



**OLSJ**  
OUR LADY + ST JOSEPH  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

***RE POLICY***  
***OUR LADY & ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC***  
***PRIMARY SCHOOL***

PREPARED BY: P Devereux  
APPROVED BY: Governors  
CHECKED DPO: March 19  
DATE: March 2019  
REVIEW DATE: March 2021

## **RE Policy 2019**

### **Mission Statement**

**With Christ at our Centre, we love, listen and learn**

### **Rationale of Religious Education:**

- We believe Religious Education to be at the core of the curriculum
- We help pupils to live and learn in a Catholic Christian environment leading to acceptance and respect of others in a diverse school community and wider world
- We provide an environment in which high expectations will lead to a striving for excellence in all areas of school life
- We are clear that the specific contribution Religious Education makes to the Catholic Life of the school is primarily educational and will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects.
- We educate and develop each member of the school community by building on their strengths and supporting their weaknesses
- We foster purposeful relationships with those who learn in, work in and visit our school where diverse views and backgrounds are respected

### **Religious Education in Our Lady and St Joseph aims:**

- To provide a broad and balanced Religious Education curriculum to promote knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life
- To promote knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose
- To develop the skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice
- To challenge pupils to examine their own standing in life, to deepen their personal faith, commitment and respect that of others
- To develop an enquiring mind for searching and questioning
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and also of other major religions in Britain as a whole and in the local community
- To help pupils respect different religions by exploring issues within and between them in order to develop a positive attitude towards living in a religiously diverse society.
- To help pupils understand the significance of religion and its contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- To develop their understanding of personal relationships by assisting and supporting their moral, emotional, psychological and physical development
- To ensure it is taught as rigorously as any other core subject

### **Leadership of Religious Education**

Religious Education is the responsibility of the R.E. co-ordinators and the headteacher with support from Key Stage Leaders. Their role is to monitor and assess the R.E. curriculum and Catholic prayer and worship throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression. They also ensure that the aims and learning outcomes in the Curriculum Directory are

identified and fulfilled. A governor has specific responsibility for R.E. and liaises closely with the staff of the school to fulfil their monitoring duties.

**The Religious Education Co-ordinator will be responsible for:**

- Working with senior leaders and monitoring teaching and learning, planning and standards through lesson observations and work scrutinies according to school practice
- ☐ Organising in-house moderation of standards meetings
- Self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Ensuring the curriculum offered is appropriate, suitable and relevant to pupils' needs and interests.
- Attend 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 Education Service on matters relating to Religious Education
- Auditing, managing and developing resources within a given budget.

**Curriculum Content**

R.E. is a core subject in our school, alongside English, Maths and Science, and therefore we devote 10% of our curriculum time to its delivery. We adhere to the Curriculum Directory guidelines and learning outcomes. This provides a cohesive approach and opportunities for whole school assemblies and celebrations as well as displays, which are relevant to every child.

The core of our curriculum is based on the Diocesan plans provided by Margaret Carswell. The new Age-Related Standards issued by the Diocese of Westminster, will be used to support planning. Key driver words will be used to ensure children are being taught the skills for their phase.

The content of this R.E. programme is based on the four major Constitutions of Vatican II; these are related to the Church's teaching on Revelation, the Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. These themes are treated and developed each year, though children are introduced to the theme through a variety of different "Life Topics" related to it. [The Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory for R.E. (January, 1997) follows the same structure of the major Vatican II Constitutions, relating them to study of the Trinity, Creation, the Scriptures, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.]

These themes are developed with greater depth and breadth each year as the child progresses through the school, and will form the core of our R.E. studies.

The purpose of these areas of study is to help the children as follows:

**Revelation:** Story, Scripture, Memory and Tradition of the Church

- a) To explore the importance of story in the human quest for meaning;
- b) To understand the role of Christian Scriptures as expressions of the ways in which humankind strives to understand the nature of God and the nature of human persons;

- c) To reflect upon the personal and community response to God invited by Scripture;
- d) To explore the sacred writings of other faith communities.

**Church** : Community of Believers, Pilgrim People of God

- a) To reflect on the experience of belonging to community at various levels;
- b) To reflect on the belief that, as people created in the image of a Triune God, Christians are called to be that community which is the Church;
- c) To develop a knowledge and understanding of people and roles in the Church and understand that to be the Church is to be witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ;
- d) To explore the relationship between the Catholic Church and other denominations and faiths.

**Life in Christ:** Lifestyle, Morality, Values, Attitudes

- a) To explore the values which underpin beliefs and actions in the human family;
- b) To understand the following of Christ as a call to holiness/wholeness of life;
- c) To reflect on the values which Christ expressed in his life and teaching;
- d) To explore the values and way of life of other world faiths.

**Celebration:** Ritual, Prayer, Sacraments, Worship, Liturgy

- a) To explore the meaning of celebration which marks the growth and development of every human being;
- b) To understand that spiritual growth and development is rooted in the Church's sacramental life which is expressed in sign and symbol throughout the liturgical year;
- c) To reflect on the place of prayer in the life of the Catholic community and of individual Christians;
- d) To develop a knowledge and understanding of prayer in other faiths.

***"What are we to teach? Bishops' Conference of England and Wales"***.

This document is intended as guidance for governors, teachers and parents. Its purpose is to guide teachers and help them to become familiar with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Its aim is to help schools and teachers to ensure that the religious teaching is faithful to the Catechism. It will lead teachers through the content of the Catechism, so that they may make reference to the approved text itself.

The essentials of Catholic religious teaching need to be present in the curriculum of every Catholic school, even if only in a simple and elementary way in the early years. Throughout the school years, the presentation of the whole Christian message must grow and develop so it becomes ever challenging and central to the lives of our children.

Teachers should make the time to read through this document to become familiar with the layout of the Catechism.

***The Catechism of the Catholic Church***

A copy of the Catechism will be available in the Staff Room for reference. This is not a book that will be suitable for classroom use, but it is for teachers to use as a resource. The Catechism of the Catholic Church provides an excellent topic index, which will assist teachers' own understanding of the faith.

## **Marking**

In line with the school's marking policy, the marking of children's religious work should always be positive and supportive to encourage the child in his/her faith journey as well as explaining their next steps in learning and addressing key misconceptions and errors.

## **Assessment and Recording**

The assessment of Religious Education at our school is designed to assist our children's learning and to enable them to strive for a feeling of confidence and success in their understanding of the Catholic faith.

Progress is monitored through discussion, questioning, posing problems and giving opportunities to present their knowledge to others in a variety of ways, e.g. class assemblies. Attainment level records are completed at the end of each half term to show children's levels of understanding and RE Co-ordinators monitor pupils' attainment and progress.

Teachers will undertake the Diocesan recommended assessment procedures using the criteria listed in AT1: Learning about religion; AT2: Learning from religion and AT3: Analysis and Evaluation.

## **Teaching Staff**

All teachers at Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School are either Roman Catholics or are sympathetic to the teaching of the Catholic faith which permeates all aspects of our school life. Through example, commitment and teaching, the children are encouraged to develop a loving and trusting relationship with God, an experience which it is hoped will influence their attitudes to life and their relationship with other people. All teaching staff have the responsibility of teaching Religious Education to the children in their class and providing half-termly homework.

Discussion of approaches between teachers is vitally important as well as regular discussions taking place at our staff meetings, phase meetings and INSET.

All staff are encouraged to regularly attend relevant courses. Our in-service coordinator provides information on courses and teachers give feedback to staff at staff meetings. Our diocesan advisor is invited to contribute to our staff development and her help and advice sought about policy and practice.

## **Home Links**

The school recognises that it cannot teach our children without the cooperation of the parents and the parish. The parents/guardians are the first educators and they work in partnership with the teachers who have the professional skills and training to help parents in the task of teaching the Catholic faith.

We endeavour to do this in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. During the year, parents and friends are invited to join us at many celebrations.

At the beginning of the school year we hold a welcome mass to promote new beginnings. At the end of the year we hold a goodbye ceremony to say farewell to anyone leaving us and to thank them for their contribution and commitment to the life of our school.

Parents are always invited and welcomed to all our school and class celebrations, which include school masses, class masses and assemblies.

Every Wednesday, each family is given a copy of the Wednesday Word, which encourages children to explore the upcoming Gospels with their families.

We have an RE blog on the school website which informs our community of the latest news and events in relation to the Catholic life of the school.

### **Parish Links**

We recognise that the school stands in the midst of the local community. At parish level, we take an active part in the holy days of obligation masses in the parish church providing music and readers.

We give regular support to CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society enabling our children to become aware of the needs of the wider world of children and families overseas. This leads to an appreciation of the diversity of culture, races and faiths within the world.

### **Parish Priest**

The parish priest, who is also a governor of the school, has responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community. The parish priest promotes the spiritual life of the 'school church'. He leads the celebration of liturgies, mass, penitential services, the Ash Wednesday service and the other liturgical feasts and celebrations during the year. In addition, the parish priest also instructs pupils on traditions and rituals of the church and the church is often used for such lessons.

### **Prayer**

An essential part of the Catholic ethos of the school is the prayer life. Staff meetings and Governors meetings begin with a prayer. The most important aspect of prayer for children is that they realise it is their way of communicating with God and is first and foremost a personal occasion.

Children are encouraged to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development. The diocesan plans offers progression for children as they move through the school. Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying:

- quiet reflection / meditation
- praying together
- writing own prayers
- prayers through music
- learning traditional Christian / Catholic prayers
- Staff are encouraged to pray with children, and to be an example for them.

Through prayer, we endeavour to develop our relationship with God. All classes have a prayer area, which has displays of children's work. This area generally changes with the liturgical year. Class prayers are established throughout the school and each teacher uses prayers appropriate to age and ability of the class. Candles, pictures and objects are also used as a focus for prayer.

Children take part in infant or junior assemblies, and whole school assemblies where children and staff join together to pray. Children are encouraged to pray their own prayers. In addition, classes, have daily acts of worship, which are pupil-led, including pupil-led liturgy.

### **Records of Assemblies**

The head teacher keeps a record of Monday morning assemblies, which he always leads and Friday whole school assemblies are planned by class teachers and monitored by RE coordinators.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Through our R.E. scheme, knowledge of all the sacraments is established, with special emphasis upon Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation. The children are prepared through the parish for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion from Year 3. The course of preparation is carried out in the parish led by the RE co-ordinators and headteacher of Our Lady and St Joseph, in close consultation and partnership with our governor, Sr Christine Frost. In this way we hope to achieve true partnership between school, family and parish, with the children celebrating their First Communion in their local churches.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also led in the parish. Like the Sacrament of Communion, the preparation for Reconciliation starts at the beginning of the child's school life. It begins with the child's first experiences; teachers and helpers work towards a loving, caring and forgiving atmosphere in school.

Pupils in Years 4-6 will have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school during Lent.

### **Chaplaincy Team**

A group of pupil volunteers work with the RE co-ordinators to prepare for, plan and celebrate school liturgies. This newly-formed Chaplaincy Team is designed to give the children more ownership and understanding of this central aspect of their faith.

### **Spiritual and Moral Development**

The religious character of our school is seen as giving shape to every aspect of school life, and especially the spiritual and moral development of our children.

Spiritual development is understood as the development of all those aspects which enable us to appreciate goodness, beauty and truth.

Through our teaching, we hope to enable children to reflect on their experiences of life and grow in knowledge of their feelings, needs and reactions. Through their awareness and understanding of themselves, they will recognise God's action in their lives and come to an inner peace and contentment. In addition, pupils are taught about the importance of the mission of the Church and the school's contribution to the 'common good'.

Helping children to make their moral decisions is a crucial part of the formation of a moral conscience. Through our teaching, we aim to help children to have an understanding of the Gospel of Jesus and through self-awareness and self-confidence enable them to come to good moral judgements. Our Behaviour Policy is based on Gospel Values of: **Faithfulness & Integrity; Dignity & Compassion; Humility & Gentleness; Truth & Justice; Forgiveness & Mercy; Purity & Holiness; Tolerance & Peace; Service & Sacrifice.**

### **Multi-Cultural and Multi-Faith**

Our Lady and St Joseph's is Catholic primary school and therefore it's this very religion that causes its existence, it must be a school that encourages tolerance, respect and care for all people, regardless of colour, race or creed.

Whilst Religious Education is specifically of the Catholic tradition, we welcome input from other faiths and denominations. We appreciate how the beliefs and values of other faith communities can enrich our own spiritual existence. We teach and learn about the other major faiths within our scheme of work.

### **Equality**

We aim to ensure that pupils attain their full potential regardless of race, gender or class. The materials we use reflect a multi-cultural society of women and men. Teachers ensure that no particular group or gender dominates the use of equipment or other aspects of teaching and learning situations (see Equality Policy).

### **Special Needs, Gifted and Talented**

We recognise that pupils have different needs in their religious education learning and cater for that by planning a variety of approaches. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored to ensure that suitably challenging work is given to individuals and groups (see SEN and Disability Policy).

### **Environment**

It is our intention that the environment of our school reflects our mission statement and that we are providing a caring, well-ordered and stimulating environment that reflects our Christian beliefs.

Work is displayed in a variety of ways throughout the school. Each classroom has an R.E. area with a display board and prayer area, where the half-termly AT2 question is displayed. The prayer will reflect the colour theme of the liturgical year. There is a Religious Education display board at the front school hall and a reflection area in the foyer. Bibles, candles, artefacts and pictures are all used to enhance and present our Catholic faith.

### **Prayer Room**

The Prayer Room is a special place where children and staff can reflect, light a candle and say a prayer in a peaceful and safe environment.

### **What every New Teacher needs to know**

- Any questions directly relating to Religious Education should be asked of the R.E. Coordinators and subsequently the headteacher.
- It is important that every teacher, when joining the school, becomes familiar with:
  - The RE: Diocesan Plans (Margaret Carswell)
  - The location of our Parish Church- St. Mary and St. Joseph's
  - The location of Vaughan House, Westminster, for in-service training and resources

### **Information Technology**

All classes have access to laptops and other ICT equipment, which will be used to enhance R.E. teaching and learning.

### **Review**

The school undertakes an annual review of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school with input from the governing body, staff, parents, pupils and our diocesan adviser. Outcomes are used to plan training and development needs for the upcoming year and prioritise actions in the following school development cycle.