

# R.E Policy



## Our Mission

**'At SS John and Monica we learn through the example of Jesus to love, respect, understand and value each other'**

“In the life of faith of the Catholic school, religious education plays a central and vital part. At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed in religious education. Therefore, religious education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school.”

The Bishops of England and Wales May 2000

## **The aims of our School**

SS. John and Monica's School is a Catholic Primary School whose primary aim is the education of Catholic children. We are set in a wonderfully diverse community which draws many Christian sects and other faiths and we welcome all children to our school (subject to places being available) who wish to receive a Catholic education. We create a welcoming atmosphere for all who come into contact with us and hope that they take away some of our values with them.

As a Catholic School we have certain duties to:

... be more than just places where pupils are equipped with learning and skills for the workplace and responsible citizenship. Rather, they are to be the communities where the spiritual, cultural and personal worlds within which we live are harmonised to form the roots from which grow our values, motivation, aspirations and the moral imperatives that inform our choices and actions as persons.

“Christ At The Centre” (2012)

- We have a missionary responsibility: To make Christ available to all who wish to know him as part of their lives and offer the opportunity to share the Catholic Faith to all who wish it
- We have an educational role: To provide children with an excellent general curriculum and religious preparation that has Christ at its centre
- We have a spiritual role: To ensure that we work closely with parents as the primary educators of their children, to prepare those children for their religious and spiritual life
- We have a responsibility to our parish community: To ensure that we serve the family that we belong to and make links with the wider Catholic Church
- We have a responsibility to society: To ensure that we are of service to the larger community by the provision of excellence in teaching and learning, an openness to diversity and contribution to social cohesion.

## **How do we teach RE at SS John & Monica's?**

RE is a Core subject in a Catholic School and as such is allocated 10% curriculum time each week. All RE lessons follow the Learning and Growing as the People of God curriculum strategy and include a variety of creative expression. RE is expected to be taught using as many cross curricular methods as possible and links are made to RE, where appropriate, at other points of curriculum delivery.

Whole school collective worship is delivered by the Head teacher, class teachers and pupils. Class collective worship takes place on a fortnightly basis. It is led by the teachers, children and Chaplaincy

Team (Years 2-6). The children have an active part in planning and preparing collective worship using the visual planner. In KS2 the children take on more of responsibility by also selecting gospel readings, music, prayers ect. Father Babu says Mass each week. Parents, families and parishners are invited to Masses throughout the year.

In line with the Directives from the Archdiocese SS. John and Monica's School uses the curriculum strategy for Religious Education in Catholic schools, "Learning and Growing as the People of God" and the progression of skills document.

This comprehensive scheme is used in all Year groups and provides children with opportunities to access and understand the various aspects of the Catholic Faith:

- Liturgical Year
- Scriptural Knowledge
- Prayer
- Living as Christians
- The Sacraments

These 5 core areas are covered in a differentiated way in each year so that children develop a progressive understanding of the faith during their 7 years at SS John & Monica's. The progression of skills document supports the progression of skills covered in each year group.

On entry to SS John & Monica's our Reception children are assessed through a 1:1 baseline that examines an entry level of Catholic/religious awareness. The children will be reassessed, using teacher assessment, at the end of their Reception year to measure development after exposure to the programme.

As a Catholic School one of our aims is ensuring the secure foundation of Catholic children in their faith and as part of this we prepare our children for the Sacraments of initiation into the faith. Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are completed in Years 3. Confirmation is completed on a two year cycle with Years 5 and 6. We are an inclusive school and see these Sacraments as community acts so, in keeping with this, when our Catholic children prepare for these special life changing events, the whole class prepares together. Supplementary materials are used for the teaching & preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation in conjunction with the units where these are covered in planning.

Resources are available to support the teaching of RE in all classes. Age appropriate Catholic Bible versions are provided for all children and staff. Liturgical preparation materials are available from the co-ordinator.

The school prayer book is available to children in class and to parents, upon request, who may wish to use it to support their prayer life at home with their children.

## **Lesson Planning**

In order to ensure continuity and progression from one year to the next it is important that teachers have detailed and precise objectives. This makes planning and assessment easier. These objectives are clearly stated in the Diocesan Planning documents.

