22 core values on a two-year cycle. The values were agreed after consultation with all members of the school community and reflect their views. We aim to fully prepare our children for life in British society and for their role as citizens, able to make the strongest possible contribution to the Common Good of all.

Through our two-year cycle, each value is taught in depth to enable our children to gain a greater understanding of what it means to live a good life and our teaching draws on examples from the life of Jesus and his welcome and inclusion of all and as such it underpins our teaching of British values too.

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching are taught through regular child-led assemblies which invite and motivate our pupils to love God and to love our neighbours, especially those living in poverty and to become active participants in our society to bring justice and peace.

Classroom Practices

All classes receive RE teaching. Each class experiences a variety of teaching styles, including whole-class teaching, group or paired discussion and individual work. Teachers encourage a variety of ways of getting the children to record their learning including: writing an account, a diary entry, newspaper account, strip cartoon, prayer writing, mime, drama, debate, group discussions and creative art or IT. Children should also be able to discuss freely. Children are encouraged to express their own ideas and developing concepts in their work and to make an individual response to the content of the lesson.

Lessons incorporate opportunities for spiritual reflections for children. These include meditations, prayers or meditations which are supported by music, lit candles and a focal point, i.e. prayer table or art.

All classrooms have a “Holy Table” and focal point for prayer, reflecting the R.E. topic and the colours of the Liturgical year and a reference to the “Value of the Month”.

All classrooms have their own class scripture, which is quoted on each classroom door for children to reflect on as they enter, the class scripture is also accessible through a QR code as part of the RE display.

Time Allocation

The Bishops of England and Wales recommend that 10% of school time be given to Religious Education.

For Collective Worship: 60 – 70 minutes per week.

For RE lessons per week:

Nursery 1 hr (am session and pm session)

Reception – Year 6 2hrs 30mins

In all classes the total weekly time includes two or three lessons at least, taught separately or as a block. This also includes weekly reading lessons based on the understanding of religious texts and Gospel scripture.

This time does not include time allocated to activities such as drama, art, creative writing etc. which may be connected to Religious Education.

Planning, Assessment and Recording

The RE Co-ordinator offers support with Topic Planning and Assessment. “The Way, The Truth and The Life” scheme provides each teacher with a Teacher’s book, resource pack and assessment materials.

All plans are shared on the online learning platform. Samples of planning are monitored by the RE Co-ordinator.

Assessment is ongoing throughout each topic and the principles and strategies of assessment for learning are embedded. Following the removal of levels, assessment data is completed termly, against the objectives taught to inform judgements about pupil’s progress and attainment.

The R.E. Co-ordinator is liaising with other local schools and the Diocese to create a portfolio of assessed samples of work to support teacher assessment. These samples have been assessed internally and externally via the Wandsworth Catholic Schools Network in collaboration with an external Consultant.

Special Needs and Differentiation

All children are unique and it is recognised that children are at different stages of development and this is as true for RE as for other subjects. Children's understanding of their faith is affected by their intellectual capacity and their home experience of religion. The work that they produce is also affected by any difficulties that they may have with literacy, pencil control or interacting with others.

The school recognises that some children have individual needs that require special support if they are to access to the R.E. programme effectively. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to plan effectively to meet the needs of all the children within their class.

Teachers meet individual needs by:

- Varying the level of instruction and discussion so that each child may learn something from each lesson.
- Setting differentiated or open-ended tasks drawing on a variety of skills so that each child may complete a satisfying piece of work or contribute to a group effort.
- Providing opportunities for children to use their knowledge from home or to rise to an intellectual or creative challenge.
- Valuing and affirming the individual responses of all children and commending children's performance for effort as well as achievement.
- Emphasising at all times the inclusive nature of the kingdom of God.

The school also admits some children whose families are not Catholic. These children are encouraged to participate in lessons, but their different faith backgrounds must be respected and their contribution valued.

Marking of work in Religious Education

In marking RE work, it is particularly important that the teacher should examine the child's effort in the light of the original learning intention. There should be a response from the teacher indicating recognition of the child's understanding, interest or effort, especially when the child has made personal revelations or shown a strong involvement in the task.

As in other subjects, the teacher tries to disengage the specific subject learning from fluency and accuracy in writing and from artistic ability. This is not easy. The final comment may reflect the teacher's conversation with the child while the task is being completed rather than the apparent quality of the work on the paper.

Drawings by younger children are particularly significant and should, whenever possible, be briefly discussed with them as they give indications of the child's ideas and feelings, which may be scribed by the teacher.

As in other subjects, children should be encouraged to do their best. The children should be reminded that any targets set for writing apply to all pieces of writing in all subjects. RE work should be marked in accordance with the teacher's expectations of the child and comments on content should recognise the child's progress towards the learning intention of the lesson and are useful for assessment.

Links with Home, School and Parish

We recognise that parents are the principal educators of children in their faith. We believe a partnership between home, school and parish is the best way to support our families in this task.

