



## ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

*"The following statement of principles for the teaching and learning of Religious Education was arrived at by a consultative process, agreed by all staff and is based on the school's values and the requirement of the National Curriculum."*

### Mission Statement

*St MARY'S is a happy and vibrant family where each child and adult is cherished, valued and enabled to grow in confidence to their full potential. It provides a safe environment in which each individual is encouraged to live as Jesus taught and to reach levels of personal development, creative and academic achievement.*

In St Mary's School, Religious Education enables children to know of God's love for them and to grow in knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith focusing on their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. It encourages awareness of and respect for people of other faiths.

Each child is trusted to use their unique abilities to grow as a person and make a difference in the world by following Jesus' example and his teachings. Children created the school's own Bee-attitudes:



Prayerful



Close to God



Pleased when others succeed



Thankful



Hardworking



Kind



Generous



Full of courage

These are shown through caring for one another.

An effective approach to Religious Education in St. Mary's Catholic Primary should:

- Recognise that we are acting as an instrument of the Catholic Church helping children to understand, deepen and appreciate our Catholic beliefs and practices.
- Involve a three-way partnership between home, school and parish to support each child's unique journey of faith.
- Help each child to understand about the significance and dignity of life which is reflected throughout the curriculum.
- Explore our specific Catholic faith and beliefs, to encounter other world religions and encourage children to understand, respect and be tolerant of other beliefs.
- Be child centred and accessible to all children, taking account of their family backgrounds.
- Take Christ as our model and ensuring, as He did, that in practice our daily lives reflect the Gospel values for our pupils.
- Involve adults living and sharing their faith experiences with the children.

### **Curriculum Aims**

- To ensure Religious education has a high status in school in line with other core subjects and that it contains the same academic demands and challenges.
- To demonstrate continuity and progression throughout both key stages by providing appropriate knowledge and planning to develop each pupil's understanding and skills.
- Religious Education is to be relevant to the child's interests and experiences.
- To provide opportunities for the children to reflect on, express and evaluate their religious and spiritual experiences.
- To give understanding of our own and other cultures in our multicultural society.
- To set aside a time for worship in order to develop one's spirituality.

### **The RE Programme: The Way, the Truth and the Life**

The children are taught through the Religious Education programme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life', which encourages development of skills required for exploration, investigation, interpretation, communication whilst allowing them to develop their basis knowledge of the Old and New Testament. In addition, a Christian ethos is created by the example set by all adults in our community; this ethos permeates all aspects of the school and this provides a model for the children to follow.

- Children learn through shared experience and make connections between life's experiences and the gospel teachings.
- Stages of development are taken into account resulting in a structured progression allowing children to learn according to their different abilities, backgrounds and experiences.
- Children are introduced to and encouraged to explore scripture; both relative to the work they are doing and also to their daily life.
- Prayer and preparation for the sacraments are an integral part of the 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme. Specific preparation for First Forgiveness and First Communion is co-ordinated through home, school and parish catechesis.
- Teaching methods stimulate activity resulting in a response from the 'heart' of the child, developing attitudes of respect and reverence and an understanding that following Jesus is a call to a spiritually whole life.
- Background knowledge of people of other faiths is taught so that similarities and differences can be celebrated at an early age, and to ensure that children are provided with opportunities to develop a global approach to citizenship.
- Children are taught in as creative a way as possible, using, for example, role play, drama, art, music; the children learn and live through experiencing living faith.
- The 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme underpins the SMSC Policy.

- The resources in the 'Ten Ten' programme, a scheme of work in Relationships and Health Education (RHE), support the children in exploring the many aspects of their personal and social development.

RE is a core subject and, in line with the Bishops' Conference recommendations, 10% of teaching time is allocated to RE.

### **Resources**

The Chapel provides the school with a sacred space for worship and celebration. A variety of books are available in the staff resources to assist teachers in developing their own knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and in planning celebrations and lessons. Various religious artefacts, bibles and books are centrally located, while children have easy access to further reading from the themed baskets around the school. A poster cupboard is situated in the project court. There is also a variety of music and CDs available for use.

### **Planning**

We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in two phases; long-term and short-term. The long-term planning maps the RE topics studied in each term by each year group. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group, using the Way, the Truth and the Life primary map. Planning must outline specific learning objectives and expected outcomes linked to the 'driver words' suitable for each year group. Planning is tailored to the specific needs of the children so that the learning is accessible and engaging. The Ways of knowing set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey. The three ways of knowing are: understand, discern, and respond. These are identified in lesson plans using colour coding.

### **Delivery**

In order to aid delivery of the Way, the Truth and the Life programme, the following measures have been undertaken by the school to manage and develop the programme.

