



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

At St. Mary's we live and learn, sharing God's love.

MISSION STATEMENT

'As a Catholic school community, we strive to live as a Christian family showing our love for God in the way we treat each other with dignity and respect and by promoting the development of each child as a unique individual.'

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

AIMS

It is the aim of this Catholic School to enable our children to

- develop an imaginative sense of awe, wonder and reverence
- develop a sense of the presence of God in their lives; to reflect upon this presence and respond individually
- acknowledge that the Church provides insights into, and explanations for, the challenging experiences in life such as death, suffering and encounters with good and evil
- appreciate that there is something beyond material wealth in life and value their inner experiences and consciousness
- respect how people of other faiths respond to the spiritual dimension in life
- reflect upon their own values and attitudes in light of the Gospel teachings

PUPILS AT ST MARY'S SHOW EVIDENCE OF THEIR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT WHEN THEY DISPLAY:

1. The acquisition of knowledge

At St Mary's we believe that 'spiritual development' is not synonymous with 'religion' and is therefore not considered to be just a part of the Religious Education programme. All areas of our school's curriculum contributes to the spiritual development of our pupils. Through science discovery, mathematics phenomenon and creativity, we strive to help our pupils understand the way God works in our lives, thus exploring beyond mere factual knowledge.

The 'Come& See' programme and the Collective Worship themes, however, do provide a more formal framework in which children can develop a sense of the presence of God in their lives, have opportunities to reflect upon their own personal existence and make sense of the world in which they live. They experience the teachings of the Gospels and stories through which they become familiar with the life and teachings of Jesus.

2. Understanding

Throughout the curriculum, the children in our care hear about how, over time, people have sought to explain the creation and existence of the universe.



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We consider it important for the children to realise that, despite our personal beliefs as individuals, as Christians we should have some understanding of how people have been inspired by the natural world, mystery and human achievement. It is through this understanding that our children can begin to recognise and value the worth of each individual and develop the ability to build up relationships with others.

3. Beliefs

It is expected that through the curriculum and through their exploration and discussion of real life experiences, children at our school will grow in faith, having belief in and an awareness of themselves through their deepening knowledge of creation and revelation. Through our Collective Worship and timetabled 'Come & See' lessons the children are encouraged to be engaged with fundamental questions and explore their own and others' religious beliefs, learning how their own faith and love of God can be freely expressed. We provide learning situations for the children to appreciate that different people do have individual and shared beliefs, upon which they base their lives and how these beliefs contribute to each individuals' own personal identity.

4. A positive attitude and behaviour

By gaining knowledge and understanding, our ultimate aim is for the children to develop an awareness of themselves in terms of their thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities, experiences and a growing development of self respect and acceptance of individual identity.

Through regular Circle Time and Collective Worship a sensitive environment is provided for the children to explore, exercise and express their beliefs. Stillness, reflection and contemplation are practised in a supportive group atmosphere.

We aim to cater for those children who experience specific difficulties in these areas of self development. Our understanding allows us to help children to feel valued when they express their innermost thoughts and feelings through art, music, exercise, imagination, writing and craft work.

5. A personal response

It is our intention to encourage our pupils' intellectual curiosity, to question and explore the meaning of their own and others' experiences. We encourage and provide time for children to explore for themselves, to question and to reflect upon times of hardship and suffering and to respond to challenging experiences.

We feel we are preparing the children to respond to the important questions and circumstances they will undoubtedly face in their lives, whether they are hurt, overwhelmed, delighted or disappointed. The understanding that it is important to control emotions and feelings underpins our teaching, as we strive to teach the children to use these feelings as a source of growth and development.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At St Mary's we recognise our responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. All aspects of the curriculum reflect the following principles



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- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

This is monitored at class, departmental and senior leadership level.

AWARDS

At the end of each academic year we have 2 special end of year awards, 'Overcoming Adversity' and 'Faith In Action'. The chosen children receive a shield of their own which they can keep and then a larger shield is displayed in school and is engraved with the children's names.

Reviewed April 2018. Next review April 2019.