We do this by:

- meeting with parents and discussing ways in which the school will endeavour to support them in their responsibility for the faith development of their children. (This also includes providing information on the RE scheme and the Catholic life of the school for families of other faiths).
- our published “on-line” curriculum
- providing a half-termly newsletters for parents about the RE programme ‘The Way, The Truth and The Life’.
- annually providing a written report to parents about their child’s progress in RE
- posting of the weekly “Wednesday Word” on Google Classroom

Our parish priest visits the school regularly. He contributes to the RE curriculum, by giving specialist input e.g. on the Sacraments, the Mass.

In Year 3, when the children are being prepared to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, the school works in collaboration with St Thomas a Becket Parish. The work done in the school during the year supports and complements that of the Catechists and parents. There is a Thanksgiving Assembly, for all those who have recently received their First Holy Communion which provides an opportunity to celebrate as a school family.

Collective Worship and Prayer

Worship is an important part of the life of the school. We aim to provide the children with a variety of experiences so that they can develop a personal relationship with God. Worship is a collective experience, so it helps to build the school and parish community. The children are involved in the planning and delivery of class collective worship, where their learning is reinforced and shared with others. A variety of mediums, i.e., art, music, drama, mime, enhance these occasions

Collective Worship includes:

- Celebration of mass in the school or in St Thomas a Becket Church on Holy Days of Obligation, and special occasions and a Mass on or near the feast day of St Joseph for the whole school.
- A Welcome Mass in September.
- An Advent Mass.
- A Thanksgiving Mass for Year 6 as they prepare to leave the school.
- Whole school collective worship is celebrated every Monday, led by the Head teacher and is based on Sunday’s Gospel reading using resources from Ten:Ten.
- Each term every class prepares and shares collective worship with the school and inviting their parents to share their religious learning
- All children attend a weekly collective worship based on Liturgical Music to practice hymns and worship through song.
- All children attend a weekly Celebration Collective Worship, where they pray together and

- celebrate achievement together
- Weekly Key Stage collective worship supports further exploration of scripture linked to Gospel values and the liturgical year.
- All children will also have their own Collective Worship in class each week which is pupil-led
- Lunchtime and home-time prayers for all classes.
- Praying the Rosary every morning as a school family school during May and October.

Nursery children attend all class collective worship (Tuesdays).

All assemblies are predominantly acts of worship. Any other announcements or celebrations are markedly separated from the main prayerful part of the assembly.

Prayer includes:

- Formal prayers to be learned by heart and recited aloud.
- Formal prayers with which the children are familiarised eg those used in the Mass
- Response prayers eg psalms, bidding prayers and litanies, in which all make the responses aloud.
- Prayers read aloud for listening.
- Prayers improvised for listening or repeating phrase by phrase.
- Prayers to be read silently eg display captions or class prayer books.
- Prayers composed by children for their own use.
- Class prayer books, which are taken home for children to compose prayers to share with the class and/or whole school.
- Collective meditation.
- Individual reflection or contemplation.
- Prayer of movement, dance or gesture.

The school endeavours to give all children a variety of prayer experiences. Each classroom has an area of focus for prayer, displaying items and pictures appropriate to the season and some written forms of prayer. Children are encouraged to choose or compose prayers for class use and to suggest prayer intentions. They may also bring items from home to display. Children's work is featured in this area.

Aims of Collective Worship

The aims of Collective Worship and what we hope to achieve through the collective worship in the school community are to:

- To provide opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with God.
- To support enable the spiritual development of each child.
- To enable each child to become familiar with the traditional forms of prayer used in the Catholic Church.
- To provide the children with experience of good liturgy
- To introduce a variety of formal and informal prayer settings and forms
- To facilitate growth in a knowledge of the person and teaching of Jesus Christ
- To encourage a social and individual moral consciousness
- To help children to experience a sense of loyalty and belonging to a worshipping Christian community.

Statement of Principles

In accordance with the aims stated above, it is the practice of the school:

- To provide opportunities for all to take part.
Each School Mass is planned by one of our Key Stage 2 Classes. They are responsible for choosing the theme (usually reflecting the Liturgical Year or influenced by “The Way, The Truth and The Life”), selecting readings, composing bidding prayers, choosing hymns, making invitations to the other classes and sometimes posters, bringing items for the offertory procession and flowers for the altar.

Teachers ensure that every child has a significant role to play at some time during the year.

The same policy is followed for the Class Collective Worship, in which every child is seen or heard individually as well as collectively.

- To make worship relevant.
Themes are chosen through which links can be made between the Gospel and the children’s own lives. Children’s suggestions are used whenever possible. Themes of acts of worship are explored beforehand by the class which prepares the Mass or Collective Worship. These could be linked to the liturgical season or the topic being covered in RE.

Class Collective Worship involve much use of children’s own prayers, Scripture accounts, stories, poems, music, dance, drama and their work in other subjects such as science and geography.

- To build a worshipping community.
Teachers ensure that no child misses collective worship regularly for any other commitment such as intervention programmes.

Parents are invited to Class Collective Worship by their children. The whole school community is invited wherever possible to all our acts of worship apart from daily class worship.

Spiritual Development

The growth of the spirit in children is promoted not so much by words as by experience. Through our curriculum, the school, therefore, endeavours to provide children with:

- Experience of beauty:
The children’s surroundings are made as attractive as possible. They are provided with beautiful things to see (pictures, natural objects, sculpture, objects d’art), to hear (recorded music, live instruments, poetry) to touch (flowers, fabrics) to taste and smell (cooking, shared food).

Things of beauty created by them are valued and displayed.

- Experience of wonder:

Children are given close contact with the natural world through the use of the school grounds and park for nature walks, as well as farm and seaside visits. They are encouraged to question and speculate about the origins and design of natural objects and creatures, and to marvel at their qualities. Visits from new babies and pets are also occasions for wonder and delight.

- Experience of feelings:
Children are encouraged to explore their feelings through imaginative play, stimulated by story, drama, dressing-up and appropriate toys. Emotions are stimulated by music and poetry, expressed through the creative arts and at times, reflected upon in words or in silence.

Much of this spiritual development takes place outside the RE lessons. It may be linked with religion by evoking the memories of children's experiences in the course of the lesson or by planning an experience as part of a lesson.

The roles of all staff in promoting both spiritual and moral development are given emphasis and importance.

Moral Education

Moral Education concerns value judgements and choices of courses of action. In a Catholic school such judgements and choices are necessarily informed by the teachings of the Church. Discussion of moral issues therefore take place in many RE lessons and Collective Worship. Children are encouraged to reflect upon possible actions, to make judgements and to commit themselves to making the right choices in the future.

The RE programme provides many opportunities for this.

The Behaviour Management Policy is based upon the Catholic ethos of the school. It aims to support the development of self-discipline. It sets out positive expectations of children's behaviour and puts them in a moral context.

Children are encouraged in their daily school life to assume personal responsibility eg for their belongings, for tidying their work area and for following class routines. All children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions.

Moral issues which arise naturally in our Learning Challenge, enquiry-based curriculum are discussed by the children. The teacher provides guidance on the Church's teaching and promotes the acceptance of responsibility for the care of the earth, and all its people, and the establishment of justice and peace.

The school's involvement with local charities such as Royal Trinity Hospice and international charities such as Save the Children and CAFOD offer the children opportunities to develop a sense of social concern. Our project with the British Council and partner schools in other parts of the World enhance this work and further develop the children's understanding.

Circle Time, PATHS and 'Rainbows'

The Mental Health Foundation report entitled "**The Big Picture**" contains a worrying finding that one in five children may need help with mental health problems.

Circle Time

Circle Time is used in most classes and can make a very positive contribution to the mental health of the pupils. It is a listening time and helps children develop an emotional language. Our experience shows it improves behaviour and achievement in school, helps prevent personal and relationship problems developing in school and provides inter personal skills that we hope will help children in later life. We use Circle Time to focus on relationships, morality, team building, peer support, social skills and celebrating success.

PATHS

The PATHS® Programme for Schools programme has been implemented throughout the school to support all children's development of self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills. We feel that the skills taught will increase the children's access to positive social interactions and provide opportunities for a greater variety of learning experiences, increasing reflective thinking skills

Rainbows and Sunbeams

Rainbows and Sunbeams counselling service is a well-respected national charity. It is offered through the school staff, having been trained by the CSS (Catholic Children's Society) and helps guide children through times of bereavement in an emotional safe environment, through a structured age-related programme. It provides children with an opportunity to express themselves and to be understood and support appropriately.

Resources for Religious Education and Worship

Each class has the appropriate Teacher and pupil resources for "The Way, The Truth and The Life" scheme and access to "Come and See" materials.

Each class also has a basic set of resources, including a Catholic Children's Class Bible or set of Bibles, tablecloths in the liturgical colours, statues, candles etc.

Topic boxes with resources artefacts supporting the teaching of other faiths are stored, ready for use.

We are building up our supply of stories to complement our RE scheme of work and they can be found in the appropriate sections of the library.

IMPACT of Religious Education

Through moderation of planning, lessons and books, we can be sure that progress is made across all year groups. Evidence of impact in RE is not just collated through books. The books are marked according to the learning objective of the lesson and comments made should be affirmative, to encourage the children. Teachers may add a question when marking, to help children to reflect further and deepen their understanding. Assessment happens all the time and is integrated into teaching and learning.

We follow the Age-Related Standards (3-19) in Religious Education (published by The Department of Catholic Education and Formation of The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in July 2018) and the End of Year Descriptors adopted by the Diocese of Southwark. These can be found on the web site of Southwark's Education Commission.

POLICY REVIEW TERM: BIENNIAL

Policy reviewed: February 2023

Next review: February 2025