

R.E Policy



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Our Mission

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Religious Education is central to the life and mission of our Catholic school. It enables pupils to encounter Jesus Christ, deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith, engage thoughtfully with Scripture and the teaching of the Church, and discern how faith informs life.

Policy and Diocesan Framework

This policy is informed by the Religious Education Directory, To Know You More Clearly; To love You more dearly - The Prayer & Liturgy Directory for Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales; the requirements of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales; and the directives and guidance of the Archbishop of Birmingham and Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.

The school recognises Religious Education as a core subject within the curriculum of a Catholic school. Curriculum Religious Education is distinct from, while closely connected to, the wider prayer, liturgical and sacramental life of the school.

The aims of our School

SS John and Monica's is a Catholic Primary School whose primary aim is the education of Catholic children. We are situated within a wonderfully diverse community and welcome children from Christian traditions and other faith backgrounds who wish to receive a Catholic education.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a welcoming atmosphere in which pupils encounter the Catholic faith with confidence, respect and openness. We seek to work closely with parents and carers as the primary educators of their children and with the parish and wider Catholic community.

We have a missionary responsibility to make Christ available to those who wish to know Him and to provide opportunities for pupils to grow in faith.

We have an educational responsibility to provide high-quality Religious Education with Christ at its centre.

We have a spiritual responsibility to support pupils' prayer life and spiritual development.

We have a responsibility to our parish community and to the wider Catholic Church.

We have a responsibility to society to promote dignity, service, openness to diversity and social cohesion.

Leadership and Governance

The Head Teacher and Governing Body have responsibility for ensuring that Religious Education is given the status, curriculum time, staffing, resources and leadership appropriate to a core subject within a Catholic school. They ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Religious Education Directory and the expectations and guidance of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Governors receive appropriate information about the quality of Religious Education, pupil outcomes, staff formation and professional development, prayer and liturgy, and the Catholic life and mission of the school. The RE Coordinator supports leaders and governors in evaluating provision and identifying priorities for continued improvement.

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

Religious Education is a core subject in our Catholic school and is allocated 10% curriculum time each week. This entitlement is for curriculum Religious Education and is additional to the time devoted to prayer and liturgy, Masses, retreats and sacramental preparation.

From September 2026, the school follows the Religious Education Directory (RED), 'To Know You More Clearly', through the Archdiocese of Birmingham's Discerning Disciples curriculum.

Discerning Disciples is structured through six curriculum branches: Creation and Covenant; Prophecy and Promise; Galilee to Jerusalem; Desert to Garden; To the Ends of the Earth; and Dialogue and Encounter. The branches are revisited through the years with increasing depth and challenge.

Teaching is framed through four knowledge lenses: Hear, Believe, Celebrate and Live. Pupils are supported to develop the ways of knowing: Understand, Discern and Respond.

RE teaching gives appropriate weight to secure theological knowledge, Scripture and Church teaching, thoughtful dialogue, discernment and response. Creative expression, art, drama, speaking and listening and appropriate cross-curricular links may support the RE learning, but the religious learning remains central.

Lessons should begin from what pupils already know and make deliberate connections to prior learning. Teachers should use dialogue, retrieval and explicit teaching to establish secure knowledge before pupils are asked to discern or respond.

Curriculum and Progression

The Discerning Disciples curriculum provides a coherent sequence of learning across Reception to Year 6. Teachers should use the official diocesan planning for the relevant branch and year group as the principal planning source.

Each unit identifies intended Know, Understand/Discern and Respond learning, Direct Knowledge Statements, Scripture or other textual references, key vocabulary, suggested discovery questions and teacher notes. Teachers should teach these faithfully and should not introduce additional theology, Scripture, vocabulary or programme terminology without a clear reason and, where appropriate, agreement with the RE Coordinator.

Learning should build cumulatively. Teachers should identify the knowledge pupils need to retrieve, misconceptions that may need addressing, the new understanding being developed and what is intentionally left for later in the sequence.

The curriculum enables pupils to encounter Scripture and Church teaching, understand Catholic belief, participate in prayer and liturgical life, and consider how faith is lived.