1. Spiritual experience through prayer.
  - Set prayers. These are to be used in school life in the classroom, assemblies and services. Grace before and after meals is to be said in the classrooms.
  - Free prayers – i.e. expressing what one feels without a set format of words, becoming completely open-ended. This can be fostered by composing prayers for Mass, class assemblies, meditations or sharing innermost thoughts in circle time or class religion work.
  - Regular Mass in school (class/whole school). This is based on the children's liturgy which can be easily understood. The readings are read by the children as are the bidding prayers. The offertory is taken by the children and if appropriate contains their work as part of the offertory procession.
  - All children participate in the Mass responses and singing of the hymns. Those children wishing to receive the Eucharist are encouraged to do so in a reverent manner.
  - Services – Advent and Lent services, Stations of the Cross and liturgically themed Assemblies
  - The use of religious artefacts
  - Adoration
2. Knowledge and experience of Catholic beliefs and way of life.
  - Teachers as role models. The way in which we deal with each other is a concrete example of Christ's love at work.
  - Specific explanations of feasts and liturgical services.
  - Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and the Eucharist is undertaken in year 3. It is necessary to provide opportunities throughout the religious programme to support the instruction given in the parish.

### 3. Christian and Catholic attitude to life.

- Development of a moral code based on respect for God and each other.
- Behaviour policy which is based on preferring to promote and emphasise positive behaviour and so fostering each child's self-esteem.
- Participation in festivals, services and Masses.
- Parents and staff having closer ties through the use of the home/school links to share joys which are not necessarily academically based. Building up links with parents is encouraged through: open door policy; pre-school parents' meeting; school parents' evenings; parental helpers in school; parents sharing end of topic celebrations; school links with PTA; invitations to parents to class assemblies and school functions.
- Use of merits to celebrate achievements with everyone. This is intended to cover personal, social, emotional as well as academic achievement. This achievement is directly related to the individual child and celebrated in Praise assemblies.
- Planning of the RE programme ensures that all children have equal access to the curriculum and lessons are presented in a variety of ways to make provision for greater depth as well as those with Special Educational Needs.
- Assemblies based on religious themes and the Sunday Gospel. Usually these will be linked to the topic being studied in RE if delivered by the teacher and if possible related to topics being studied in the wider curriculum, in order to extend every child's knowledge and deeper appreciation and experience.
- Working for others beyond our immediate circle through working to help charities, e.g. CAFOD, Harvest Festival, Mission Together, St Luke's Hospice, organisations acting in response to natural disasters etc.

#### **Supporting Non-Catholic Teachers**

Whatever a teacher's own faith, background or views - they are invited and encouraged to embrace the school's ethos. By virtue of the fact the teacher was appointed, they are deemed to be someone who can enrich the faith life of the school and the community. We expect all our teachers to do everything with full engagement, knowing that they have a significant contribution to make in every aspect of the school's life - including its faith life. We will support them in every way possible to do so and give them access to professional development opportunities provided by the Diocese.

It is important that all teachers feel confident teaching curriculum RE, prayer and liturgy and understand the Catholic ethos of our school. The school will provide induction sessions with the RE subject Lead looking at the planning, assessment and implementation of the 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' Programme, planning and evaluation of prayer and liturgy in class and how to ensure the Catholic ethos runs throughout, and is central to, daily activities in school. The RE subject lead will also run regular INSET sessions in school on planning and expectations for curriculum RE, work in books, assessment and moderation of work.

In addition to this, teachers will have access to a number of diocesan RE courses.

#### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting.**

Assessment takes place informally at the end of each RE topic and refers to what should be assessed through self-assessment and teacher assessment using the 'I can Statements' linked to driver words. One formal assessment per term assesses the 'Ways of Knowing' in RE in line with the guidance from the diocese. Each child's progress is recorded in their RE book. Teachers will look for evidence in pupils' books of what children understand of the content taught and children's ability to think creatively, compare different interpretations and evaluate critically. A written report is sent to parents in the Summer Term.

Religious Education is directed towards spiritual growth which in itself is immeasurable. This is referred to in the RESPOND guidance. Assessment in this subject establishes what the children know and understand about their Faith. It does not in any way assess the levels of their Faith or spiritual growth.

### **Monitoring.**

The teaching and learning in RE is monitored by the RE subject lead through lesson observation, work sampling and scrutiny of planning.

Written records of these are kept by the coordinator and shared with the Headteacher and class teachers. The RE governor meets with the co-ordinator to be kept up to date with progress in the subject and termly updates are shared with the governors.

### **Conclusion**

The Religious Education experience offered to children in St Mary's School recognises that each one of us is on a journey of Faith that will continue throughout the whole of life. As a Faith community, we contribute to children's spiritual growth, knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ and His love for us through living the Gospel values.

**Name:** Mrs McKinlay **Role:** RE Subject Leader/ Head Teacher **Signature:** *J McKinlay*

**Reviewed:** September 2023

**Date of next review:** September 2024

