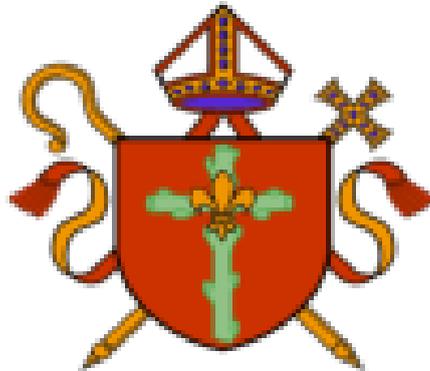




**St Mary's Catholic
Academy**



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



July 2019



St Mary's Religious Education Policy

Mission Statement

“Walk hand in hand with God, loving him, loving each other and loving ourselves, doing our best with the gifts he gave us to make the world a richer place”.

Rationale of Religious Education

- **Religious Education is ‘the core of the core curriculum.’**

...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.

*Religious Education in Catholic Schools,
Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000: para 4*

- **Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the Church. This is reinforced by Pope Francis who states, ‘Educating is an act of love; it is like giving life’.**

- **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.**

Excellence in religious education ...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.

*Religious Education in Catholic Schools,
Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 7*

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.¹*

Religious Education and Catholic life are central to the foundations and life of St Mary's Catholic Academy. We are members of God's Holy Family and belong to a strong multi-cultural Community in Hyson Green, Nottingham. Each person is recognised as unique, and is at different stages on their faith journey. Through our Religious Education, the sharing of our lives, our experiences, through sharing teaching and knowledge, we work together in order to deepen our faith, enabling us to come to know, love and serve God in our daily lives.

At St Mary's Catholic Academy we recognise that Religious Education is a lifelong process and we appreciate the significant opportunity we have in making a deep, lasting impression upon our children. Alongside Religious Education, we offer children opportunities to explore and nurture their spirituality, enabling them to strengthen and deepen their personal relationship with God. Religious Education in school is concerned with children understanding and searching for meaning in the world around them. The children are helped to gain a deeper understanding of their own identity and uniqueness, in a world of divergent beliefs and values.

Catholic schools are to be open, welcoming places, where children and young people's minds are opened to the revelation of Christ's teaching and his love for us all.

Pastoral Letter, September 2018
Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham

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 Nottingham Diocese. 10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This does not include Collective Worship time, which is additional.

The Come and See programme integrates the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Levels of Attainment and the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.

¹Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (2012:6)

Children explore the mystery of Faith through scripture and tradition. Links are made explicitly, in planning documents, to the resources. Plans are adapted to meet the needs of each unique cohort. Lessons are well resourced with both interactive stimuli, a variety of artefacts and by making cross curricular links. Lessons are also enhanced by the use of videos and creative tasks, including drama and music. There are three topics taught each term, and two 'other' faith units (one being Judaism).

Taking a whole school approach in using Come and See, we are confident that the breadth of the curriculum is being taught and that there is good progression from year to year. More information about planning and curriculum coverage can be found in the Come and See materials.

Following the Come and See programme closely ensures:

- Appropriate content for each age group
- Support when planning and recording
- Continuity and progression across the school
- Communal celebrations are possible (classes work on a shared umbrella theme)
- Diocesan training is appropriate to what we are teaching in school in order for staff to access training.

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 Educationshould 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.²

Methodology

A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used from across the curriculum, adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of pupils. Strategies may include:

Annotated pictures	Ethics games	Retelling
Asking questions	Freeze frames	Research
Blogging	Homework tasks	Role play
Brainstorming	Interviewing	Scaffolded writing
Concept Mapping	IT	Story boards
Creative writing	Labelling	Story telling
Debates	Liturgical dance	Thought tunnel
Discussion	Meditation	Trips
Drawing/sketching	Poetry	Visitors

² Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012:7

Inclusion

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme. Differentiation may be planned by task or by outcome. It is encouraged that where a pupil can voice a greater knowledge and understanding of their RE learning better than they can in written form, teachers and teaching assistants will scribe for pupils. No child should be restrained from attaining their best in RE due to difficulties with Literacy.

SEN pupils should access their respective year group topic, where possible. Work is tailored and differentiated to meet each child's needs. Where this is not possible (possibly regarding some topics in Upper KS2), children will explore the KS1 topic under the same umbrella theme (e.g. universal church) as their peers.

Other Religions

Two other religions are taught from EYFS to Year 6 following the programme of study in 'Come and See'. These are Judaism, which is usually taught in the Advent term, and Islam/Sikhism/Hinduism (on rotation), which is taught usually in the Pentecost term. At least one week's teaching and learning time per year is given to each. In order for children to gain greater knowledge and understanding of other world faiths, teachers are encouraged to make cross-curricular subject links in order that more curriculum time is devoted to other world faiths. Where possible, children will visit the respective place of worship or a visitor will be invited to lead a session in school. Staff with greater knowledge and skills will be consulted with also, creating first hand experiences where ever possible.

Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

- Assessment of standards is carried out according to Diocesan guidelines using the criteria set out in the End of Year Expectations in RE.
- Each teacher keeps a class record of pupils' progress.
- On entry to Foundation 2, children complete a Baseline, personalised to the school. The baseline is repeated at the end of the Pentecost Term in order to track progress.
- Children are targeted in response to the monitoring of RE data. Where children make insufficient progress or are working below age related expectations, children will be identified by the RE curriculum coordinator and class teacher. Target children are monitored closely to ensure expected progress. This is especially pertinent if a particular group shows a trend of working below expected standards. On-going monitoring ensures timely interventions are in place for these children.
- Each child builds up a portfolio of their assessed RE work. This portfolio contains three samples of work from each year group based on the Diocesan agreed task each term (three AT1 pieces). This portfolio follows the children through school showing progression.
- An in-house moderation meeting is held twice annually and in addition, the Catherine McCauley hub meet to moderate RE once a year. Prior to the moderation, the RE Curriculum Coordinator offers support to teachers in the planning and assessing of completed work if required.

- Examples from the school portfolio of assessed samples of work are presented for Diocesan Moderation at RE Coordinators' Moderation meetings in the Pentecost Term.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is on-going throughout the year. Informal 'drop ins' and work scrutiny takes place in the Advent Term. Formal observations supported by pupil interviews take place in the Lent Term and work scrutiny takes place in the first half of the Pentecost Term. Where new staff have joined St Mary's, further monitoring, support and training is likely, with the sole aim of supporting their teaching (planning, observations and work scrutiny. For example, experienced teachers work alongside new staff to plan and deliver high quality lessons.
- Pupil attainment is assessed at the end of each term and this information is used to ensure progress and achievement is recorded and tracked. Any children making insufficient progress are discussed at pupil progress meetings and additional support is organised e.g. through intervention groups, additional TA support in class. This is in addition to the target KS2 children established at the start of the academic year.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to Governors and the Our Lady of Lourdes Standards Committee termly and annually to the Nottingham Diocesan Primary RE Advisor – David Quinn.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Collective Worship

Provision of collective worship, monitoring and evaluation is outlined in the St Mary's Collective Worship Policy. Careful monitoring ensures worship at St Mary's meets the needs of all pupils and identifies whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

The Religious Education Subject Leader

Caroline Carberry, the Co-ordinator for the RE Curriculum has responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education, supported by the Senior Leadership Team, consisting of: Celine Toner, Interim Executive Head Teacher, Linda Valenica, Acting Head of School and Kerry O'Neill, Deputy Head Teacher (See Appendix 1).

Assessment and Record Keeping

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for overseeing the effective, on-going assessment and recording keeping process is maintained efficiently by all teaching staff.

Termly attainment is entered into the school assessment data base system (EAMAG), which is new to the school Advent 2019. Prior to this, staff entered assessments manually on paper. The DHT, along with the RE Curriculum Coordinator analyses attainment and progress at whole class and group level termly. This information is then used to inform action planning.

Home, School, Parish Links

We recognise the importance of parents as the child's first teacher and their role in their child's faith development is crucial. Parents and staff do everything possible to work in close partnership. There are many opportunities for parents to engage in school life.

St Mary's Catholic Academy seeks, in partnership with parents and parish, to develop

and nurture the Catholic faith of our children. We strive to bring pupils to a fuller understanding and knowledge of the Roman Catholic traditions.

On Holy Days of Obligation, when celebrated on a school day, the school children celebrate Mass with St Mary's parish community at St Mary's Church.

Children are prepared for Holy Communion and First Reconciliation at a weekly after school session which is delivered by parish catechists and Fr David. The Holy Communion Masses are well attended by staff from St Mary's School community. They are very special and proud occasions for our children and we like to make them feel special and supported.

Parents

We value the role of Parents who have a crucial role in their children's life and education. In order to build a positive relationship and strong bonds, we:

- Give a warm welcome when they visit our school.
- Provide termly curriculum overviews which inform them of the topics covered in class, as well as ways they can support their child's learning.
- Provide opportunities for them to offer support with their child's homework by sending home the first piece of work from each new topic.
- Keep them informed through our website, school blog and regular newsletters.
- Give verbal feedback about their child's RE achievements and progress at Parents' Evening and written feedback about their child's development at the end of the academic year.
- Hold regular assemblies and liturgies where parents are welcome to join the school celebration e.g. Harvest, Congratulations etc.
- Invite parents to be involved in all charity activities during the year for school or for the wider community.

