

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy



Date adopted: Spring 2024

Review date: Spring 2027

Staff responsible: Angela Beirne

“Education in a Catholic setting, whether school, college or parish sets about equipping the learner for spiritual growth and an increase in understanding of the faith as they grow in maturity and

wisdom. This is the foundation of the Catholic understanding of education and is central to the Church's mission."

Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor
Education Sunday January 2005

The purpose of our policy for religious education and collective worship is to guide and inform school practice in working towards this outcome.

Content of a policy on religious education and collective worship

Context statement

St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Beckenham takes pupils primarily from the parishes of St. Edmund's Beckenham, St. Mark's West Wickham and Our Lady of the Rosary Hayes.

Our Mission

- In our Catholic School we believe that the first professional responsibility of the teacher in the classroom is to affirm the personal dignity of each member of the class in all tasks. Who we are is unique and sacred. It is important and contributes to what is achieved.
- We strive to show respect and appreciation for all our pupils and their families, and in turn, expect it from them. As a staff we aim to show respect and appreciation for each other as individuals.

Philosophy

As a Catholic school, we are not only concerned with helping children to fulfil their academic potential; we also have a responsibility to promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

We believe that Religious Education has a vital place in the school curriculum. Understanding religious beliefs helps children to understand why and how people or groups of people behave as they do and how this has affected the world in which we live. It also helps them to understand the customs, institutions, laws, art, literature and architecture of the varying cultures of the world.

Religious Education can help children begin to answer the fundamental questions that give meaning to their existence and, by explaining to children that there is a religious approach to life, we give them another dimension to the world.

Our Mission Statement and Religious Education Policy sets out our philosophy where Religious Education is concerned.

'We would like to be recognised by the quality and depth of respect and love, which we show towards each other. Mutual respect and tolerance are central to our way of life at St Mary's, as we meet Jesus Christ in each other.'

Through our scheme we deliver our Religious Education programme; our objectives are as follows: -

Aims and Objectives

Aims

The aim of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is to develop and supplement what the children receive in the home and the parish on their individually unique journey. We use the The Way, the Truth and the Life programme which contributes to their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs of the Catholic tradition.

By means of a gradual progression the children should:-

1. become aware of the love, sharing and forgiveness of God Our Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ and grow to appreciate the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit in their lives;
2. learn about Creation and God's plan for them and the part which they have to play in the order of things;
3. learn something of the history of God's people through the Old Testament and be encouraged to realise that they have a history going back before the birth of Christ;
4. be given the opportunity to experience the Church's liturgical year. The celebration of the Eucharist in school is a very important part of the prayer life of St. Mary's.

5. meet Jesus Christ and learn about Him in the study of the New Testament - His life story, teachings, actions and parables;
6. learn to show a devotion to Mary the Virgin Mother of God, who was assumed into Heaven;
7. learn about the establishment of the missionary church;
8. be encouraged to meet Christ in each other, in their teachers and in those who enter the school;
9. be encouraged to attend the celebration of Mass at their local parish church and take an active part in the community life of that parish;
10. learn the most used formal prayers of the church;
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Morning/Evening prayer, Grace at meals, Act of Contrition, Creed, Prayers of the Mass;
11. become familiar with the church building and be able to recognise and name the principal features within the church;
12. learn about the Ten Commandments;
13. learn to worship in a variety of ways; private/group/class prayer, assemblies, the singing of hymns, school masses, celebration of mass in the parish church, Ash Wednesday, Passion play/Easter celebration, devotions, e.g. Benediction, processions, the Rosary.
14. learn about Sr. Raphaela Mary, handmaid of the Sacred Heart, the foundress of the Order of Sisters who opened the school in 1968 and the other saints of the church;
15. be taught about the sacraments of the church;
16. value the experience of belonging to a faith community;
17. develop respect and appreciation of other faiths;
18. become familiar with the religious language, symbols, signs and gestures of worship and prayer.
19. to develop the skills needed to increase the knowledge and understanding of their faith.

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The programme of religious education covers all the essential content of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The R.E. programme

We follow the 'The Way, the Truth and the Life.' Programme. The syllabus incorporates two attainment targets: learning **about** the Catholic Faith and learning **from** Catholic faith.

