



St John's RC School

A Policy for Religious Education

Adopted by the Governing Body

Signed by Chair of Governors

Date: April 2021

To be reviewed: April 2023

St. John's School Religious Education Policy 2021/23

Mission Statement "Learning for Life"

Introduction

Religious education forms the cornerstone of the life and work of St. John's and permeates throughout the whole curriculum. We believe that, "Religious Education is not one subject among many but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life.

It should provide the context for, and substantially shape the school curriculum and offer living experience of the life of faith in its practical expression." (Bishops of England and Wales, 1988) We see our Christian community sharing in the mission of the church, on our journey to closeness with Christ.

We strive for our Catholic ethos to pervade our school day. This policy is intended to be read in conjunction with the curriculum mapping for R.E and the Diocesan scheme of work which gives details of what pupils in different year groups will be taught. The Religious Education provided in a Catholic school cannot be confined to the teaching and learning specifically devoted to Religious Education. The school should seek to ensure that the message and spirit of the Gospel, permeates ALL aspects of school life, that informs the approach to and treatment of the whole curriculum and that it is reflected and communicated in the love, care and respect with which staff and pupils are treated.

Aims

Religious Education in our school should:

- Nurture children's faith.
- Promote in a gradual way their understanding and appreciation of Catholic teaching and practice.
- Develop their involvement with the Church Community.
- Develop their ability to show care for others.
- Foster pupils' religious, spiritual and moral development.
- Develop the skills required to be able to examine and reflect on religious belief and practice, including those from other faiths and cultures.
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder

Rationale

St John's RC School is administered by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood. As a Catholic School, R.E. is in accordance with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church and must fulfil the diocesan requirements. In addition, Church Festivals are celebrated usually with a Liturgy or a Mass. Worship is seen as an essential part of the religious experience. The Liturgy and Masses in themselves give a good general framework to the Christian faith. It also incorporates key elements

of Christian principles such as being sorry, reconciliation, giving and receiving, giving thanks, listening, sharing and celebrating. A simplified liturgy is used and arranged to allow maximum participation from the pupils and students. St John's is part of the Church and as such a sacramental community and the celebration of Mass is a central part of our worship. Pupils and students who are Catholic may be prepared to receive the sacraments where this is deemed appropriate and in consultation with families and clergy. Sacramental preparation is delivered on an individual or small group basis as and when appropriate and in consultation with families.

Teaching and Learning objectives of the school are:

- To help children become more aware of and to reflect on their experience of living in the world with others (Experiential).
- To reveal to the children some aspect of God's plan for our salvation (Doctrinal)
- To help them respond to God's love in their lives. (Moral)
- To help them listen to and respond to God (Prayer). Prayer has an important role in the scheme and is taught both as an integral and a discrete area of study.

Planning Arrangements

At St John's, the R.E. Leader is Gillian Hall. She takes overall responsibility for the Catholic Ethos of the school and for the content of the R.E. Curriculum and fully supports Wendy Kililea, the Head Teacher, who takes overall responsibility for the Catholic Ethos of the community.

Strategies for Teaching

Implicit

Much of what pupils and students learn will result from the way they see religious ideas and principles translated into the day to day life of the school. The network of personal relationships within the school community is a powerful context for learning, so mutual respect, support and understanding are very important since values, attitudes and personal skills are largely developed through experience on social, emotional and intuitive levels. This may be described as the 'hidden curriculum'. Just as R.E. cannot be separated from the general life of the school neither can it be separated from the rest of the curriculum. In developing awareness and understanding of the world, in science, humanities, language topics etc. there will often be a religious element since religion is about life itself, so an integral approach is often most appropriate. All learning is either an implicit or explicit encounter with God.

Explicit

A planned programme through which R.E. will be delivered is provided. In the Pre 14 department Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 follow a specially adapted version of the diocesan approved programme 'Come and See'. This is a programme for primary schools, published with the authority of the Department for Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference for England and Wales.

The programme sets out to help children to explore the beliefs, values and traditions of the Catholic Church and of other faiths. A flexible approach is necessary to take account of the particular needs and abilities of the pupils and students at St John's. The programme incorporates much of the

Autism Awareness and Learning Disabilities Good Practice Guidance and is delivered in a highly multisensory and interactive experiential style.

A whole school approach is used so that assemblies and special celebrations can be linked to the Religious Education Programme. Both departments are circulated with the assembly/special celebrations list at the beginning of each term.

In the Post 14 department three modules from the AQA Religious Studies syllabus have been selected.

Strategies for Learning

The quality of learning will be dependent on pupils and students:

- being willing to participate
- being able to express thoughts and ideas
- developing respect for others and the world around them
- being given an opportunity to develop their spirituality e.g. through prayer and reflection
- learning factual information relevant to the topic being taught
- showing an awareness of what they have done in R.E. and ultimately putting it into practice in their daily lives

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in this area is important and is encouraged and achieved through:

- consultation evenings
- involvement with Harvest Festival
- attendance at Christmas Carol Service and Nativity Play

Cross Curricular Links

St John's seeks to create a Christian ethos which should be reflected in all areas of the school. Just as R.E. cannot be separated from the general life of the school neither can it be separated from the rest of the curriculum. In developing understanding in science and humanities, there will often be a religious element since religion is about life itself. An integrated approach is often most appropriate.

- Science
- Humanities
- PHSE and Citizenship
- Community Skills

Equal Opportunities

All pupils and students should have access to a relevant curriculum/programme which meets their individual needs. Materials used should reflect the multi-cultural society in which we live and should be checked for race or gender stereotypes. No differentiation should be made between pupils as regards gender, ability, race, religion or social background. All have a right to develop self-esteem and respect for others and learn tolerance in the treatment and understanding of others. As only a small minority of St John's pupils are Catholic, R.E. must be open to the faiths of others and those who do not have any faith.

Classroom Environment

Each classroom and the school hall should have a religious focus point. A crucifix and a Bible should be displayed in a prominent place. The prayer corners should include drapes appropriate to the liturgical season. Artefacts and posters should be prominently displayed whenever possible and changed on a regular basis.

Display In order to highlight the importance of Religious Education and the Catholic ethos of the school, displays of a religious nature should be evident in each classroom throughout the year. Similarly such displays should be encouraged in corridors and at appropriate times of the year in the school entrance.

Liturgy and Celebration of School Masses

Liturgy and Celebration of School Masses are an essential factor in the religious life of the school. Preparation for Masses should take place within the context of the R.E. lessons with pupils developing their understanding of the meaning and structure of the Mass as they progress through school. All children should be actively involved in their Masses by doing the readings, offertory procession, serving and singing hymns. The Parish Priest and RE Teacher should be involved in the preparation of as many Masses as time permits. The school aims to ensure that children attend Mass at our Parish churches for specific Holy Days of Obligation. All parents are encouraged to take part in all school Masses.

Moral Values, we recognise the atmosphere of the school is very important for personal and moral growth. An atmosphere of love, respect for others, sympathy and forgiveness, contributes to the children's self-confidence and self-acceptance, and develops their capacity to relate to others and to God.

Assemblies and Collective Worship

All children take part in a daily act of worship; this may be whole school, key stage or class. Assemblies are considered to be an important element in the delivery of moral and religious education to the children.

Early Years children are integrated into whole school assemblies as is appropriate to their needs.

The content of assembly should be of a religious or moral nature. During assembly time the school community is expected to discuss, sing and pray together, it is expected to prepare for special feasts and follow the church liturgical calendar