



The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



Religious Education Policy

Scope:	Federation		
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Next Review:	Spring 2025	Annually, or when regulations change.	
Approved:	EHT		Curriculum Committee
	Governor	M. Dann	



The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



'With God all things are possible'

'Where there is love, there is God'

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will give every child the best possible education because each individual is uniquely created and precious to God. As a Catholic community, guided by the Holy Spirit, we will follow the example of Jesus Christ in all aspects of daily life.

With the help of God's love, the Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will seek to develop the whole child. Each child is uniquely created and precious to God and it is the Federation's mission, guided by the Holy Spirit, to nurture each child's spiritual, moral and academic growth.

Inspired by the teachings of Christ we will...

- Develop our children's faith, spirituality and joy in the love of God
- Educate our children to the highest standards thus realising their own potential
- Instil in our children the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed and take pride in their achievements recognising we each have special gifts and talents
- Encourage everyone to be more than they thought possible, in a secure and loving environment
- Promote a caring community where we will all behave well. We will be dignified in our actions, demonstrating good manners, tolerance, kindness and generosity to ourselves and others
- Prepare our children today to become tomorrow's responsible and independent individuals equipped to face life's challenges
- Ensure our Federation is a happy, safe and welcoming place where we all enjoy learning, work hard, support one another and do our best
- Create an active partnership of love, joy and high expectations between children, parents, carers, staff, governors, parishes and the wider community

Inclusion statement

The school community will ensure that ALL children irrespective of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender (including those who identify as transgender), sexual orientation, ability, special educational need, disability, faith or religion, age, culture, socio-economic or home background will have equal access to the breadth of this policy.

The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter and the school will endeavour to promote their individuality. Children with learning disabilities and gifted and talented children will be allowed to express themselves according to their ability. Work will be differentiated to meet their needs and achievements will be celebrated.

This Policy will be implemented through on going consultation with all members of the school community and developments in law or statutory guidance.

Introduction

The Federation of St. Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools is in the parishes of Wallington and South Croydon. However, schools in the Federation also welcome pupils from parishes in Sutton, Waddon and further afield. Up to 25% of pupils may come from other Christian faith backgrounds or other faiths or from a background of no religious faith but whose parents are in sympathy with the mission of the school.

PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE

“The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients. This is why there are so many subjects – because development is the results of different elements that act together and stimulate intelligence, knowledge, the emotions, the body, and so on.”

“If something is true, it is good and beautiful; if it is beautiful; it is good and true; if it is good, it is true and it is beautiful. And together, these elements enable us to grow and help us to love life, even when we are not well, even in the midst of many problems. True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life.” (Pope Francis, May 2014)

Religious Education including moral, social, spiritual and cultural education is the corner stone of our mission as teachers, Governors, pupils and parents in Catholic schools. By our teaching we should evangelise, proclaim the Good News and catechise, and help the children know and grow in their faith and developing their spirituality.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Religious Education at our schools is a journey through the understanding and development of the Catholic faith involving every member of the school community alongside the children's families and respective parishes. In addition, other faiths are also studied.

Religious Education is an academic subject in its own right in the curriculum and is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other core subject, with additional emphasis on the specialness of the topics studied.

It is our aim to provide all children with the necessary skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding to assist them through their faith journey, enabling them to progress towards Catholic Christian maturity.

We aim to provide all children with the opportunities to develop a closer, more personal relationship with God, whilst developing an understanding of their own values and importance as individuals, and respect for others, other faiths and other cultures.

We aim to enable all children to become more familiar with the language, symbols, signs and gestures of religious belief, and to practise their faith and worship within the environment of a Catholic Christian community.

It is our aim, through the use of the “Come and See” programme and other resources, to provide all children with a framework for life based upon the truth and wisdom of the living Gospel and sound educational principles. In doing so, we will give the children a basic understanding of the doctrines of the Catholic faith which are appropriate to their age, level of development, experiences and background.

The Catholic **Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2023** - *‘To know You more clearly’* states the aims of Religious Education to be as follows:

Article 1 - Oversight of religious education

Formation and education provided in schools is subject to the authority of the Church (can.397, 806). It is for the Episcopal Conference to issue general norms concerning formation and education in the Catholic religion and for the diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it (can.±804).

