Growing and Achieving Excellence, Inspired by Faith

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

'With God in our hearts, we learn and grow together on our journey through life.'

Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Religious Education
Date of Review: Spring 2024 ***Date of next review: Spring 2026***

INTRODUCTION:

In the life of Faith of this Catholic school, Religious Education is embedded in every aspect of the curriculum. This policy is a working document which reflects the fact that religious education is provided in the spirit of tolerance, encouraging in the pupils an understanding of the need for tolerance themselves so that each pupil may grow and develop in his or her own way and at his or her own pace.

Our policy reflects the fact that all of us, teachers, pupils, governors, parents, other members of staff, priest or visitors are on a personal journey of faith and each person's stage on the journey is different.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER DOCUMENTS:

This policy underpins all other policies within the school and therefore cannot be used in isolation. As religious education underpins every aspect of school life all policies and some national documents must be considered particularly;

- SEN Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Racial Equality Policy
- Policy for Education in Human Love
- Home School Agreement

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

Religious growth and development are the main aims of our policy, remembering however that Religious Education in St. Joseph's underpins the whole school experience so that the total curriculum stimulates religious growth and development together with academic and social progress.

In order to achieve our aim we must:

- Uphold the truths of our Catholic faith, bearing in mind the experiences children bring with them and the fact that they have a whole lifetime to journey in faith

- As teachers, help our pupils to explore a variety of methods of prayer: private as well as group prayer (lunchtimes, mornings and afternoons) in both formal and informal styles and settings.

- Ensure our whole school Collective Worship is sensitive to the nature of worship and to what is appropriate for such a wide range of ages and stages of development in Religious Education.
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- Ensure that acts of worship take place in class and in assemblies promoting a conducive atmosphere where children, staff, visitors and parents can pray.

- Celebrate Mass in school and in our Church, preparing children for full and active participation.

- Forge home, parish and school links. There should be a dynamic interaction between them. We must work together to provide for the pupils entry into the wider community, working together for the building up of God's Kingdom on the foundations of the Gospel values of love, peace and justice.

- Provide support for the children with their preparations for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion.

- Promote the equal value of all people, regardless of colour, race, creed or gender.

- Encourage the development of skills to be able to examine and reflect on religious beliefs and practice, including those from other faiths and cultures.

Success criteria:

- Seeing children growing and developing as individuals through participation and active involvement in the Catholic life and Religious Education in our school.
- Seeing staff as good role models in living the Gospel Values through the way they work and interact with all members of the school and wider community.
- The Leadership Team, in partnership with Governors, ensure that pupil outcomes are in line with, or better than, National Expectations through implementation of a new, clear RE Policy, reviewed Scheme of Work, improved system of assessment process and full Programme of Spiritual Worship.

GUIDELINES

IMPLEMENTATION:

Approach to teaching RE:

Parents are the first teachers of the child, and they must continue this role throughout the child's growing years.

The main responsibility for the development of their children's faith lies with parents,

"As it is the parents who have given life to their children, on them lies the gravest obligation of educating their family. They must therefore be recognised as being primarily and principally responsible for their education. The role of parents as educators is of such importance, that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute. It is therefore the duty of parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and devotion to God and their fellow man, which will promote an integrated, personal and social education for their children". ("Declaration on Christian Education").

Teachers seek to support, extend and clarify the faith, which the children experience at home and within the life of the Church

In this school, the Christian atmosphere prevails and we help the children to express their faith in prayer, liturgy and the Sacraments.

- The children are encouraged to pray and meditate in the prayer area in each classroom.
- Our Collective Worship provide opportunities for communal prayer and a sharing of hymns of praise.
- Hymn singing introduces the children to an ever-widening range of hymns of praise.
- Morning/evening prayers and Grace before meals are said together in the classrooms.
- Mass is celebrated regularly in the school hall and in the school chapel. The children take an active part in the liturgy of the Mass as a whole school, with music used to enrich the celebration. Children also attend parish Masses at St. Raphael's Church, our Parish Church.
- The Sacrament of First Communion is parish based and the school works alongside the parents and the parish to support the children in their preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion.
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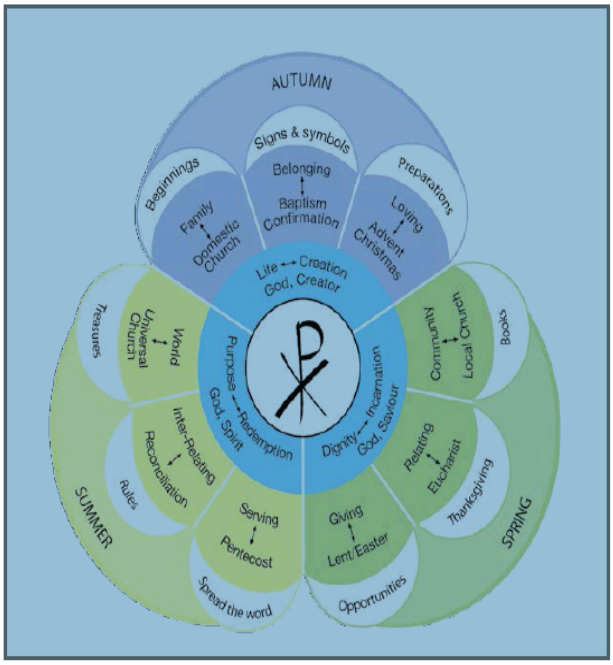
The R.E. Programme:

As a base for development, the school follows the 'Come and See' programme, for the Nursery/Reception classes to Year 6. The programme aims to assist in deepening and enriching the children's understanding of their Catholic faith. The intention is that this programme will

help children to understand that religion is not just a curriculum subject, but that their Christianity is a way of life.

Also, the aim of the programme is to explore the religious dimension of questions about life, dignity and purpose within the Catholic tradition. Links are made with the pupil's own experiences and with universal experience. Links are also made with the experience of other faith traditions.

The icon below, which is an example of year 2, shows how the programme develops from the central underpinning of the Word of God, Dei Verbum (Come and See teacher's book, pg 17).



Other Faiths:
We believe that learning about other faiths and cultures is important for a better understanding of our own faith and culture. Everyone will study Judaism during the Autumn Term and Islam in the Summer term.

Approach to Using the Programme:

St. Joseph's School follows a "whole school approach" to the 'Come and See' programme, where religious themes are explored through topics allocated to each term. Within the planning of topics, references are made to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.

Teaching Time:

In line with the recommendations of the Diocese, the school ensures a time allocation of 10% of the teaching week to Religious Education (2 hrs 15 mins in Key Stage 1 and 2 hrs 30 mins in Key Stage 2).

Each topic in the scheme lasts approximately four weeks, with three topics covered in a term.

Teaching Methods:

Children will have the opportunity to be taught as individuals, in small groups, in a class group, and as a whole school. They pray as individuals, groups and as a whole school. In each classroom situation, equal opportunity issues and special needs of the children are addressed.

Within each class, the class teacher employs a range of teaching methods, styles and displays to support and enrich the use of the programme using the liturgical year of the Universal Church.

The main display area in the school entrance is devoted to R.E. and provides a focus that links the liturgical year of the church with the spiritual life of the school. This approach is also reflected in the well-chosen religious displays and images evident throughout the school, to provide stimulating and prayerful focal points.

The teachers and teaching staffs' role as models of our faith in practice is vitally important.

Assessment, Marking and Recording:

Children's moral and spiritual development can be identified:

- through direct conversation with children
- through class written work
- through analysis of their contribution through whole class experiences
- through reflections at the end of each 'Come and See' topic
- through topic assessments

Marking and recording is in accordance with school policy.

There will be many facets involved in the evaluation of the effectiveness of our Religious Education Programme. This will include the relationship between children/children and adults/children. The whole of the enterprise of St. Joseph's School should be the living embodiment of our aims and beliefs, and as such is a true indication of the effectiveness of our Religious Education.

R.E. in its broadest sense, cannot be confined to the timetabled lessons, collective worship or church services, but is reflected in the whole ethos of the school.

Prayer Life and Liturgy

The whole school ethos finds its nourishment in its prayer life, which gives an atmosphere in the school reflecting its Christian values. This is important for personal and moral growth.

The Parish Priest has a vital role in the religious formation of the children, particularly in Sacramental and Liturgical areas. The involvement of the Parish Priest enables opportunities for spiritual and moral growth through the frequent celebration of school Masses, Advent and Lenten confessions, and sharing in the prayer life of the school. These form important links between the life of the school and the life of the local parish.

The attendance of the Parish Priest at many school events indicate a strong involvement of the church in the school's everyday activities.

There are specific prayer times and prayers (see appendix 2) for the whole school – in the morning, before lunch and at the end of the school day, where the children pray together in their own classes and consequently as a whole school. The prayer times form a prayerful base for the whole school day in addition to the prayer elements within the RE programme.

St. Joseph's School prides itself on an atmosphere of love, where respect for oneself and others is both explicit and implicit and which will contribute to the children's self confidence.

The development of qualities such as self-discipline, perseverance, determination, patience, fair play and consideration for others, will help children relate to each other and to God.

To develop these qualities, the school has a Behaviour Management Policy. We help the children to see the reasons for the rules and accept consequences of their actions. In doing this, their moral sense develops in a loving, caring atmosphere and is a valuable part of their development as Christian members of the community.