The following represents a guide about planning and delivering RE at SS John & Monica's:

- Planning should be completed by the Unit .
- The LO can be taken directly from the 'learning and growing' document or devised by the class teacher using the 'progression of skills' document.
- Each lesson must also have a KU and ER /AE(KS2 only) skill focus. These are at the top of the medium term planning sheet and have been taken from the progression of skills document.
- The Unit to be covered must be photocopied from the Strategy and annotated fully to indicate which activities are going to be used, how long the unit is going to take, any arrangements for visits, collective worship, differentiation etc. The document is comprehensive but in isolation it is merely a list of activities. Teachers must be realistic about what they will deliver to make sure the key learning outcomes are attained by all children at their level of attainment.
- A short term planning sheet must accompany each unit being studied. This will give details about vocabulary, resources to be used, differentiation, assessment criteria and opportunities for SMVSC.
- At the end of the unit, the evaluation sheet must be completed (last section of the strategy document). It is an opportunity for teachers to reflect on the successes and areas for development for that unit.
- RE can be delivered in a variety of cross curricular formats but the LO must be an RE one.
- Learning Objectives must be written as "I can..." statements to support clear marking and assessment and to allow the children to be involved in the assessment of their own/peers work.
- Teachers should make informal observations of their class during RE lessons to look for evidence for the more difficult to assess areas in RE. These may include the moral awareness, higher order questioning that explores the nature of God and our relationship with Him.
- RE is not about quantity but about coverage quality and understanding. The work in the books should show that each child has done their best at their level of ability. Children doing the same task may therefore have a variety of recorded responses depending on what they can do – it is acceptable for a child to draw, speak (adults scribe) or write their responses to the same LO.
- A variety of thinking skills, drama, art, speaking & listening should be integrated into RE teaching.

## **Assessment in RE**

Owing to its nature, R.E. is difficult to evaluate, because we cannot judge a child's relationship with God with regard to their faith. However it is the School's policy to assess children's knowledge and understanding against key learning objectives in the Archdiocese Scheme. In keeping with the trend in other subjects we look at RE assessment in two ways:

- Assessment of Learning (Attainment Bands)
- Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning is an ongoing tool used by teachers to ensure that their class are receiving what they need and are able to make judgements about their own learning. This method of ongoing peer/self/teacher assessment means that children will be involved in decisions about what they learn, when, how and where to go next. Teachers use the Learning and Growing assessment statements alongside the Age Related Skills to make accurate judgements.

There is a 4 year cycle for assessment in place at SS John & Monica's and the children are assessed on 3 units per year. Each year the focus of the assessment will change.

The Diocese directs schools about the key focuses for assessment in each academic year.

Prayer is an ongoing area of assessment in each unit, in each year. This is not done in any formal way as we recognise the personal spiritual growth that occurs during prayer.

During the formal assessment of learning staff look at the key LO's of the unit alongside the progression of skills document in order to measure which children have attained a full, partial or no understanding of the concepts, vocabulary etc. Teachers will have three tracked children (WTS, EXS and GDS), one piece of work for each assessment unit will be assessed using the progression of skills document. This assessment will be attached to the piece of work. At the end of the academic year the subject co-ordinator will collect the books for evidence.

Teachers will assess children's work using the 'progression of skills' document. There will be two attainment targets for KS1 and three attainment targets for KS2:

- AT1: Learning about Religion (KU)  
Knowledge and understanding of beliefs, teachings & sources, celebration & ritual, social & moral practices
- AT2: Learning from Religion (ER)  
Reflection on and response to their own experiences in the light of religion, engaging with questions, engaging with own and others beliefs
- AT3: Application of skills (AE)  
Analysis and evaluation

Staff moderate work samples each term to support a better understanding of the levels that children are working at in our school. At SS John & Monica's, we aim for the majority of children to make the expected levels of progress each year so the majority of children are assessed as EXS or GDS.

Children with SEND at our school are fully involved in accessing the RE curriculum. Teachers should show on their planning the activities that they intend to adapt and which methods of support will best enable understanding to be developed. We would expect to see scaffolding, peer support, small group work, 1:1 support, differentiated worksheets, age-appropriate materials, differentiated outcomes, as methods to support the learning and attainment of children who have learning difficulties. Those children with specific learning and physical needs will have their RE needs met on an individual basis appropriate to them.