Lesson Planning and Delivery

Planning should be completed from the official Discerning Disciples planning for the relevant branch and year group.

Each lesson should identify the relevant Direct Knowledge Statement(s), intended Discern learning and Respond opportunity where these are provided by the official planning.

Teachers should make the purpose of each teaching episode clear: pupils should understand something after it that they did not understand before it.

Dialogue should be used from the beginning and throughout the lesson to activate prior knowledge, explore ideas and support discernment.

Teachers should explicitly teach the Direct Knowledge Statements and provide opportunities for pupils to rehearse, recall and apply them.

Discovery questions should promote thoughtful discussion rather than simply elicit factual answers. Teachers should listen for misconceptions and use questioning to deepen reasoning.

Scaffolding should enable pupils to move from secure knowledge towards meaningful discernment. Support should be reduced where appropriate as pupils become more secure.

Hinge questions should be used at appropriate points to check whether pupils have understood the important concept before moving on.

Pupils should have opportunities to record or communicate a response to the learning. Responses may be written, drawn, spoken and scribed, or expressed in another appropriate form.

RE is not about quantity of recorded work. The quality of religious thinking, secure knowledge, discernment and response is more important than producing lengthy written outcomes.

Assessment in RE

Assessment in Religious Education focuses on pupils' developing knowledge, understanding, discernment and response. It does not attempt to assess a pupil's personal relationship with God or measure faith.

Assessment within Discerning Disciples is primarily formative and is built into teaching. Teachers use four assessment approaches:

- Hinge Questions: carefully designed multiple-choice questions used during lessons to check whether pupils have understood the important concept and to identify misconceptions. Teachers use responses to decide whether to move on, reteach or provide further explanation.
- Assessing Discern: teachers assess the quality of pupils' thinking and response to the official Discern intention. This may be demonstrated through discussion, oral reasoning, drawing, practical response or recorded work, as appropriate to the age and learning.
- End-of-unit assessments: at the end of an appropriate unit, pupils complete an assessment opportunity that checks the key learning from the unit and provides evidence of what has been retained and understood.
- Direct Knowledge Statements: these are the key knowledge statements identified in the official planning. Pupils should have repeated opportunities to learn, rehearse and retrieve

them. Teachers should use pupils' ability to recall and explain the Direct Knowledge Statements as evidence of secure knowledge.

Assessment information should be used to identify what pupils know securely, what needs to be revisited and what the next stage of learning should be.

Prayer and personal spiritual development are integral to the life of the school and are not treated as a separate attainment measure.

Marking and Recording in RE

Marking should help teachers understand what pupils have achieved and what needs to be consolidated or developed.

Recorded work should reflect the intended religious learning. Where appropriate, teacher feedback or questions should help pupils deepen their understanding or discernment.

Children may demonstrate the same core learning in different ways. Drawing, oral response with adult scribing, practical response and writing are all appropriate when they allow the intended learning to be demonstrated.

Work used as an end-of-unit assessment should be reviewed carefully so that it provides useful evidence of pupils' knowledge and discernment.

SEND and Inclusion

Children with SEND are fully entitled to access the RE curriculum. Teachers should preserve the same core religious learning wherever possible while reducing barriers to participation and expression.

Appropriate support may include symbol-supported vocabulary, visual choices, oral rehearsal, partner- or adult-supported discussion, sequencing, matching, drawing, reduced writing, sentence stems, word banks and adult scribing.

Teachers should avoid simply giving pupils less of the same task. Adaptations should address the barrier while retaining the essential theological knowledge and opportunity for discernment.

Our diverse pupil community is welcomed and respected. Catholic Religious Education is taught from the perspective of the Catholic faith while pupils are encouraged to listen respectfully to others and to recognise the diversity of experiences within the school community.

For pupils accessing the Woodland Hub, RE provision will be provided by following the diocesan SEND planning document, while preserving pupils' entitlement to the essential religious learning and appropriate opportunities to understand, discern and respond.

Environment and display in RE

Each classroom should have an RE display or clearly identified RE area. Displays may include current unit vocabulary, Scripture, work demonstrating pupils' learning, Catholic Social Teaching, saints or sacramental preparation as appropriate.