Collective worship

The aim of collective worship is to give praise, honour and thanks to God through a meaningful experience of the Scriptures and liturgy. It is a time where children can make a personal response to the message of Christ thereby deepening their relationship with God.

During collective worship, we:

- contemplate the mystery of God;
- reflect on spiritual and moral questions;
- respond to and celebrate life;
- enrich our religious experience with hymns and prayer which are part of our Catholic tradition;
- grow in liturgical understanding and development;
- nurture a common ethos and shared set of Gospel values.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

In order to ensure the success of this policy, we must work in partnership, communicate effectively and have the highest expectations of each other to uphold the Catholic ethos of our school.

Governors

- Governors are responsible for establishing the core values and principles, which must underlie the Religious Education Policy, its values and its practice. They have an annual commitment to review the R.E. Policy.

- Governors should support the Headteacher and staff in the strategies they employ to deliver their R.E. Policy.

- The Governors of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School are the employers of the teachers to whom they should give clear guidelines about the Catholic character, education and life of our school.

Headteacher

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility on behalf of the Governors for the Religious Education programme in our school but works in partnership with other members of the school community.
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- The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher organises and plans the content of the acts of worship for Collective Worship.
- The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher approves the planning and schemes of work submitted by class teachers for the RE syllabus.

R.E. Subject Leader

- Liaises with staff regarding Collective Worship, class assemblies and whole school Masses.
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- Provides school Inset at the start of the school year about RE provision.
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- Researches and orders appropriate materials for R.E. after discussion with staff and maintain central resources.
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- Organises school Masses in consultation with class teachers.
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- Assists staff as required regarding the teaching of R.E.
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- Organises a rota for Collective Worship, school Masses and other religious celebrations.
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- Takes a leading role in planning for "whole school" celebrations which are outside the normal school timetable.
- Represents the school at subject leaders' meetings and Kingston's Catholic School's Group. Circulate relevant materials and notices.
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- Maintains the standards and attainment in R.E. across the school by: -

    - Collecting samples of pupils' work from each year group to show progression and assist teachers in their assessment of R.E.
    - Collecting samples of work and photographs to celebrate the Religious Teaching in our school.
    - Supporting the Parish and catechists in the preparation of the Sacraments for Reconciliation and Communion.
    - Collecting evaluations of the RE programme from staff.
    - Reporting on standards and attainment to the School's Leadership Team and Governing Body.

Teacher

- It is vital that all staff uphold the Catholic ethos of the school and respect our aims and objectives for R.E.

- Teachers will plan the schemes of work from the 'Come and See' Programme appropriate to their year group.

- Staff will prepare the children for acts of worship and special events in the liturgical calendar e.g. Holy days, Easter, Christmas.

- Prepare the children for Collective Worship, class assemblies and school Masses.

- Teachers will evaluate the RE syllabus and give this to the R.E. subject leader.

- Teachers will assess children in R.E. at the end of each term and record attainment levels on their assessment sheets and on the assessment manager, Target Tracker.

Parents/Home/Parish

- The links between parents/home/parish within our school are vital. We should strive for both formal and informal links, which should establish mutual trust and openness. We will keep parents updated about the Religious Education of their child.

- We should be aware of any changing scene in parish structures, the emergence of parish teams and lay involvement in the growth of parish life.

- The school staff should be aware of all parish celebrations.
- School/home/parish should support each other.
- The Parish prepares children for sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion. The school and home supports this preparation.
- Parents will be informed and welcomed to all school Masses, class assemblies and special events.

Priest

- The clergy are welcome to visit our school as frequently as is possible to meet and talk to the children in a formal and informal way.
- Conduct whole school Masses and class Masses as appropriate.
- Support and be aware of our R.E. Policy and the schemes of work undertaken.

Appendix 1

Resources

Each classroom must have:

- ‘Come and See’ resources
- Copies of the Bible
- Prayer books
- Religious symbols such as crucifix, rosary beads and statues
- Appropriate pictures and posters reflecting the ‘Come and See’ topic and relating to the liturgical year of the church.

There is a central resource of Religious posters and display materials as well as a selection of resources dealing with liturgy and prayer.

Hymn PowerPoints, hymn books and various R.E. resource materials are available to support collective worship assemblies and class liturgies.

Appendix 2

School prayers

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now, and at the hour of our death. Amen

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
as it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen

MORNING PRAYER

God our Father, I bring to you
all that I think and say and do,
all my work and all my happy play
I will give to God today.
Amen

LUNCHTIME PRAYER

Bless us O Lord as we sit together,
Bless the food we eat today,
Bless the hands that make our food,
Bless us O Lord.
Amen

EVENING PRAYER

God our Father, I come to say
thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family, and all the friends you give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night, and in the morning send your light.
Amen