We routinely teach and check that children know and learn the prayers appropriate to their age, know the Mass responses and follow a simple formula for Confession.

Observation of children's behaviour plays a major part in this evaluatory procedure, eg. changes of moral behaviour, good or bad, are monitored.

Conduct within and outside of school is encouraged to be one of dignity and respect, growing from inner joy and happiness. In the end of year reports to parents teachers specify and comment on the child's knowledge and understanding of our faith in the RE section, but moral behaviour will be included in the general comment section.

## **Marking Books/Work in RE**

The marking of RE books should be completed in accordance with the general assessment rules as outlined in the Marking and Presentation Policy.

All marking should contribute to the teachers understanding of what a child has achieved during the session/unit and where they need to go next to consolidate or develop the learning. Marking must contribute to a child's understanding of how they have achieved and what they need to do to improve or develop. Where appropriate, targets/questions will be set.

Work that forms part of the assessment cycle must be comprehensively marked.

## **Environment and display in RE**

Each classroom is expected to have a display board dedicated to RE which can display permanent sacramental preparation material, work on the Saints, the class CST focus or the display can be changed on a unit by unit basis to show each new unit being covered. The unit specific vocabulary is continually updated to match the current unit being taught. Attention should be paid to the school display policy regarding the content and procedures. It should be apparent to all visitors that we are a Catholic School and this is partially achieved in the use of art and display to show the core Gospel values that drive our school.

All classrooms should have a prayer area that draws the children's attention during moments of prayer, reflection and contemplation.

Class Saints should be prominently displayed and the children must have opportunities to find out about the lives of the saints in RE lessons and during saint celebration days.

We have a Prayer Garden. This is an area of reflection and contemplation.

## **Prayer Life at SS John & Monica's**

Developing a good prayer life is integral to maintaining Christ at the Centre and at SS John & Monica's we look for opportunities to use and create prayer that will support Sacramental preparation, units being studied, liturgical preparation and personal spirituality. There is a legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship in school and we ensure that there is a mix of individual, class, Key Stage and whole school prayer.

Prayer is when we engage in communication with God and it can take many forms and styles – no one way to pray is correct. We pray daily in class at the start and end of the school day, before and after meals, at appropriate times dictated by the liturgical calendar (i.e. Rosary, Stations of the Cross).

Prayer has a structure that should be followed by teachers when teaching children how to write prayers.

- Greeting: YOU (Who are you addressing in the prayer)
- Compliment/Attribute: WHO (What makes them special, characteristics, praise)

- Request: DO (What are you asking for, why)

It is important that we create an environment conducive to prayer for it to be done with meaning. Teachers should use all of the senses in making prayer accessible and valuable. There is a school 'prayer bag' that will be sent home during certain liturgical seasons with the Catholic and Christian children (if a child of another faith requests the prayer bag, they will be able to take it home to share with their family). The children are encouraged to talk to their family members about prayer, when sharing the prayer bag at home, and a comment should be recorded in the book that accompanies the bag (this can be scribed for younger children). When the prayer bag is in school; it can be shared with the whole class during prayer time. All children are encouraged to talk to their teacher about how the prayer bag has been used at home.

Prayers are used for the following reasons:

- Traditional/Formal Prayers: Shared by everyone
- Adoration: When before the blessed Sacrament
- Thanksgiving: Showing thanks to God for all he has done for us
- Contrition: Sorry prayers
- Intercession: When we want God to intervene for us
- Imaginative Prayer: Meditations and scripture based prayer

We do not assess Prayer as a separate unit at SS John & Monica's as we believe it is an important component to all RE units being studied. Children are expected to write, say, act, think prayers and to contribute to the preparation of the Liturgy through prayer. Teachers shouldn't make corrections to children's written prayers as they are personal reflections and the intent is important.

## **Sacramental Preparation**

We work co-operation with the Parish to prepare our children for their Sacraments. The Eucharistic Ministers, parents, and volunteer parishioners help in preparing the younger children in the Parish with activities and prayers during the "teaching " part of the Mass. This means the children and their families feel involved, and the whole community takes responsibility.