- Classroom practices - a variety of approaches are to be used to present the religious lessons in a lively and thoughtful way. Work is recorded in religious exercise books and also for displays and personal use e.g. Prayer cards, paintings etc.
- Use is to be made of I.C.T. for research, recording and presentation. Drama, discussion, music, art, dance etc. are suitable forms for self expression and these can be developed in topic based and subject specific lessons. Reverence, awe and wonder are desired aims- we set the atmosphere.
- Saint Mary is the patron saint of the school. We have a particular affinity with Saint Raphaela Mary and the English Martyrs.
- The Oratory is a special focal point for prayer in school.
- Prayer tables are also a focal point for worship.
- We have a May procession each year which is attended by high numbers of parents. At Christmas the infant children present plays about the Birth of Jesus. The KS2 children are involved in a Carol Concert at St. Edmund's Church.
- Easter celebrations are led by Year Five, who present the Passion and Death of our Lord, to the school and KS2 parents.
- The months of May and October are devoted to the celebration of our Lady's life and all families are invited to devotions in the main hall before school. June is the month of the Sacred Heart. The month of November is devoted to the Holy Souls.
- Important saints of the British Isles are celebrated on their feast days - Saint Francis and Saint Joseph also are the focus of discussions in school assemblies.
- Families are invited to pray the Rosary before school during advent and Lent.

TEACHING OF OTHER FAITHS

We use the Come and See scheme as the basis of our teaching of other faiths is taught. We have a four weeks each year that the whole school focuses on another faith. The children learn about Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. The scheme is structured so that each year the children build upon their previous learning. Children in Key Stage 2 follow visit a different place of worship each year. Assemblies are set aside to encourage children to understand and appreciate other faiths, cultures and traditions.

TIME ALLOCATION

10% of our working week is spent on R.E. lessons. Time each day is spent on prayer. Assemblies reflect themes from The Way, the Truth and the Life as well as the liturgical year and are an integral part of our teaching time.

EARLY YEARS

Teaching and learning is developed according to Early Learning Goals. The 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' programme of study is followed. Considerable time is spent on moral education at this stage.

PLANNING

We follow the yearly syllabus from The Way, the Truth and the Life which includes specific key learning objectives for each module of work. We use the plans provided by the way, the Truth and the Life as a basis to our teaching and adapt the plans according to our children's needs.

Our parents are given a topic overview in the curriculum newsletters that are given out every half term by the class teachers.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Homework

Homework is given when appropriate to the course of study. e.g. research into local churches and religious events.

Marking

Where Religious Education is concerned the thoughts behind the writing are more important than the precision in spelling and grammar. However we still have high expectations in terms of the spelling, grammar, presentation and quality of writing in our Religious education books.

Record Keeping

We report to parents verbally twice a year at open evenings. In the summer term a written report goes to all parents. Teachers maintain their own records in line with diocesan guidance.

Assessment

Religious Education is assessed three times a year in line with the school's assessment and tracking systems. Assessment is formally recorded on our tracking system once a term. The teachers do not create assessment tasks for RE instead they use the children's 'I can' statements and follow a 'best fit' approach when deciding on the levels of attainment. Assessment records are scrutinised regularly by the RE leader and assessment leader. Pupil self- assessment is continuing to be developed throughout the school.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

SEN, INCLUSION and A,G&T

We acknowledge that some children have special learning needs, therefore levels of understanding and output will vary. Additional support may be needed.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children regardless of ethnic, culture, physical, language, abilities and gender differences are entitled to equal access to all areas of the national curriculum. Religious education offers a wonderful opportunity to implement this aim. Refer to Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality policies.

P.S.H.E.C.

Refer to policy.

LINKS WITH HOME, SCHOOL AND PARISH.

'The partnership between home, parish and school is the best setting for the formation of maturing Catholic young people.'

Parents are recognised as the first educators of their children and it is the school's mission to support and build upon their work.

The school's role in the preparation for the first sacraments.

Our Catholic faith is an integral part of our school and is reflected in every aspect of school life. Preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist will take place in Year 3 and is provided by each of our three parishes. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in preparing their children for these sacraments.

SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

Our school chaplaincy is always invited to become actively involved in all that takes place within the school. Their assistance is sought: -

- a) In the preparation for liturgical celebrations;
- b) For team teaching purposes in the classroom;
- c) Counselling of teachers;
- d) Spiritual assistance of teachers;

LINKS WITH PARENTS

Being a primary school we have excellent contacts with our parents, especially at Foundation Stage, where 'Meet the Teacher' appointments take place before the children start school. The parents are invited to Masses, May procession, October, May, Advent and Lent devotions, Easter and Christmas liturgical celebrations. They are informed about termly topics in both curriculum and RE newsletters. Our parents are a valued resource for whom we have great respect and our school chaplain is a wonderful resource for our parents.

LINKS WITH PARISHES

On our governing body we have representation from our local parishes and the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Links with the parish and clergy are encouraged and indeed every effort is made to develop the partnership with the three parishes through a variety of programmes.

We also liaise on curriculum matters.

Collective Worship and Prayer are at the heart of life in St. Mary's.

LITURGIES

The school community worships in a variety of ways. Mass is celebrated at the beginning and end of term and on Holidays of Obligations. Each year group has a termly Mass or other Liturgy.

The pupils are involved in the preparation of Masses - both class and school. They prepare readings, bidding prayers and take an active role in the Mass - e.g. year 2 lead the offertory procession for whole school Masses and children are altar servers.

Members of staff help in the Masses with music, preparation and organisation. Some members of staff and parents also assist as lay ministers of the Eucharist.

Each class spends time in daily prayer. Children are encouraged to pray in their own time.

To facilitate this we have a prayer garden and an Oratory within school to which children, staff and parents can go. Older children lead break time prayer groups for younger children in the prayer garden.

Assemblies are held on a regular basis and centre around The Way, the Truth and the Life programme and the Liturgical year.

Whole school assemblies are held on Mondays and Fridays. Key Stage One and The Foundation Stage classes have a Wednesday word assembly each week led by their teachers. The children then take home a copy of the Wednesday Word to share with their families. The Key Stage 2 classes take it in turns to lead their Thursday Thought assembly. Infants and Juniors gather together each week for worship through hymn singing and prayer.

Prayer Life

The children are encouraged to lead group and class prayers - using their own individual and formal prayers. The prayer garden is used for class prayer times and also for private prayer and reflection time.

CHARITIES

The children raise money on an annual basis for Cafod, Mission Together and the Catholic Children's Society. We have a whole school Harvest Mass at which we collect donations of food for local people in need. We encourage the children to develop their individual social and moral consciousness through their

own charity and support work such as Blue Peter appeals, the Good Shepherd collection and to study the work of CAFOD.

RESPONSIBILITY

The R.E. co-ordinator oversees mid term planning, monitors written work, moderates assessments and methods of developing the use of The way, the Truth and the Life in school. The co-ordinator is also responsible for obtaining new resources when monies are available.

PUPIL CHAPLAINCY

All children have the opportunity to be involved in pupil chaplaincy in a variety of ways. All classes have termly class Masses in which the children are fully involved in the preparation of. Children in the infants make up their own prayers and choose the hymns in their Wednesday Word assembly and in KS2 each week a class prepares and leads the Wednesday Word assembly.

Two children from each class volunteer to be RE Ambassadors each year. They meet weekly with the RE Leader to discuss their ideas for developing the Catholic Life of the school and how they can demonstrate Catholic Social Teaching. Our Year 5 Mini Vinnie Group meet regularly and focus their efforts on their motto of 'Turning concern into action.' All classes have the opportunity to suggest charity projects that they would like to plan and undertake with their year group which are underpinned by Catholic Social Teaching.

RESOURCES

We constantly update and refurbish our class altars to ensure that they reflect the themes being studied in our scheme of work. Books, posters, and statues are constantly being updated. We have developed a collection of artefacts from other faiths, which is kept in the RE resource cupboard.

Books on religious topics (Christian and other faiths, poetry and story books) are available in the RE resource cupboard and the library. Mass books are available in the resource cupboard. A range of books on religious topics are kept in the school library. All classes have bibles or bible storybooks. All classrooms have a statue for their altars which are a focus for prayer and crucifixes are in each classroom and the offices. Vestments, altar cloths, Mass vessels etc are kept in a special cupboard in the corridor between the two halls

The Oratory

The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Oratory and groups of children are able to make visits, usually with an adult.

The Grotto

This is used throughout the year and is a special focus in the May Procession.