Article 2 - Aims of religious education

The aims of religious education are:

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;
2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church’s moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils’ imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

Article 3 - Outcome of religious education

The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills - appropriate to their age and capacity - to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Article 4 - Religious education as the heart of the curriculum

1. Religious education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
2. Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.
3. Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.
4. In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.
5. In each year of sixth form schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 5% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

The Religious Education Curriculum

The Religious Education Programme

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools follow the 'Come and See' programme for religious teaching. In the life of faith in our Catholic schools, religious education plays a central and vital part. At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. We express and explore this vision in religious education. Religious Education is not one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process at the Federation. The beliefs and values studied in religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school.

Our religious education curriculum is delivered in line with our Teaching and Learning Policy which reflects our Catholic ethos and values. The outcome of Catholic religious education *"is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills - appropriate to their age and capacity - to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life."* (Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools 2023)

The whole school shares the thematic approach to the teaching of Religious Education, although "Come and See" is taught as individual lessons in each class. Where cross-curricular links arise, however, these are fully developed, initially at the planning stage of the process. Saints' days, Holy Days of Obligation, and other festivals are celebrated not only in Religious Education lessons, but through assemblies, Mass, liturgies and services.

The school places special emphasis upon Our Lady, with focus within the months of October and May. In addition to these, the school focuses upon the preparation times of Advent and Lent in traditional style. Religious Education is also celebrated through display work, especially in the Infant and Junior halls,

and links are made across subjects too. Examples of this include the annual Nativity Plays, nativity liturgies and Carol Services.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools celebrate our community's cultural diversity and teach the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith and other faiths through our PSHE and RSHE curriculum. In addition to this, two other faiths are studied each academic year in each year group, in accordance with the "Come and See" scheme.

Pupils in Year 3 prepare for the reception of first Sacraments during their time in Year 3. Whilst recognising that sacramental preparation is the first responsibility of the home and parish, the Federation is happy to work with the feeder parishes to support this in class.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

Catholic social teaching (CST) is rooted in Scripture, formed by the wisdom of Church leaders, and influenced by grassroots movements. It is our moral compass, guiding us on how to live out our faith in the world.

Catholic Social Teaching is intertwined throughout the 'Come and See' scheme of work. Children are regularly exposed to the CST principles in lessons and Collective Worship and asked how they can promote them to make a better and fairer world.

The seven principles of CST

- Dignity
- Solidarity
- The common good
- The option for the poor
- Peace
- Creation and Environment
- The dignity of work and participation

Our faith calls us to love God and to love our neighbours in every situation, especially our sisters and brothers living in poverty. Following in the footsteps of Christ, we hope to make present in our unjust and broken world, the justice, love and peace of God.

Modern Catholic social teaching is said to have originated in 1891 with the encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*. Since then, a wealth of teaching continue to give new life to the Scriptures and shape the Church's response to our modern world. From these Catholic social teaching documents and encyclicals we derive core principles.

Dignity

We believe every human person is made in the image and likeness of God. This is a gift that we all share as fellow human beings; we are all infinitely loved by our Creator.

God is present in every human person, regardless of religion, culture, nationality, orientation or economic standing. Each one of us is unique and beautiful. We are called to treat every person and every creature with loving respect.

Solidarity

Solidarity arises when we remember that we belong to each other. We reflect on this in a special way at Mass. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognise Christ in the poorest."

The Common Good

The common good means that the fruits of the earth belong to everyone. No one should be excluded from the gifts of creation. Pope Paul VI spoke about this 50 years ago in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*.

Option for the poor

The option for the poor reminds us of God's preferential love for the poorest and most vulnerable people. God's love is universal; he does not side with oppressors, but loves the humble.

Peace

Peace is a cornerstone of our faith. Christ, the Prince of Peace, sacrificed himself with love on the cross.

Creation and environment

In the first pages of the Bible we read how God created the sun and the stars, the water and earth, and every creature. We believe Christ is the redeemer of all creation.

The dignity of work and participation

The dignity of work has been a key principle of Catholic social teaching from the very beginning.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labour). He shone a light on the injustice and exploitation of workers by the rich during the Industrial Revolution. He advocated for workers to join forces and fight against inhuman conditions.

Since then, Church teaching has upheld the dignity of work and participation. The human person should always come before the pursuit of profit. Workers have the right to join trade unions, to a just wage, to spend time with their families and to rest. Work is an essential part of our human dignity and everyone has the right to participate.