Preparation of the Liturgy for the Sacramental Masses, includes choosing the hymns and readings. Children and their families are expected to make a commitment to their faith in order to begin the formal preparation for the Sacraments. This involves attending meetings with the staff who will prepare their children and attending meetings with Father Babu. Children are expected to attend all preparation Masses and complete all necessary work to ensure that they are mentally and spiritually prepared for their Sacraments.

Every two years pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 make their Confirmation. Confirmation preparation begins in the Autumn Term. All preparation for the Eucharist is completed in Year 3.

Catholic children are offered opportunities during the school year to make their Confession (typically Advent and Lent).

## **Catholic Celebrations and Liturgy**

Christmas and Easter are the two main Christian celebrations of the year. All the children are involved in preparing performances and Masses (usually Key Stages at Christmas and sometimes assemblies at Easter) for the whole community. There is a general festive spirit shown in appropriate displays and the making of cards and the organising of parties etc.

During Holy Week (or the week preceding if we are not in school), the children experience 4 key events in the build up to the death and resurrection of Jesus during the day.

All classes in school prepare Masses. The RE Coordinator timetables each class so that over the course of a year each will prepare and lead at least 3 Masses (Reception only plan and lead 2). Masses are themed based on the Feasts and Solemnities that occur during the days that we are in school. Masses are held on Thursday mornings in the school hall and all members of the community are welcome to attend.

## **Class Saints & House Teams**

Each class has chosen a Saint that will form the basis of some class based study into exploring the lives of important Catholic characters and how they have helped to shape our faith. Each class has a special celebration day (Saints Feast Day) and on this day the children are allowed to come off curriculum to do creative cross curricular activities to engage in their “life as Christians” and how the Church is impacted by the people who built it.

The following are our class saints:

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Feast day</b>
<b>Reception</b>	<b>St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> September</b>
<b>Y1</b>	<b>St. Francis</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> October</b>
<b>Y2</b>	<b>St. Therese of Lisieux</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> October</b>
<b>Y3</b>	<b>St. Bernadette</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> April</b>
<b>Y4</b>	<b>St. Cecilia</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> November</b>
<b>Y5</b>	<b>St. John Paul II</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> October</b>
<b>Y6</b>	<b>St. Martin de Porres</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> November</b>

Our children are divided into 4 house teams and these are named after the Patron Saints of Great Britain; St George, St Patrick, St Andrew and St David. Each house has Teacher Leader, as well as Year 6 pupils Leaders who organise meetings and rewards. Merits are counted each month and teams receive rewards.

- St Patrick – (17<sup>th</sup> March)
- St Andrew – (30<sup>th</sup> November)
- St George – (23<sup>rd</sup> April)
- St David – (1<sup>st</sup> March)

## **Multi- Cultural Development**

One of the core aims of a Catholic school is to be inclusive and prepare children for taking their place in a cohesive society. We have a very diverse pupil roll and we like to take opportunities to reflect the many cultural and faith experiences that these children bring to our community.

This is a Catholic School and our aim is to deliver a Catholic based spiritual education to all pupils, however we do acknowledge the presence of other faiths in our community and we give the children an opportunity to find out about these faiths in our planning. Our 10% RE allocation is purely for the delivery of the Strategy and all other discovery about other faiths is done during PSHE. Each class from Year 2 – 6 is timetabled a 6 week time period where they can investigate and find out more about another faith. Our Year R and Year 1 pupils are too young to appreciate these sessions and so they maintain a focus on developing their emergent understanding of Catholicism.

Currently the multi faith PSHE exposure is as follows:

- Year 2: Sikhism
- Year 3: Judaism
- Year 4: Buddhism
- Year 5: Hinduism
- Year 6: Islam

Each class has a small supply of artefacts linked to the study of other faiths in PSHE, that may support children's awareness of the similarities and differences between these other faiths and Catholicism. Scriptural units reaffirm the closeness of Judaism to Christianity and also the links between the three monotheistic faiths. Visits to places of worship are organised for each of these year groups.

