



SS PETER & PAUL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**'Learning Together, Achieving Together in Christ'**

# Religious Education Policy

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## **Introduction:**

The ultimate aim of Religious Education, in our school, is to situate Christ at the centre of all that we do. This means integrating Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of learning, teaching and the totality of school life. Jesus Christ is the absolute revelation of God. Through the Holy Spirit each of us, in communion of Christ's Church, has the means to know and to love God, our Father, by knowing and loving his Son, Jesus Christ.

Religious Education plays a vital part at SS Peter and Paul school. It is an essential part of the core curriculum and extends to every aspect of our school life. Our policy reflects the fact that everyone: teacher, pupil, governor, parent, support staff, priest or visitor is on a personal journey of faith and each person's stage on the journey is different.

## **Rationale for 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,*

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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

*and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life".<sup>4</sup>*

- Whilst evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school for some pupils, the specific contribution Religious Education makes to the Catholic Life of the school is primarily educational and will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects.

### **Inclusion and Differentiation:**

Our commitment to Christ's ministry and the uniqueness of each individual, leaves Catholic schools ideally placed to respond with imagination and sensitivity to those children with SEND. Essential to this task will be the respect and dignity for the gifts of each individual and a positive response to their needs.

Each member of our school community takes seriously the variety of ways and stages along which God accompanies individuals, so that they may discover truths about God. Cultural background and faith differences within the wider community, but especially if found within school, provides a rich source of learning materials for this at every level: social, emotional and intuitive and therefore should be highly prized.

Our commitment to inclusion and differentiation in Religious Education also considers our development of community cohesion, as a school. All members of the school's community work to further develop these precious links both within Religious Education and throughout the school.

Teachers have high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to develop and achieve their highest possible standard, regardless of their starting point and therefore, a variety of teaching and learning strategies are used from across the curriculum and adapted appropriately to the need and learning styles of pupils.

### **Relationships with other documentation:**

This policy is not to be seen in isolation. As Religious Education links to every aspect of school life, all policies and some national documents must be considered, in particular,

- Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19) for Catholic school and Colleges, Bishops Conference of England & Wales 2012;
- Diocesan Policy for Religious Education (2019)
- Diocesan Policy for Collective Worship (2019)
- The school's SEN Policy
- The school's Behaviour Policy
- 1944 Education Act (sections 27, 118 and 114)
- The school's RSHE Policy

### **Aims and purposes of the Policy:**

Religious growth and development are the main aims of our policy, remembering however, that Religious Education at SS Peter and Paul underpins the whole school experience so that the

complete curriculum stimulates religious growth and development, along with academic and social progress.

In order to achieve these aims we:

- A. Uphold the truths of our faith gradually, considering the experiences children bring with them and the fact that they have a whole lifetime to journey in faith.
- B. Help our pupils to explore a variety of methods of praying, from private, individual prayer, as well as group prayer (lunchtimes, mornings and afternoons) in both formal and informal styles and settings.
- C. Ensure our whole school assemblies/liturgies are 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.
- D. Ensure that a true act of worship takes place in class liturgies i.e. children, staff, parents and visitors are invited to pray in an atmosphere conducive to prayer.
- E. Provide school masses, which encourage the children to celebrate and learn more about their faith.
- F. Liaise with our local catechists to help prepare the children for their First Holy Communion.
- G. Forge home, parish and school links

### **Links with Home, Parish and Wider Community**

We recognise that parents are the first educators in the faith and that the school represents only one integral part of the three-fold partnership that is responsible for the education and faith development of the children. The local church and community are responsible for nurturing our children, encouraging positivity and hope within their lives. Our school aims to work in partnership with the home and the wider community, by teaching our children through positive example and use of the Gospel message. This expectation is always very clearly set out when new parents come to the school. We meet with our parents on a regular basis and warmly invite them to share in our school Masses and liturgies. Our local priests, Fr Stephen and Fr Gerry, are regular visitors to our school, celebrating Masses, liturgies, Reconciliation and other services and supporting us in our teaching of religious education. We liaise with our local catechists to help prepare the children for their First Holy Communion.

We welcome members of the parish for Masses and liturgies. We support our local food banks with our harvest food collection. During Advent and Lent we work together to fundraise for selected charities. We have close links with CAFOD.

### **Our organisation and Delivery of Religious Education:**

#### **Programme of Study:**

To fulfil the above aims and to address the four areas of study outlined in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory, 2012 – Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ - the 'Come and See' programme is used as recommended by the Diocese.

Each topic is introduced by the RE Co-ordinator with all staff, to ensure a deeper understanding is gained on background theology and teaching material.

To further develop links with parents/guardians, a Religious Education Newsletter is sent home once a term, prepared by the RE Co-ordinator, informing parents of the programme of study and ways in which they can support their child at home.

### **Process:**

Religious Education is taught through the process of *Explore, Reveal, Respond*. This follows the pattern of: the human **search** for meaning, God's initiative in **revelation** and the **response** in faith. This pattern is outlined both in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in the Curriculum Directory.

As the Directory states:

*'Teaching in Religious Education ....should help people be attentive to the meaning of their experiences, illumined by the light of the Gospel, so that they may respond to God more fully. Experience can also make the Christian message more intelligible.'* <sup>6</sup>

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

10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This does not include Collective Worship.