Classrooms should have a prayer area that draws pupils' attention during prayer, reflection and contemplation.

Class saints should be prominently displayed and pupils should have opportunities to learn about the lives of the saints through RE and appropriate celebration days.

The Prayer Garden provides an additional area for reflection and contemplation.

Prayer and Liturgy at SS John & Monica's

Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life and mission of SS John & Monica's. Provision is planned and provided in accordance with To Love You More Dearly - The Prayer & Liturgy Directory for Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales, together with the requirements and guidance of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The school fulfils the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship within this distinctly Catholic framework.

Prayer enables pupils and adults to enter into relationship with God and takes a rich variety of forms within the Catholic tradition. Pupils pray daily, including at the beginning and end of the school day and around mealtimes, and encounter forms of prayer appropriate to the liturgical year, including the Rosary and Stations of the Cross. Prayer and liturgy may take place individually, in class, in key stages and as a whole school community, with pupils increasingly supported to participate, prepare and lead in age-appropriate ways.

When teaching pupils to compose prayers, teachers may use an age-appropriate structure to support confidence and understanding, while recognising that Catholic prayer includes a wide range of traditional, scriptural, liturgical, contemplative and spontaneous forms.

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| • 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) |

The environment for prayer and liturgy should be purposeful, reverent and accessible, helping pupils to recognise that they are entering a sacred time and space. Appropriate use may be made of Scripture, religious images and symbols, music, silence, gesture and the senses. A school prayer bag may be sent home during appropriate liturgical seasons to support prayer with families. Catholic and Christian pupils are encouraged to use it with their families; pupils of other faiths may also take it home where requested and appropriate. Families may share a photograph or comment through ClassDojo, and pupils are encouraged to talk about how the prayer bag has supported prayer 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

Prayer and personal spiritual development are not assessed as measures of attainment. Pupils are given regular opportunities to encounter, participate in, prepare and lead prayer and liturgy in ways appropriate to their age and stage. Personal prayers are treated respectfully as expressions of prayer rather than marked as ordinary written work; where teaching focuses on religious knowledge or understanding connected with prayer, that curriculum learning may be assessed separately.

Sacramental Preparation

The school works in cooperation with the parish to prepare pupils for the Sacraments. Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are prepared for in Year 3, and Confirmation is prepared for within the school's established two-year cycle in Years 5 and 6.

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 preparation Masses and complete all necessary work to ensure that they are mentally and spiritually prepared for their Sacraments.

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

Sacramental preparation is additional to the RE curriculum and takes place outside the 10% weekly curriculum time allocated to Religious Education.

Catholic Celebrations and Liturgy

The liturgical year shapes the prayer and worshipping life of the school. Pupils encounter and celebrate the seasons and feasts of the Church, including Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost, as well as appropriate solemnities, feast days and memorials. Masses, prayer and liturgical celebrations enable pupils to participate in the life of the Church and to deepen their understanding of the Paschal Mystery. Displays, music, Scripture, symbols and other activities should support the religious meaning of these seasons and celebrations.

During Holy Week, or in the preceding week when necessary, pupils are given age-appropriate opportunities to enter more deeply into the events of Christ's Passion, death and Resurrection through Scripture, prayer, reflection and liturgy.

All classes contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school. The RE Coordinator timetables opportunities for Years 2 to 6 to prepare and lead at least three Masses during the year, while Reception prepares and leads one Mass in the Summer Term. Celebrations are linked appropriately to the liturgical calendar, including relevant feasts and solemnities. Mass is ordinarily celebrated fortnightly on Thursday mornings in the school hall, and members of the school and parish community are warmly welcomed.

Class Saints & House Teams

Each class has a patron saint. Pupils learn about the lives, witness and example of the saints and consider how their lives demonstrate discipleship, holiness and faithful response to God's

call. Each class marks its saint's feast day in an age-appropriate way through prayer, learning and celebration, helping pupils to understand the communion of saints and the continuing witness of holy men and women in the life of the Church.

