

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

*Here at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we learn and grow through the love of Jesus.
Our community is a safe, caring and happy place where everyone is supported and valued.
We encourage and challenge everyone to achieve their full potential,
spiritually, academically, morally and socially.
We inspire others with a love of learning and aim for excellence in everything we do.
Through our own faith, we treat one another the way we would like to be treated.
We help every child to be gentle and fair: to always do their best.*

'Learning through the Love of Jesus Christ'

Introduction

Here at St Joseph's we are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations of all the children. The achievement, attitude and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied needs. The mission statement of St Joseph's values the individual as a child of God. As a Catholic school we believe that everyone is equal in the eyes of God and we respect and value the diversity of God's family. At St Joseph's we seek to ensure prayer and worship is central to life in our School.

St Joseph's is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its pupils and staff. The governors and staff are committed to promoting British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of St Joseph's, which is at the top of all school policies, values the individual as a child of God. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. As a Catholic school we believe that everyone is equal in the eyes of God and we respect and value the diversity of God's family. At St Joseph's we seek to ensure prayer and worship is central to life in our School.

Aims and Objectives

'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.'

-statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales [2000]

At St Joseph's we aim to nurture every aspect of Catholic life and to provide our children with opportunities to develop a personal relationship with God by creating:

- An environment that uses Jesus as the ultimate role model, thus demonstrating the Christian values of respect, trust, honesty and co-operation.
- An awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives.
- A celebrating community, which uses prayer, assemblies, festivals, liturgies, positive discipline and worship.

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- A sense of belonging to and participating in a community.
- An understanding and practise of the Catholic faith

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- An opportunity to grow in liturgical understanding
- Opportunities to develop understanding, respect and appreciation of other faiths.
- Familiarity with religious language, symbols, signs and gestures of worship and prayer.
- A curriculum that develops the whole child, integrating physical and intellectual growth alongside moral, spiritual, emotional and physiological growth.
- Have respect for other people's views, and hence to celebrate diversity in society

Religious Education Curriculum

Come and See

"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 for Catholic Schools 2012

The school follows the 'Come and See' programme and this forms the basis of our scheme of teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers use Come and See for their short, medium and long term planning.

A variety of approaches are used to present the religious lessons in a lively and thoughtful way. Use is made of ICT for research, recording and presentation.

The programme of study is 12 units (3 each term). Each year group studies the same unit however the focus of study changes and develops over the years building the pupils knowledge and understanding. In addition to RE lessons, a priest from the parish visits the school every Monday morning to work with the class teachers on rotation. This time may be used to extend the learning linked to the topic, a class mass or, as in Lent and Advent, the leading of a penitential service. We allocate at least 10% curriculum time to the teaching of RE. Time is spent each day in prayer.

Assemblies reflect themes from Come and See, the Gospel reading and the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme.

A unit from Come and See is formally assessed each term and that assessment is put on the tracking sheet (AT1). In addition across the year teachers are assessing the pupils spirituality (AT2). AT1 is the assessment of knowledge, AT2 is the assessment of putting that knowledge into practise.

We recognise that some pupils have special needs and their level of understanding may vary, however we also look at different ways of recording their knowledge and understanding of the learning to ensure that their learning difficulties are not marking a better understanding of RE.

Other Faiths

Other faiths are taught throughout the year. Every autumn term all classes study Judaism for 1 week and follow the programme in Come and See. Each year group focuses on a different aspect of the Jewish faith to build up a full understanding of that religion as it is so closely linked to Christianity. In Year 3 the children will go and visit a synagogue during the summer term.

Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism are taught during the summer term. In EYFS and KS1 the 3 classes will focus on one faith during a week of the summer term. When possible the school will invite someone in to speak to the children and there will be activities for the children to take part in. In KS2 each class will focus on a different faith each year. Year 3 will focus on Judaism by visiting a

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synagogue, Year 4 will focus on Sikhism and visit a Sikh temple, Year 5 will continue to focus on Hinduism and will visit the Hindu temple in Neasden and Year 6 will focus on Islam and visit the Central Mosque. Through the visits and follow up work the pupils will learn first hand about the other main religions of the world.

Links to other subjects

Religious Education is an integral part of the school life, and religious education is incorporated with other curriculum areas when it is appropriate. Aspects of PSHE, SEAL, SRE, Literacy, spiritual development and moral education are catered for through the Come and See programme.