PROVISION FOR SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION

Spiritual development

To make prayer, worship and liturgy real educational experiences the following are provided: -

- a) Quiet corners/prayer corners within our classrooms to develop a sense that God's presence is always with us.
- b) Assemblies on The Way, the Truth and the Life themes, and our Core Values.
- c) Liturgical celebrations planned and led by the children through a variety of experiences are held e.g. music, readings, prayers, and artistic presentations.
- d) Christmas nativity productions across the school, the junior carol concert and year 5 Easter plays. These bring to life the true Gospel message and contribute effectively in developing a sense of awe within the children.
- e)

Spirituality

School helps pupils to deepen their spirituality by talking about, reflecting upon the being aware of the goodness of God and His mercy. It helps children to interpret every day events and to understand them as part of God's plan. It helps children to understand the sacraments and the Mass.

Assemblies form an important and valued part of school life. The children's knowledge and awareness of key aspects of The Way, the Truth and the Life programme are explored. Prayer forms part of the assembly. Once a week we celebrate success at a whole school assembly. This allows children to be mentioned by name, to be praised and valued. We have a selection of different kinds of liturgy to which the children are exposed. Children are helped to understand symbolism of the Mass vestments. Class teachers explore conflict resolution strategies with the children at Circle Time. Children who continue to have difficulties with relationships are given the support of the staff. Children who suffer sadness or bereavement are also encouraged to share their feelings and thoughts with an adult.

Moral Education.

We aim to develop this through a range of activities - see below and to develop the children's own sense of responsibility.

- PSHE policy /SRE
- Behaviour Policy
- School council
- Year 6 help at reception playtimes
- Playground support.
- Circle time
- Charities
- Cross curriculum work - issues
- Community activities

CONCLUSION

Religious education aims to make children more aware of themselves and more sensitive to things and people around them, as a contribution to their personal development and moral growth. It aims to foster their Christian moral education and formation of conscience. Religious Education aims to develop an awareness of Jesus through prayer and teaching, and build up a devotion to Our Lady. It aims to help the children develop moral qualities of self-discipline, perseverance, determination, patience, fair play and consideration for others. It makes them aware of other faiths and develops their respect and understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

This policy was developed by the staff and governing body of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School.

Overview of Foundation and Key Stage One Syllabus

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Foundation	F1 God's World	F2 God's Family	F3 Getting to know Jesus	F4 Sorrow & Joy	F5 New Life	F6 Church
Year 1	1.1 God's Great Plan	1.2 Mary, Mother of God (Hinduism, Divali)	1.3 Families & Celebratio ns	1.4 Following Jesus	1.5 Resurrecti on	1.6 Miracles
Year 2	2.1 Chosen People (Judaism)	2.2 Mysteries	2.3 The Good News	2.4 The Mass	2.5 Eastertide	2.6 Birth of the Church

'THE WAY, THE TRUTH & THE LIFE' SERIES

Links with Other Faiths

Overview of Key Stage 2 Syllabus

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 3	3.1 The Christian Family	3.2 Mary, Our Mother <i>Significance of Shepherds & Wise Men in Judaism</i>	3.3 Called to change <i>Jewish Day of Atonement Yom Kippur</i>	3.4 Eucharist <i>The Sabbath for Jews</i>	3.5 Celebrating Easter & Pentecost <i>Jewish Feast of Pentecost</i>	3.6 Being a Christian <i>St. Paul, the Pharisee</i>
Year 4	4.1 The Bible <i>Jewish Scriptures</i>	4.2 Trust in God	4.3 Jesus, the Teacher <i>The Temple & Synagogues</i>	4.4 Jesus, the Saviour	4.5 The Mission of the Church	4.6 Belonging to the Church <i>Other Faith Communities</i>
Year 5	5.1 Gifts from God	5.2 The Commandments <i>Ten Commandments</i>	5.3 Inspirational People	5.4 Reconciliation	5.5 Life in the Risen Jesus <i>Prayer in Islam</i>	5.6 <i>People of Other Faiths</i> Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism & Judaism
Year 6	6.1 The Kingdom of God	6.2 Justice <i>Mohandas Gandhi</i> Prophet Muhammad	6.3 Jesus, the Bread of Life <i>Passover</i>	6.4 Jesus, Son of God	6.5 The Work of the Apostles	6.6 Called to Serve <i>Interfaith examples</i>