### **World Faith Studies**

As part of the Come and See programme, two weeks are set aside for the study of other religions, one in the autumn term and one in the summer term. Judaism, the root of our faith, is studied every year (Autumn Term) along with Islam, Hinduism or Sikhism (Summer Term) on a rotational basis. During our World Faith Weeks, pupils are given the opportunity to explore aspects of these religions through practical activities and, wherever possible, from input by representatives of other faiths. Through the study of other faiths and cultures, we prepare the children for life in an ever changing global and multi-cultural world, where people of different religions respect each other's beliefs and ways of life.

### **Resources**

1. All classes have a login to the 'Come and See' teachers book and supporting resources, both of which are online.
2. All classes have several copies of the Bible and one class copy of the Catholic Children's Bible appropriate to the abilities and age range of different children.
3. All classes have a particular focal area in their classrooms, to aid in class prayer and worship. This includes appropriately coloured cloths and display boards to reflect the liturgical year.
4. Additional resources mentioned within the 'Come and See' programme will be purchased where appropriate.
5. Staff have access to a centrally held resource centre of materials, artefacts, books, Bibles and artefacts linked with our study of other world faiths.

## **Celebrations:**

1. The class liturgy timetable is planned termly by the RE Co-ordinator and the Headteacher. The content is based around the themes set in the 'Come and See' programme and the Liturgical Year.
2. At the start of the week there is a whole school assembly, usually led by the Headteacher, an Assistant Headteacher or the Religious Education leader, with a religious or spiritual element focusing upon the Gospel from the weekend.
3. At the end of the week, there is a celebration assembly, which celebrates the good news, work and achievement of our pupils.
4. The Religious Education leader liaises with the Parish Priest (s) and prepares the school Masses for Holy Days.

## **Assessment and Reporting to Parents**

As a school, we follow the attainment standards as set out by the Bishops Conference.

Formal assessments take place once a term to identify progress and attainment and to assess the developing understanding of our pupils. Class teachers enter the assessments onto the school's tracking system. Class teacher provide evidence of assessment and achievement, which is compiled by the Religious Education leader. Time will be given during staff meetings for teachers to moderate work.

We meet with our deanery schools to moderate samples of RE work and to ensure consistency across our schools.

Parents are informed of their child's progress in RE at our termly parent teacher meetings and in the end of year report.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Religious Education Leader will monitor and evaluate the provision of Religious Education throughout the school by:

- overseeing the planning process – long, medium and short term
- monitoring the teaching of R.E. through regular observation, to evaluate its implementation
- analysing the 'Come and See' programme, its delivery and implementation
- work scrutiny by the Headteacher and RE Leader
- ensuring the prayer corners and focal areas are interactive
- co-ordinating, collating and moderating assessment
- working with deanery partners for consistency of practice
- liaising with outside agencies as appropriate, i.e. Diocesan Education Commission etc.

## **CPD Opportunities**

CPD opportunities are provided in-house as well as by the Diocesan Education Commission. The aim of our CPD is:

- for staff to develop their own religious and spiritual life
- to improve the teaching and learning of Religious Education
- to enable the staff to level and moderate attainment

- to increase and develop the knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith and Traditions
- as Induction for new staff and to offer support to non-Catholic teachers

### Roles

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

#### Governors:

- ensures that the school is following a programme of study endorsed by the Archbishop of Southwark.
- responsible for ensuring that 10% of the teaching timetable is dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education.
- ensuring that they receive regular updates on standards within Religious Education.
- ensuring that there is an appointed governor with the role of RE Link Governor to liaise regularly with the RE Leader.

#### 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
- ensures the high standard of Religious Education teaching and learning in the school, in conjunction with the leader for Religious Education
- liaises with the Religious Education leader, finalising a clear monitoring schedule and data analysis for Religious Education to measure the impact of the quality of teaching
- allocates a budget for the purchase of Religious Education resources and requirements.

#### The Religious Education leader:

- ensures high standards of Religious Education in our school
- ensures this policy is implemented, updated and reviewed
- monitors pupil progress and attainment through book and planning scrutinies
- provides training and staff development as necessary
- ensures accuracy of assessment and recording through analysing work samples and teacher assessment awarded
- updates staff on current issues and changes to the Religious Education curriculum
- purchases resources to support learning.

#### The teaching staff:

- uphold the Catholic ethos of the school and respect our aims and objectives for Religious Education
- ensure high standards of Religious Education in the classroom
- plan and teach all aspects of Religious Education according to Diocesan guidelines
- differentiate lessons according to the needs of the children
- track children's progress and attainment according to the criteria set by the Diocese

- keep up to date records of children's progress and attainment
- provide assessment levels and evidence of work to the Religious Education Leader each term
- report children's progress and attainment to parents, through parent's meetings and end of year reports
- prepare the children for whole school celebrations and class/year group liturgies.

The support staff:

- uphold the Catholic ethos of the school and respect our aims and objectives for Religious Education
- ensure the high standards of Religious Education with the children they support, in conjunction with class teachers.
- assist in preparing the children for whole school celebrations and class/year group liturgies.

The Parents/Home/Parish:

- are kept up to date regarding the progress and attainment of their child
- support the religious development of their children, academically and spiritually
- assist in preparing their children for the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

The Parish Priest:

- maintains school-parish links through liaison with the Headteacher, Religious Education Leader and Governors
- conducts whole school Masses and year group Masses as appropriate.

**Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy**

The Headteacher, Leadership Team and Religious Education Leader monitor the effectiveness of this policy throughout the academic year. The Headteacher and assigned Link Governor report to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy annually and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements.