



# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

### Introduction

As a Catholic Primary School we firmly believe that our faith is central to all we undertake and that all our policies will reflect our central mission "Living and Learning in Faith."

This policy helps us to focus in on the techniques we employ to make a fundamental impact on the quality of the relationships we aim to develop and the spiritual, physical and intellectual development of the children in our care.

### Mission Statement

The aim of our school is:

To provide a loving Catholic environment which will help each individual member of the school family grow morally, spiritually and academically in the love of Jesus Christ.

This means we aim to meet our children's needs in the light of the Good News of Jesus Christ that God loves us all. This is found in the life of the school through:

- The quality of relationships based on love, care, respect and trust.
- Prayer, reflection and celebration
- Learning and teaching that enables children to reach their full potential.
- Partnership between home, school and parish.

*LIVING AND LEARNING IN FAITH*

### **Introduction**

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School our Religious Education Policy encompasses our Mission Statement and our school aims.

We believe that the whole of the educational provision in a Catholic Primary School is rooted in a religious understanding of life based on the Gospel. Worship and Religious Education in the classroom constitute the specific, but not exclusive, Religious Education provision. For the purposes of this document, Religious Education is considered as the professional area of the curriculum flowing to and from the life and values that the school seeks to proclaim and celebrate. As a Catholic school we offer Religious

Education as an important contribution to the faith development of pupils. It may also be received, in our classrooms, by some pupils, as catechesis, deepening and enhancing their personal faith, or for some evangelisation, this being the first time they have been presented with, personally, the truths of living faith.

### **Rationale**

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School we believe that Religious Education is at the heart of our curriculum as we strive to proclaim and live the Gospel Values. We see our role as supporting parents in leading their children to a greater understanding of who God is and to celebrating, with deeper faith and more understanding, the liturgy of the Church. We believe that Religious Education provides children with opportunities to recognise, affirm and celebrate the gifts and talents they and others have been given and to develop the skills which will enable them to think and question more deeply and lead, ultimately, to a greater understanding and appreciation of their faith.

In proclaiming the Gospel message we endeavour to share the Gospel spirit of love in all that we do and say by providing a warm, family atmosphere reflecting the fact that all children need to feel respected, trusted and loved. We believe that Religious Education is about the meaning and the need to discover answers about human existence. Love and security are the most basic human/religious needs. We teach that God is love and faithfulness, but understanding of this concept can only grow from our own experiences of kindness and love. Therefore every effort is made to create, in our school and in our classrooms, a community where the children know they are loved and feel confident and secure. Through our teaching of Religious Education we endeavour to enrich the lives of the individuals in our school.

### RE Aims and Objectives

Our aims are closely linked to the aims of the 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme and to our Mission Statement.

#### Spiritual

To give each child an opportunity to develop a relationship with God, promoting their innate capacity for the spiritual whatever their faith background.

To deepen and enrich the child's understanding of the living faith, making it interesting and relevant to their lives.

### Intellectual

To present the RE curriculum in a broad and balanced way, so that it receives equal status with other subjects in the way that it is planned, presented, evaluated and reviewed, and so that it is relevant to the needs and abilities of each individual.

### Moral

To raise questions on which to reflect and explore the beliefs and values of the Catholic tradition in an atmosphere of love and care, respecting the rights and beliefs of others.

### Cultural

Prepare children for their future in a multi-cultural society by developing awareness and respect for other peoples' attitudes and beliefs.

### Physical

To develop a thoughtful and positive attitude to all aspects of Health Education.

### Social

To enable individuals to grow to their full potential morally, spiritually, physically, socially and intellectually, thus raising the self-esteem of every member of the community.

### Global

To raise and heighten awareness of issues to do with justice, peace and care for the earth.

## Objectives

Our objectives will help us to achieve our aims.

In spiritual development we will:

- systematically present the Christian event, message and way of life in ways appropriate to the age and development of each child.
- provide opportunities for prayer and reflection, forgiveness and reconciliation, celebration and liturgy and promotion of a sense of awe and wonder.

- provide a framework for Sacramental preparation that takes into account the current developing and changing needs of the individual, the family and the parish.
- Develop links with other religions, cultures, traditions and agencies (e.g. Cafod, Plan International) so that we might better appreciate God's love for all people.
- Encourage staff to promote links with the parish and home through sacramental programmes and informal contact with parents through assemblies, Masses, celebrations, open nights, pre-school visits and meetings.

In moral development we will:

- Promote caring attitudes within the school towards each member of the school community.
- Correct misconceptions and teach the difference between right and wrong, and the consequence of choices.
- Encourage each other to show initiative, take responsibility, celebrate achievement and be pleasant and helpful.
- Promote equal opportunities by acknowledging and respecting the needs of the individual and developing a respect for the value and importance of all within our school community.
- Express and control feelings so that they benefit the individual/ group/ class and avoid hurting others.

In intellectual development we will:

- Help each child to achieve religious literacy
- Provide a whole school approach to the teaching of R.E. by using "The Way, The Truth and The Life" thereby ensuring continuity and progression.
- Ensure that staff is familiar with and understand the underlying principles, both theological and educational, of the R.E. programme being followed.
- Use our agreed format for planning, recording and evaluation for R.E.
- Ensure that R.E. teaching is matched to the children's level of ability and maturity, and that all skills - educational, manipulative, organisational, and physical - are practised.
- Value the contributions of all.

- Provide, use and develop a rich variety of resources.
- Recognise the importance of Religious Education, treating it as a National Curriculum core subject, giving it the appropriate time, attention to detail, planning and display.

In cultural development we will:

- Provide opportunities to learn about and appreciate other faiths and traditions.
- Develop a knowledge and appreciation of music and the arts.
- Assist children in exploring, discovering and learning about their own environment and that of the wider society.

In physical development we will:

- Develop a healthy and sensitive attitude to physical growth and development in self and others.

### Our Lady's Religious Education Programme

Our purpose is to bring children to encounter Jesus in the Gospel, in the Church, in the Sacraments, in the world and in their experience so that he can be known, loved and served. In the words of St. Ignatius, "We need to find God in everything."

Religious Education is important because:

- It is a body of knowledge essential to our understanding of the Catholic Faith
- The skills developed through the study of R.E. have a wide application in everyday life.
- Values, attitudes, knowledge and skills acquired facilitate responsible participation in society.

The Religious Education programme "The Way, The Truth and The Life" is followed throughout the school in order to fulfill our aims and objectives.

### Continuity and Progression

This is built into the scheme as topics are developed which take into account the ages and stages of development of our pupils. The content is structured so that at each level there are:

- Clearly stated aims
- Achievable learning intentions

- Experiences and differentiated activities for each of the learning intentions, enabling pupils to work according to their own abilities.

### Teaching Methods

"The Way, The Truth and The Life" offers opportunities for a variety of teaching and learning styles to meet the needs of each pupil. We believe that the best way to present Religious Education to children is through active learning methods, thereby promoting an active response in life and worship.

This is achieved through:

- ✓ Co-operative group work
- ✓ Individual work
- ✓ Class and small group discussion
- ✓ Story telling and writing
- ✓ creative play, movement, drama, mime and music
- ✓ Painting and drawing
- ✓ Interview and fact finding
- ✓ Research
- ✓ Reflection and celebration
- ✓ Use of ICT

These provide the children with an active means of exploring experiences freely and of coming to terms with negative as well as positive aspects of life experience.

### Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants are a valuable asset in the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum.

They provide support for children with special needs, prepare classroom resources and displays, and help with the Sacramental programme and the preparation of Masses and other liturgical celebrations. They also accompany the children on educational visits

### Curriculum Time

Children will have an average of two and a half hours per week Religious Education. This will be exceeded in Year 3 during preparation for Reconciliation and Eucharist. Time allocation will not be evenly spread across all weeks of the year. More time will be devoted to Religious Education, at certain times, e.g. in Holy Week, prior to class or school liturgies, or in Lent or Advent.

Homework is used to support Religious Education through tasks such as interviews with family and friends, using books to find answers to questions posed in school and sacramental programme worksheets which enhance the partnership between home, school and parish.

Excellence in Religious Education is celebrated through display in the classroom and round the school and through whole school or class gatherings.

Each classroom has an area set aside for focus on Religious Education work and relevant display to provide a stimulus for the current topic. It also has an area for the children to gather with a focal point for prayer and reflection. Each class has an appropriate statue/crucifix or other aid to prayer.

The focus area may also have books, drapes, candles and appropriate music.

### Equal Opportunities

All children of varied abilities and wide range of commitment are encouraged to appreciate the spiritual dimension of life. In helping them to know and enter into the beliefs, values and attitudes of the Catholic tradition we also wish them to respect and value the religious commitment of others.

### Pupils with Special Needs

Our aim is to give each child an education appropriate to their age, aptitude and ability in a secure environment. Religious Education plays an integral part in this since each child is a unique individual made in the image and likeness of God.

In Religious Education we strive to:

- meet the needs and abilities of each individual
- give each child a sense of their own worth and value
- praise and encourage children for their efforts no matter how simple
- provide gifted children with stimulating and challenging work to develop their abilities to the full
- give extra support to children with language/communication difficulties

### Resources

CDs, tapes and hymn books are kept by the Religious Education subject leader. Bibles, Bible stories, stories related to the topics and some prayer focus artefacts are kept in each classroom.

Assembly and liturgy books, other faith materials, posters, videos and other prayer focus artifacts are kept centrally in the staffroom.

The school library also contains books on a variety of topics relating to Religious Education.

### Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment for learning is an essential aspect of Religious Education teaching. It is an ongoing process undertaken by all teachers throughout their time in the classroom.

"The purpose of the assessment process is to make explicit children's achievements, celebrate their achievements with them, then help them to move forward to the next goal." Vicky Hutchin

Some of the benefits for Assessment for Learning are:

- it is part of effective planning
- it focuses on how children learn
- it is central to classroom practice
- it develops the capacity for self and peer assessment
- it recognizes all educational achievement
- it is a key professional skill
- it helps learners know how to improve
- it promotes understanding of goals and criteria
- it is sensitive, constructive and fosters motivation

Learning objectives and success criteria provide the context for assessment for learning. We explain the learning intentions (WALT) and success criteria (WILF) in a language the children can easily understand. We make specific reference to the objectives and success criteria when marking children's work, when giving feedback, and in plenary sessions.

Our marking and feedback to children reflect assessment for learning principles. The focus of the marking is linked to specific learning objectives and success criteria. In our interaction with the children and their work, our comments are positive and constructive, often given while the task is being completed. Feedback is structured and clarified to enable pupils to understand their next steps in learning and to help them to reflect on their learning in a meaningful way.

We are developing formal assessment procedures in Religious Education through a collection of moderated work.

These formal assessments will help us:-

- make accurate judgments on pupil achievements.
- sum up what pupils have learned so far
- identify how pupils make next steps in learning
- contribute to the evaluation of the quality of Religious Education provision.

Each term we look at the work from one specified topic.

We use the learning outcomes from a particular strand from the levels of attainment to assess and moderate a piece of work. We use the activities suggested or plan our own assessment tasks. At present we are formally assessing 6 children in each year group and recording the level achieved on a recording sheet which is attached to the work and given to the Religious Education subject leader. We also record the level the child has achieved on a tracking sheet. These are passed on to the next teacher. Samples of work from different year groups are moderated at a staff meeting. We are moving towards assessing each child in the class each term and recording the results on a tracking sheet which will be passed on to the next teacher at the end of the year. A selection of assessed work representing higher, average and lower attainment groups will continue to be given to the Religious Education subject leader.

### Religious Education Links

- The children participate in prayer, reflection, liturgies and Masses in a prayerful and sensitive way.
- The children take part in and suggest ideas for fund raising activities for others e.g. Cafod.
- Harvest produce and gifts are collected and donated to the Wellspring Centre for homeless people.

- Y6 visit St. James' Catholic Secondary School and other secondary schools near the end of the summer term.
- The choir sings carols each Christmas for parishioners and at local residential homes.

### Governors

Governors are invited to liturgies, Masses, Christmas and Easter celebrations. They participate actively and fully in Governor training and information both for R.E. and the local authority.

### Home - School - Parish Links

Parents are invited to participate in whole school and class liturgical celebrations, assemblies, and parish Masses, the Welcome Liturgy for Reception, the Y6 leavers' Mass and Christmas and Easter celebrations. Parish Mass is held in school on Holy Days of Obligation during term time.

The children take part in a Christmas carol service at St. George's church during Advent each year along with children from other schools in Stockport.

During the Sacramental Programme in Year 3, regular meetings are held so that the parents know how the school is contributing to the preparation of the children. There are also workshops for the children to attend with their families. During the year the children lead celebrations of Sunday Mass, taking an active part in the liturgy. Parishioners are encouraged to pray for the children and their families especially during the Sacramental Programme.

Each week the children receive the weekly parish newsletter through school. There is a weekly news spot in the parish newsletter for any school news.

Parishioners are represented on the school's governing body. The Foundation Governors are practising Catholics which helps to ensure that the Catholic ethos of the school is promoted and upheld.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The R.E.coordinator with the support of the head teacher, deputy head, and with the cooperation of the staff, will be responsible for:

- the writing and updating of the R.E. policy.
- the distribution of diocesan planning sheets and any other religious material.
- monitoring and evaluating R.E. planning.
- providing help, guidance and support to colleagues
- the purchase and organisation of central resources for R.E.
- conducting staff meetings when necessary.
- through Inset, becoming aware of developments and new resources in R.E., sharing this knowledge with staff, and involving them in developing policies and practice.
- developing communication with the parish priest, parents, governors, parish and outside agencies e.g.Cafod.
- developing and coordinating the organisation and preparation of school liturgies, and supporting all involved in these and in other liturgies.
- Being responsible with the parish priest and head teacher for the sacramental preparation programme in Y3.

The headteacher has a vital role in encouraging colleagues in the ongoing development of the R.E. Programme. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff and governors have access to the policy and basic texts as well as ensuring that the policy is used and updated.

The school chaplain is vital in the parish, home, school partnership. The chaplain is part of the school as a worshipping community and as a friend and confidante. He helps in the planning and delivery of the Sacramental Programme and leads us in meaningful and prayerful celebrations.

The class teacher will:

- be an active participant in the growth and development of R.E. in Our Lady's School.
- implement the R.E. policy, and follow the scheme of work as detailed in "The Way, The Truth and The Life"
- be responsible for the termly planning of the topics in the cycle, keep and mark the children's work as agreed, and evaluate each topic.
- be responsible for a stimulating focus area in the classroom.