FAITH Values

The work of our Federation is underpinned by our FAITH Values. We are committed to developing a community where our schools will be places of excellence. We will provide outstanding opportunities for all members of the community to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Gospel values whilst serving as witnesses to Christ. We will develop our schools to ensure learning opportunities and outcomes are based on first class teaching and leadership. As a community, we seek to ensure that these values are lived-out in all aspects of our lives.

Family - we seek to act fairly and responsibly in our relationships to ensure all are welcomed, nurtured and successful.

Aspiration - to provide the highest standards of teaching and learning so all in the schools' communities excel.

Inclusiveness - we believe that all are created in the image of God and therefore we will respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person, promoting equality and celebrating diversity.

Tolerance - to develop schools where there is true understanding of culture, respect for difference and special care for those most in need.

Harmony - to develop the schools as faith communities where the Gospel values of truth, honesty, forgiveness and reconciliation are lived.

Time Allocation

Religious Education takes up 10% of the curriculum time, as mandated by the Bishops of England and Wales.

Assemblies and liturgies last for twenty to thirty minutes, weekly Mass lasts for approximately 1 hour, with around 30 minute's preparation time for each. Collective class prayer and reflection is part of the daily routine.

Planning

The long, medium term and short term planning are informed by the use of the Curriculum Directory and the "Come and See" scheme of work.

Teachers' long, medium and short term planning is a collaborative process which assists continuity and progression. We take account of the liturgical calendar to assist us in planning assemblies, Masses, liturgies and other acts of worship.

The Federation has also adopted the Ten:Ten 'Life to the Full' scheme of work to support children's learning about Relationships, Sex and Health Education. Further information about this aspect of the RE / PSHE curriculum is available in the Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy.

Assessment

Age Related Expectations are used to assess pupils' work:

- assessment of pupils' work is a necessary part of the learning process;
- Its purposes include the affirmation of attainment and achievement, the necessary recording and reporting of pupil progress, and helping the pupil take the next steps in learning;
- The Key Performance Indicators in each year group's assessment framework enables teachers to assess work in relation to that of other children of the same age.

The assessment framework is based in two fundamental attainment areas: "learning about religion" (AT1) and "learning from religion" (AT2). To do this we assess how children:

- listen
- ask relevant questions
- respond
- interact with others
- be still
- understand
- remember

We do this by talking with and listening to the pupils, by observing and by professional dialogue with our colleagues. Each child's work is assessed at the end of a topic (half termly) against the Key Performance Indicators for that year group.

Children are able to work at the greater depth standard in RE if they can independently link their learning to other biblical stories, world news, daily life and other faiths.

Evidence of attainment in the strands of Attainment Target 2 is found throughout the process of "Come and See" in the child's work and in other aspects of life in the school.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years assess using the Southwark Education Commission's Key Performance Indicators for ARE. The children learn about God our Father, Jesus and The Holy Spirit and participate in important festivals in the Liturgical Year. They are encouraged to describe experiences, identify their own feelings and those of others, demonstrate curiosity and encourage awe and wonder, and to be still and think quietly.

The Reception Year group assess in line with "Come and See" and the Southwark Education Commission's Key Performance Indicators for ARE, and also make observations on the children primarily in:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Understanding the World: People and Communities

Record Keeping

Teachers annotate weekly plans with assessment of learning for pupils. Pupil work is moderated each term and the RE Subject Leader keeps record of this in the RE Subject Leader Portfolio. Pupils are assessed formatively after each lesson and topic and then a termly summative assessment is provided to the RE Subject Leader and Senior Leadership Team. The RE Subject Leader runs a rolling programme of book scrutiny and informs class teachers and the SLT of strengths and areas for improvement. Termly data is uploaded to SIMS and the RE Subject Leader and SLT analyse the data for both class and cohort, breaking data down into specific groups such as SEND and PPG.

In the EYFS, nursery and reception classes compile a special class book which contains photographs of children's learning, their prayers and a commentary of the children's developing understanding of their faith and the Church, with evidence of pupil voice.

Photographs of displays and significant events within school and the wider community are kept in the RE portfolio.

Reporting

Reporting in Religious Education provides feedback to pupils on their achievement and progress. It is a means of sharing information with parents which further contributes to our partnership with them. It offers opportunities for discussion and collaboration, developing the part played by both in the child's education.

Reports on pupil progress are given in writing to parents annually. Class teachers may also give verbal reports to parents during parent/pupil/teacher consultations.

Social, Moral and Cultural Development

The Federation Mission Statement provides the basis of our aims and objectives for the social and moral development of our pupils. This is supplemented by the Golden Rules, Inclusion Policies, PSHE Policy, RSHE Policy and Positive Behaviour Policy. Our aims and objectives for the social and moral development of our pupils is also implicit in our curriculum policies.

Children are involved with devising and implementing the codes of behaviour within their own class and within the school. They contribute to the planning of sanctions and rewards through the use of 'Golden Rules', and achievement is celebrated during the fortnightly celebration assembly, Star of the Week. This may be academic, social, or moral achievement. Pupils from each class will also be awarded a star for living out the FAITH value of that particular half term.

Teachers are expected to be role models and reflect the Gospel values in all their dealings with all members of our school community.

Spiritual Development

It is all too easy in a climate where skills and knowledge, standards and targets prevail to neglect the essential of spiritual development. Most young children have a natural sense of wonder and awe - the gift of the Holy Spirit, but this must be nurtured particularly as they are growing up in a society where they are experience the best and worst of technology. We aim to encourage spiritual growth by:

1. Teaching children the value of silent reflection in circle time and in personal prayer.
2. Providing opportunity to experience God's gifts to us in our school environment - growing plants and vegetables, watching the tadpoles change to frogs and newts, nurturing the caterpillars as they change to butterflies.
3. Using music, art and dance to express our feelings and re-action.
4. Celebrating our joy and sharing our sorrow in everyday events.
5. Giving opportunity to observe, listen and reflect.

Each class has a prayer table which is the focus of class daily worship. Opportunity is given for individual children to contribute to and reflect there.

Cultural Development

For pupils growing up in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society, it is important that they have experience of different cultural experiences - in Music and Art in particular - and in other areas of the curriculum, including Science, History and Geography. The children should be taught to celebrate our differences and similarities and to celebrate their own cultural heritage. Many of our pupils come from Ethnic Minority backgrounds and it is important for staff to understand this way of life. One of the best ways to introduce children to other faith cultures is through celebrating and learning the stories of major festivals especially those which are common to all, and through cooking and sampling food of different cultures. This learning is also underpinned by the Federations PSHE curriculum which teaches children about fundamental British Values.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education

Young children need the security of good and loving relationships with their parents, relations and school community. Sadly, even before they start school, some have poor experience of family life. It is important for staff to be sensitive to children's differing experiences while giving stability and security in school. Although good relationships in school cannot replace those of the family, at least the children will be able to develop self-esteem and care for others, enabling them to grow, knowing that each person and relationship is a unique gift from God. The Federation uses the scheme "Life to the Full" to provide the curriculum for Relationships, Sex and Health Education. The scheme Life to the Full is

endorsed by the Bishops' Conference. For additional information about the RSHE curriculum, please see the RSHE Policy.

Home-School-Parish Links

Parents are the first educators of their children and it is our mission as a Federation community to help them as their children grow in knowledge and love. Parents and carers are provided with an overview of the curriculum their children will be learning each term; this includes the upcoming RE topics. Parents and carers are always warmly invited to join us and share with their children: Mass, Celebration of the Word (formally known as liturgies), assemblies, rosary, and liturgical celebrations at Christmas, Lent, Easter and Advent.

We aim to develop strong links with the local community. We provide work experience opportunities for many local schools.

Our local parish priests know our families and community well. Fr Patrick and Father Emmanuel celebrate Mass at St Elphege's each week and in some instances every two weeks. Pupils at Regina Coeli celebrate Holy Days of Obligation as a whole school and every two weeks, the pupils in KS2 celebrate Mass at the local church.

We also welcome other members of our parishes who come to help us in school. We support families or individuals in need through our Federation Faith Fund. We organise support for the homeless charities such as Sutton Night Watch during October and we regularly support larger charities including CAFOD, NSPCC, Missio, Link for Hope, MacMillan and Poppy Day. Each year we try to balance our support for the smaller charities with those who have a larger network. The Federation also provide continuous support to world charities.