## **Curriculum Skills to be developed though RE**

Religious Education is cross curricular and means the pupils do not only acquire knowledge and develop understanding in RE, but also improve their general educational skills.

### **Investigation skills**

Children should be taught to:

- identify and ask relevant questions.
- observe accurately.
- listen carefully.
- follow procedures.
- know where to look for evidence.
- gather information from a variety of sources e.g. texts, artefacts, photographs, art, symbols, costumes etc.
- read a variety of prose and poetry.
- find references in texts e.g. the Bible.
- recognise sequence.

### **Interpretation skills**

The children should be taught to :

- categorise and classify.
- interpret the language of religion, signs and symbols.
- develop hypotheses.
- reflect on and interpret their own experiences.

- see life from other peoples' point of view.

### **Communication skills**

The children should be taught to:

- make a sensible and ordered presentation of information.
- use a variety of means to express ideas.
- express themselves through factual and creative writing.
- express themselves through drawing and painting.
- design diagrams, charts or models.
- know religious language and use it appropriately.
- exercise imagination through role play.

### **Critical Skills**

The children should be taught to:

- question their own point of view.
- form reasoned opinions based on evidence.
- express these opinions in debate.
- weigh evidence.
- assess arguments.
- make connections between life and faith.
- differentiate between objective and subjective judgements.

### **Affective and Social Judgements**

The children should be taught to:

- relate well with others.
- work in a group.
- exercise empathy.
- participate in community prayer and celebration.
- accommodate social, cultural and faith differences
- be aware of national and global issues.

### **Evaluation skills**

The children should be taught to:

- distinguish between rules, opinions, principles and beliefs.
- make reasoned value judgements.
- make responsible choices.

The programmes of study help to develop an awareness of right and wrong, and encourage the ability to make right choices. They help to develop other essential social skills, such as empathy, and the ability to sympathise and express other emotions such as love, and help to develop a strong sense of responsibility .

## **Links with the Parish and Other Schools**

We have our sister school of St. Martin de Porres within the Parish. It is a similarly small school, with a mixture of intake, so we have a lot in common, although each school has its own identity and ethos. We communicate with each other and are supportive of each other.

We belong to the Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership which allows us to get to know other Catholic Schools and enables us to work together in our common purpose of educating all our children to the highest standards academically, socially, morally and spiritually.

We participate in sporting events arranged by BCSSA (Birmingham Catholic Schools Sports Association) which enables us to create partnerships with schools within our consortium and across Birmingham. Additionally, we are in partnership with our local Catholic Secondary School; Bishop Challoner, where we attend regular School Games Competitions with local Catholic Primary Schools, all of which is arranged by our SGO (School Games Organiser).

We keep contact and good relationships with the feeder Secondary schools to which our children transfer. We welcome teachers from those schools and we sometimes attend events to which we are invited at those schools. We have especially close links with Bishop Challoner School.

We are actively involved with Parish initiatives and fund raising. All staff support Parish events.

### **RE Coordinator Roles & responsibilities**

- Supporting the planning of Religious Education content using the Diocesan strategy as the key planning tool.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and looking at ways to develop this.
- Overseeing the delivery of RE by others in the school through observation, book trawls, moderation meetings, planning scrutiny, analysis of assessment data etc.
- Overseeing the delivery of Internal and External INSET for RE.
- Holding regular staff meetings for those delivering RE in the school to support all aspects of the strategy and spiritual development.
- Liaising with the schools RE advisor (David Haris) about developments in RE teaching and assessment.
- Liaising with Father Mario and Staff at St Martin De Porres about Sacramental Preparation.
- Designing, writing and maintaining the policy documents for RE.
- Preparing a long term strategic action plan for RE
- Monitoring Assessment, Reporting and Recording of RE in the school.
- Keeping the Governing Body informed about teaching and learning in RE.
- Supporting the SMT in completion of the Section 48 RE SEF.
- Auditing, organising, maintaining, and replacing stock as necessary.
- Making sure that the delivery of RE contributes to the school's aims.
- Supporting the religious education and spiritual development of staff and students;
- Promoting the liturgical life of the school
- Encouraging prayerfulness in the school community
- Reporting developments in all the above areas and being accountable for all the above to the Headteacher

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