



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

### School Mission Statement:

*"Learning and Growing Together in the Light of God's Love"*

*At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School...*

We cherish the uniqueness of all individuals.

We aim to create a learning climate which promotes the development of the whole child and engenders a love for learning and excellence, so that within the framework of a broad and balanced curriculum, all may realise their potential.

We proclaim the Gospel values in the ways in which we love ourselves and others.

Worship, prayer and our relationship with God are at the heart of school life.

We embrace our role in the wider community and seek to bear witness to our Catholic Faith in all that we do.

<b>Date of Policy</b>	September 2025		
<b>Policy Category:</b>	Curriculum	<b>Review Cycle:</b>	Biennial
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	September 2027		

### Policy Formation:

The policy was developed using the model policy produced by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle's Education Department (2016) and advice from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

The policy is reviewed and evaluated every 2 years by staff and governors (specifically the RE Link Governor). The RE Subject Leader and Headteacher are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policy.

Last updated: September 25 –update regarding implementation of RED programme.

Our teaching, assessment and monitoring of Religious Education, as set out within this policy, is central to achieving our Mission Statement and fulfilling our purpose as a Catholic school. As such, it will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects.

### **Rationale of Religious Education**

- Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the Church.  
*'At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education.'*<sup>1</sup>
- Religious Education is 'the core of the core curriculum.'  
*'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..... All pupils have the right to receive an overall education which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope which is within them. Religious Education is, then, the core subject in a Catholic school.'*<sup>1</sup>
- Religious Education is the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ and is a rigorous academic subject in its own right.  
*Religious Education is regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines.*<sup>2</sup> As such it is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.  
*"Excellence in religious education, then, will be characterised by a clarity of succinct religious learning objectives and of key content, by appropriate methodologies, rigour, richness of resources, achievement of identified outcomes and accurate methods of assessment. Classroom RE will be a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material."*<sup>3</sup>
- The outcome of Classroom Religious Education is:  
*"religiously literate and 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 are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life".*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 4

<sup>2</sup> Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.3

<sup>3</sup> Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 7

<sup>4</sup> Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.6

### **The Aims of Religious Education as stated in the RE Curriculum Directory are:**

- To present engagingly a comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
- To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
- To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society;
- To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
- To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;
- To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
- To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;
- To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.<sup>5</sup>

### **Religious Education - Curriculum Time Allocation**

In recognition of the importance of religious education in our school, we devote 10% of the teaching week to religious education lessons. In Key Stage 1 this is 2 hours 15 minutes and in Key Stage 2 this is 2 hours and 30 minutes, not including Collective Worship. In Early Years, the timetable and learning style is more flexible, but teaching of Religious Education is prioritised to give children the opportunity to engage fully with the curriculum.

### **The Curriculum**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, religious education is based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RED) "To Know You More Clearly". In line with the Bishop's mandate, this curriculum is fully implemented from Reception to Year 6. We use resources from the diocese of Arundel and Brighton called, 'Day by Day'.

The Religious Education Directory uses, 'knowledge lenses' which divide the content of the programme of study into four systematic sub-sections for the study of Catholicism and an additional two lenses for the study of religions and worldviews. These knowledge lenses are: hear, believe, celebrate and live (for the study of the Catholic Religion) and: dialogue and encounter (for the study of other religions and worldviews).

Within the Religious Education Directory, the children's learning is sequenced through six 'curriculum branches' that correspond to the six half-terms of the year. The six curriculum branches are: Creation and Covenant, Prophecy and Promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, Desert to Garden, To the Ends of the Earth, and Dialogue and Encounter.

These branches are revisited in each year of the school, which enables children to come to a deeper understanding of its significance for Catholic belief and practice, which allows children to make links between the four knowledge lenses.

**Four Knowledge Lenses:** Hear, Believe, Live and Celebrate indicate what should be known by the end of each age phase.

**Ways of Knowing:** Understand, Discern and Respond are the skills through which children progress and develop their thinking during the curriculum journey.

**Expected Outcomes** set out for each year group what pupils should be able to know, remember and do. Curriculum Branches divide the model curriculum into half-term units of study which repeat annually, giving a spiral curriculum which allows children to build progressively on the prior knowledge and develop their understanding year by year.

The curriculum branches are:

Autumn 1	Creation and Covenant
Autumn 2	Prophecy and Promise
Spring 1	Galilee to Jerusalem
Spring 2	Desert to Garden
Summer 1	To the Ends of the Earth
Summer 2	Dialogue and Encounter

### **Methodology**

RE is taught in every class with consideration of the needs and abilities of each child. The age, stage of development and the child's own faith journey are taken into account. A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used from across the curriculum adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of pupils. Teachers create a climate that stimulates thinking and celebrates achievement by, for example:

- Whole class discussion and teaching
- Posing open ended questions that challenge pupils
- Responding to pupils' answers in a way that extends thinking
- Providing opportunities for independent and collaborative working
- Providing a wide range of resources to support and enrich learning
- Deploying Teaching Assistants to support, enhance
- Giving pupils opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways
- External speakers/ workshops
- Continuing to be learners themselves.

### **Learning beyond the classroom**

Learning in religious education cannot always be recorded and does not begin or end in the classroom. Learning from religious education will also flow into other curriculum areas as pupils make links between their learning. We aim to give children the opportunity to connect their formal learning with their wider understanding through regular opportunities to reflect and respond.

Learning beyond the classroom may include:

- Following the example of a role model in daily life at home or in school
- Participation in charitable activity and fundraising
- Inspiration through reflection in prayer and liturgy
- Conversations with clergy or parishioners in school

- Response to catechesis in the parish e.g for Reconciliation or First Holy Communion
- Engagement with programmes based on Catholic social teaching e.g. Lily squad; Faith in Action; CST ambassadors.

We work closely with parents and with the parishes to support children’s progress in understanding and developing on their curriculum and faith journey.

### **Other World Views**

Catholic education seeks to form pupils who are well prepared to play a positive role in society and to follow Jesus’ teaching to “love your neighbour”. We therefore embrace learning about other world views with **“a willingness... to try to understand better the religion of one’s neighbours, and to experience something of their religious life and culture.”** (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales). The Religious Education Directory includes a branch called ‘Dialogue and Encounter’ which focuses specifically on exploring other world views and recognizing the connections with the Catholic faith. Opportunities for dialogue and encounter are sought throughout the academic year and especially focus on broadening pupils’ experiences and on real-life encounters with those of other faiths or none, to enable connections and develop understanding. Examples may include:

- Opportunities for families in our community to share their faith and experience
- Conversations with invited visitors about their beliefs and experiences
- Q&A with faith leaders online or in person
- Visits to places of worship
- Guided exploration of artefacts from other faiths
- Independent reading, research and discussion

External speakers are always checked in line with the CES checklist for external speakers, to ensure safe and constructive dialogue and encounter opportunities for our pupils

<https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/governance/item/1003587-checklist-for-external-speakers-to-schools>

### **Inclusion and Equality**

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme.

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

### **Right of withdrawal from RE**

Parents have the right of withdrawal from RE for their children. The school will refer to the Catholic Education Service (CSE) document ‘Guidance on the right of withdrawal from religious education and / or collective worship’ in the event of such a request being received.

<sup>5</sup> Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.6

<sup>6</sup> Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.7

## **Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting**

Developmental feedback is given in Religious Education to support children's progress and to challenge their thinking. This follows the school's Feedback Policy and may be given verbally.

Assessment follows diocesan and national guidelines, assessing against the expected outcomes for each branch in the Religious Education Directory. Pupil attainment is recorded half-termly on the school's assessment recording system and progress is tracked regularly by the RE Lead and SLT in line with the school's Assessment Policy.

The RE Lead moderates outcomes in Religious Education both internally and with local Catholic schools, to ensure consistency of expectations with other schools in the diocese. Outcomes for Religious Education are shared in line with other core curriculum subjects, both during parent consultation meetings and in end-of-year reports.

Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out by the RE Subject Leader. Evidence may be gathered in a variety of ways including: lesson observation drop-ins, work scrutiny, pupil interviews /questionnaires, analysis of assessment data, learning walks, class spiritual Journals etc.

### **Liaison with Parents**

An RE newsletter is sent out to parents at the beginning of each term providing updates and information for parents and outlining the topics to be taught and the key feasts of the liturgical season. Teachers send out a Curriculum Sheet at the start of each term which includes information about RE teaching and also send out a weekly focus sheet at the beginning of each week which includes RE. Information about Masses and liturgies is included in the weekly newsletters. Evidence of opportunities and achievements in RE learning are publicised through the newsletter. A parents' consultation evening is held in the Autumn and Spring terms, and achievement and progress in RE is recorded in the End of Year reports. In the Summer Term there is an open evening where parents have the opportunity to visit the classroom and share their child's learning in their books.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Preparation for the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation usually takes place when the children are in Year 3, though other children in KS2 may also participate. It is a Parish based programme but members of staff support the preparation at school.

### **Management of the Subject**

The RE Subject Leader, has responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education.

The quality of Religious Education may be monitored by the following:

- The subject leader monitoring that 10% of curriculum time is being allocated to RE teaching
- Classroom observation drop-ins by the subject leader and SLT
- The subject leader monitoring pupils' RE books
- Moderation of assessment at Deanery level
- Discussions with teachers at pupil progress meetings

- Gathering pupil voice

### **Policy Monitoring and Review**

The RE Subject leader, the Headteacher and the RE link Governor are responsible for monitoring and review. This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by staff and Governors every 2 years.

### **Staff Formation**

All staff support the Catholic ethos of our school and strive to develop children's progress and understanding in matters of faith. There are regular opportunities for all staff to engage in personal prayer and reflection which may support their professional role.

All teachers involved in planning and delivering Religious Education lessons have attended half-termly diocesan training on the curriculum directory resources. The RE Lead collaborates with other local schools to share best practice more widely.