



St Mary's RC Primary School, Battersea

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Approved By	Governors
Reviewed On	November 2024
Review Due	November 2025
Review Cycle	Annually

Mission Statement

“A man took a grain of mustard seed, and sowed it in his field. Indeed, the seed is smaller than all seeds but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.” (Matthew 13.31)

The school’s Mission Statement is a clear expression of the educational and pastoral aims of the school. This is demonstrated in the inclusive way we approach the teaching and learning across the school.

St Mary’s RC primary school is a nurturing and welcoming community, seeking to include every child and their families. The mission statement was developed through a collaboration with pupils, staff and governors, to link Gospel scripture to the lives of all pupils and staff. It was felt the parable of ‘the Mustard Seed’ best represented the aims of the school and the notion of nurture and growth.

The children’s gifts are celebrated at St Mary’s and in turn these gifts from God are used to inspire and motivate all to succeed to reach their full potential.

Our mission statement is displayed clearly in school and there are regular whole school assemblies to elicit children’s ideas about how they are put into practice.

Context and Ethos

At St Mary’s RC Primary School, we place Religious Education at the heart of the curriculum, in order to help us to fulfil our mission to educate the whole child, academically, personally and spiritually.

Our RE programme aims to include clear and succinct learning objectives which consider the religious and educational needs of our children including those who come from supporting Catholic homes and those for whom the school may be their first and perhaps only experience of Church.

Religious Education is for all. It is a core subject, central to the life of a Catholic school and is about the Christian vision for the whole person. It is a collaborative activity which respects and promotes the child’s innate capacity for wonder, awe and reverence, offering them a sense of self-worth through their experience of belonging to a caring community, and an awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Rationale of Religious Education

- We believe parents are the first and best educators of their children
- To help the children develop a knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- We believe in fostering strong parish - home - school links to enable staff, children, parents and parish to work together to support the community in which we live, work and worship
- To enable staff, children and their families to communicate with God through Prayer and Liturgy
- We believe Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the church.
- We will provide opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection in implicit and explicit ways. RE will be taught discretely and developmentally. It will include the deepening of knowledge and understanding of key theological ideas and their application to life
- We believe Religious Education to be ‘the core of the curriculum’
- We will provide children with the language of religious experience, ‘literacy’ in religious activities, places, stories, symbols, rituals, people and objects

- Include appropriate materials about other faiths/religions – allowing for an engagement with others’ beliefs and values which will help to develop good attitudes and dispositions so that children are instilled with a love of learning and a desire to go on learning
- Encourage pupil engagement with difficult questions of meaning and purpose which everyone has to face which will enable them to think critically about their own questions of meaning and purpose

Leadership of Religious Education

Religious Education is the responsibility of the Headteacher and R.E. Co-ordinator and the with support from all staff and governors. 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 link governor has specific responsibility for R.E. and liaises closely with the staff of the school to fulfil their monitoring duties.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Religious Education

Responsibilities includes:

- 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.
- 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 confidence to teach effective Religious Education is enhanced.
- 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 RECD and Come and See scheme of work. 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.

Planning, Assessment and Recording

Teachers follow the Come and See scheme and plan units of work with due regard for the Standards for Primary Religious Education and ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to record their learning and show that they are working at the expected standard for their age and / or ability. Teachers provide the Subject Coordinator with samples of work that reflect the expected standards and these samples will be verified by or matched against samples of work moderated and agreed at Deanery / Diocesan meetings. 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 pupils opportunities to present their knowledge to others in a variety of ways, e.g. class assemblies. Attainment records are completed at the end of each term to show children's levels of understanding and Senior Leadership Team monitor pupils' attainment and progress.

Moderation

Regularly teachers assess each child's level of attainment in their class. In conjunction with assessments, the coordinator will also track the purpose and suitability of planning, displays, marking, focal points and teaching and learning.

Feedback

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

Teaching Staff

All teachers at St Mary's School are either Catholic or are committed to the teaching of the Catholic faith which permeates all aspects of our school life. Through example 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. Non-Catholic teachers are supported in their planning and teaching to ensure accurate religious literacy is delivered.

Home Links

The school recognises that it cannot teach our children without the cooperation of the parents and the parish. Regardless of their beliefs, the parents/guardians are the first educators and in their choice of a catholic school for their child, they are implicitly supporting 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, respect and confidence. During the year, parents and friends are invited to join us at many celebrations. Parents are always invited and welcomed to all our school and class celebrations which include school Masses, Class Masses and Assemblies. Wednesday Word and termly overviews detailing each Religion topic also help to keep parents informed.

Parish Links

We recognise that the school stands in the midst of the local community. We are active participants in the liturgical life of the parish church. Classes from KS1 and KS2 attend a Mass at church every term and on Holy Days of Obligation. The parish priest and Deacon, who is also a governor of the school, shares responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community and is a welcome visitor to each class. The Parish Priest and Deacon promotes the spiritual life of the school and leads the celebration of liturgies, mass, penitential services, and the other liturgical feasts and celebrations during the year. They also teach pupils the 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. We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. The act of worship is distinct from R.E. lessons. It forms an integral part of school life and is central to Catholic tradition. 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. Pupils are encouraged to prepare and lead collective acts of worship in their classrooms and for whole school gatherings and assemblies as appropriate and take their role as prayer ambassadors seriously. The parish Deacon visits each class on a weekly basis to lead them in their daily prayer.

Prayer is recognised to be multi-faceted at St Mary's and takes place in many forms. 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
- Lectio Divina
- praying together
- writing own prayers
- prayers through music - Taize
- 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 focus area which has displays of children's work. This area changes with the liturgical calendar and is prepared to reflect the appropriate liturgical colour. 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 whole school assemblies where children and staff join together to pray. Children not only learn traditional prayers which are said on a daily basis they are also encouraged to create their own prayers and share their own prayer intentions. The children are encouraged to pray with openness and spontaneity as well as being given the opportunity to listen and be silent in prayer.

Children are encouraged to pray their own prayers. Classes have daily / weekly acts of prayer and worship including pupil-led liturgy.

Sacramental Preparation

The children are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion from Year 3. The course of preparation is carried out in the parish and the school works in close consultation and partnership with the priests and catechists. 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. Pupils in Years 4-6 will have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school during Advent and Lent and The Eucharist is celebrated often throughout the school year.

Multi-Faith Education

St Mary's is a Catholic school that encourages tolerance, respect and care for all people, regardless of culture, nationality, disability, gender or creed. We appreciate how the beliefs and values of other faith communities can enrich our own spiritual existence. While Religious Education is specifically the Catholic tradition, we welcome input from other faiths and denominations. We respect those with other faiths, by all year groups learning about a range of beliefs from the five other world faiths. We look to draw links between the faiths to enhance understanding in the beliefs of others. There is an annual Judaism Week celebrated in the Autumn term where all year groups look at different aspects of the Jewish Faith. In the summer term, there is a world faith week, pupils investigate further into the beliefs and teachings in either Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam.

Review

The RE Coordinator undertakes regular termly monitoring of RE, reports to Governors on attainment and the catholic life of the school, meets with our Deanery Advisor and attends Deanery and Diocesan meetings each term. Outcomes are used to plan training and development needs for the coming year and prioritise actions in the following School Development Plan.