The following are our class saints:

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

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 – (17th March)
- St Andrew – (30th November)
- St George – (23rd April)
- St David – (1st March)

Other Religions and Worldviews

SS John and Monica's is a Catholic school within a diverse community. We acknowledge and respect the religious, non-religious and cultural backgrounds that pupils bring to school, while remaining clear about the school's Catholic identity and the confessional nature of Catholic Religious Education.

Religious Education is taught from the Catholic tradition. Opportunities to encounter other religions and worldviews should be accurate, respectful and appropriate to the purpose of the curriculum, following the Religious Education Directory and official diocesan planning. Where learning about religions and worldviews occurs through other curriculum areas, this should be clearly distinguished from the school's Catholic Religious Education curriculum.

All year groups encounter other religions and worldviews through Branch 6, Dialogue and Encounter, of the Discerning Disciples curriculum. This learning is enriched, where appropriate, through carefully planned visits and encounters from Year 2 to Year 6 that promote accurate knowledge, respectful dialogue and understanding.

Curriculum Skills Developed through RE

Through RE, pupils develop the ability to listen, question, interpret, communicate, reason, reflect, make connections and respond thoughtfully.

Particular emphasis is placed on understanding religious language, engaging with Scripture and Church teaching, asking meaningful questions, considering different perspectives respectfully, giving reasons for ideas, making connections between faith and life, and responding appropriately to moral and spiritual questions.

These skills support pupils in becoming knowledgeable, thoughtful and discerning disciples while also contributing to their wider development.

The curriculum supports pupils in considering moral questions in the light of Scripture, Catholic teaching and the dignity of the human person. It develops empathy, compassion, responsibility and the ability to give reasons for choices, while encouraging pupils to recognise how Christian faith calls people to love God and neighbour and to act for the common good.

Catholic Social Teaching and Faith in Action

Catholic Social Teaching is woven through the life and curriculum of the school. Pupils are helped to understand the dignity of every human person, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, care for creation, the dignity of work, participation and the preferential option for the poor, in age-appropriate ways and in keeping with diocesan and Church guidance.

Through RE, prayer and liturgy, charitable action, pupil leadership and engagement with the parish and wider community, pupils are encouraged to connect Catholic teaching with lived discipleship. Action should grow from secure understanding and reflection so that service and social action are rooted in faith rather than treated as stand-alone activities.

Links with the Parish and Other Schools

The school works closely with the parish and with partner Catholic schools. Links may include Masses, sacramental preparation, parish initiatives, charitable activities and opportunities to participate in the wider life of the Church.

The school belongs to the Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership AND THE Tolkien Group of Schools and maintains links with local Catholic secondary schools and other educational partners. 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 fundraising, with all staff supporting Parish events.

Head Teacher and Governing Body Responsibilities

The Head Teacher ensures that Religious Education, prayer and liturgy, and the Catholic life and mission of the school are appropriately led, resourced and monitored, and that staff receive the formation and professional development needed to fulfil their responsibilities.

The Governing Body provides strategic oversight and appropriate challenge, ensuring that statutory, Bishops' Conference and diocesan requirements are met. Governors should receive sufficient evidence to evaluate the quality, status and impact of Religious Education and the wider Catholic life of the school.

RE Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities – RE Lead Mrs R. Doyle

- Supporting staff in the planning and delivery of Religious Education using Discerning Disciples and the official diocesan planning as the key curriculum source.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of RE teaching and identifying ways to develop provision.
- Overseeing delivery through appropriate observation, book review, moderation, planning scrutiny and analysis of assessment information.
- Providing or coordinating professional development and support for staff.
- Liaising with the diocesan RE adviser and parish regarding curriculum developments and sacramental preparation.
- Maintaining the RE policy and supporting the school's strategic development of Religious Education.
- Monitoring assessment, reporting and recording in RE.
- Keeping the governing body informed about Religious Education.
- Supporting the school's Catholic identity, prayer life and liturgical development.

Policy Review

Policy Completed by: Mrs R. Doyle

Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027 (or sooner if statutory, Bishops' Conference or diocesan guidance changes)