Spiritual Development and Moral Education

Spiritual development is promoted through religious education and collective worship. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum for children to question rationally, explore, reflect and search for answers. We encourage children to develop understanding through assemblies, discussion, drama and practical activities. Through Come and See and links with PSHE and SEAL, children have opportunities to develop their moral code. Through these subjects, children learn about the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, encompassing the moral values of self-respect, respect for others, honesty, fairness and co-operation. Our contributions to charities, help children to deepen moral issues such as caring for others and Justice and Peace.

Collective Worship and Prayer

At St Joseph's we aim to make collective worship meaningful to the children. They are encouraged to take an active part in assemblies either by acting, singing, leading prayers or through quiet reflection. [See Collective Worship Policy]

Assemblies and Hymn Practice

Collective worship takes place every day. On Monday we have a whole school assembly led by the Head teacher, this assembly concludes with House Captains and House points. On Tuesday and Thursday we have Key Stage assemblies led by senior leaders. Wednesday is Hymn practice led the Deputy head/Music subject leader. The Friday Liturgy assembly is open to parents and is led by a different class each week. The class leading the assembly explores the theme of the gospel reading for the Sunday mass; this assembly also celebrates achievement in and out of school. When there is not an assembly, the children share prayers and reflection in class.

RE Week

During the year the school has a week where there is a special focus on RE. This may be linked with another curriculum subject or a particular charity event or a mission.

Masses

Mass is an important part of our school community worship. The school leads the first Sunday of the Month mass in St Joseph's Church, the Mass is led by a different class each month. The children are encouraged to lead the readings, hymns, bidding prayers and offertory. Every year KS2 classes have the opportunity to celebrate mass in their class when one of the priests from the parish is working with them and by attending mass one morning in the parish. At St Joseph's we celebrate the beginning of the school year with mass. At the end of each term there is a celebration in the church; carol service, Easter liturgy and Leavers Mass. When a major feast days falls on a school day the whole school attends mass. We also have whole school liturgies during the year e.g. Harvest and Easter.

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Prayers

Prayer is an important part of daily life in our school. Children are encouraged to pray in their own words and for their own intentions throughout the day. Each class has a religious focal area to be used for reflections and during the RE lesson. This prayer area should reflect the liturgical colours of the church season. There are prayer areas in the entrance area and in the KS2 corridor which staff and pupils can use to take time to reflect.

Home, School, Parish

'The partnership between home, parish and school is the best setting for the formation of maturing Catholic young people.' - Statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales [2000]

The Governing Body has a Home, School, Parish committee which discusses issues relating to links between school and parish, admissions and parental involvement in school and parish life.

Parental Role

Parents understand on entry of their child that they must support the Catholic ethos of the school. All children attend assemblies and take part in RE lessons, and they are all assessed equally.

We recognise that parents are the first educators of their children. We support parents in developing children's faith. We work alongside them, assisting them on their faith journey and supporting them as they work with their children. Parents are invited into our Liturgy assemblies and school Masses. The termly newsletter taken from the commission's website, informing parents of the topics to be covered for the term, and of events in the liturgical year, is sent out to parents.

Community

We have formed strong links with the parish of St Joseph's. On the first Sunday of the month a class from the school leads the 9.15 Mass. Parish priests are regular visitors to the school, attending Friday Liturgies and once a week to work with different classes to develop knowledge and understanding of our faith.

The First Holy Communion preparation takes place within the parish but the school supports the work done and we hold a mass in school to celebrate with all the children who have made their First Holy Communion.

We encourage children to participate in a range of charitable events for our charity 'You Touch Africa' and other charities. The choir sings each Christmas to raise money for Cafod and the school takes part in National events such as The Big Share, Red Nose Day and Children in Need.

Children learn about the needs of our local community through links with local organizations such as collecting food at Harvest time to distribute through a local food bank.

Responsibility

The RE subject leader oversees planning and monitors work and assessment. She attends training sessions led by the Education Commission and supports the development of RE throughout the school.

Resources

We constantly update and refurbish our class prayer areas to ensure they reflect the themes studied at the time. We are developing the range of resources available to support the RE curriculum subject to budget.

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Monitoring

The monitoring of RE is the responsibility of the RE subject leader and the senior leadership team. Book monitoring and lesson observations take place throughout the year and are shared at staff meetings.

Conclusion

Religious education supports children in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding of their faith journey. It aims to foster their Christian moral education and the formation of conscience. Religious education shows children the awareness of Jesus Christ through prayer and teaching. It makes them aware of other faiths and develops their respect and understanding of other beliefs and cultures.

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