Environment and Display

As people enter St Mary's Catholic Academy, they are greeted by a warm welcome and the vibrant displays immediately welcome and inform guests that God is at the heart of this special place - our school. We aim to promote our school motto – 'Walk Hand in Hand with God', through the environment and the relationships that are established the moment you enter school.

Each classroom has a special prayer area in a prominent place in the classroom and a display dedicated to current learning in Religious Education. Working walls display sources of belief, keywords and name artefacts that might be referred to when the

children are working. Driver words are also displayed to ensure children have clarity about their level of learning and what is expected in order for them to achieve the next desired step.

As you move around the school, there are a number of displays showing the children's religious art work, statues of saints and The Holy Family and prayer boards and prayer areas (including religious signs and symbols e.g. crucifix, rosary beads etc). Where possible, these displays are interactive. Children are encouraged to visit the Prayer room to pray quietly. Resources and pictures are available to support the children in prayer and guide their thoughts if they so wish.

Our chaplaincy team live by our school mission and share weekly missions for the children to follow e.g. to be joyful.

On the chaplaincy team display, each member shares a little about themselves, their faith and their hopes for the year ahead. They also display their current themes on their display which is updated weekly/fortnightly. The group's action plan forms part of the whole school priorities.

Religious Education Resources

Each class has an RE box with objects and fabrics suitable for all seasons of the liturgical year (for further details – see Collective Worship Policy).

Additional RE resources are stored in the Prayer room.

Each class teacher has access to Come and See resources (including online, interactive resources).

Posters

Candles

CAFOD materials

Bibles and Bible story books

God Story 1, 2 and 3

Church's Story 1, 2 and 3

Jewish and Islamic ritual objects

Collection of RE reference books, related to Come and See topics

Class Focus Area

Each class' focus area should be a prayerful space in which children are encouraged to be peaceful and respectful, at certain points in the school day. The prayer area should feature a cloth, reflecting the current liturgical season or a feast day or religious theme (e.g. orange/red for Pentecost), supported by ritual objects, signs/symbol and images. Objects in the prayer area may include pictures, icons, stones, bibles, flowers, bark, holy water, seashells and candles. Resources for the focus area are the responsibility of the class teacher and two prayer table monitors (per class) However, all children have the responsibility of maintaining the organisation, power and impact of the focus area. Formal audits of the prayer areas are completed termly as part of the monitoring cycle.

Wider community

The children at St Mary's enjoy being involved with the local community. Staff seek opportunities to share the spirit of the school in the community, including:

- Attend Holy Communion Masses at St Mary's and St Paul's
- Visiting the soup kitchen at St Paul's
- Visiting local other places of worship
- Trinity music festival
- Mary Potter Heritage Centre

Across the curriculum, we aim to deliver full engagement and learning for each child and this engagement enhances our children's progress, resilience and resourcefulness by facilitating:

- A curriculum that is constantly challenging, innovative and reflective of current affairs
- A rich school environment
- Direct mentoring support e.g. from the Behaviour Support Service and our Faith in Families Social worker, Beth Udoh
- A range of encounters with possible professions e.g. student from Nottingham University, Members of Armed and Emergency Services, Librarians
- A learning culture, giving the freedom to experience, experiment and discover e.g. Forest School for children across Key Stage 2
- Visitors who can offer the children first hand experiences e.g. War Veterans

Spiritual, Social and Moral Education

The Come and See programme encourages children to think about their relationships and act responsibly. Year 5 take on the responsibility of being Playground Buddies to younger children throughout school who may be finding building and sustaining friendships on the playground difficult. They receive training from a HLTA in school and are supported throughout the year by her. These buddies show care and gentleness, patience and kindness, developing strong nurturing skills as they help their younger friends resolve minor disputes and encourage new friendships. A selection of year 5 and 6 pupils take on the role of Sports Ambassadors and receive training from the Local Authority to fulfil this role. They work hard every playtime in key stage 1 to encourage healthy lifestyles. They also commit to running a Change for Life Club during the Lent Term. Year 4 take on the role of Reading Buddies to children in years 1 & 2. They work patiently and diligently alongside their buddy to promote confidence in reading.

St Mary's Behaviour Policy encourages children to recognise how their behaviour affects others. Children take personal responsibility for themselves, ensuring they follow the school mission through weekly statements to live by and the school values of resilience, appreciation, honesty, kindness, respect, responsibility and commitment. On the rare occasion when a child hurts another child, physically or emotionally, they are encouraged to show they are sorry, by using kind words and thoughtful actions, in the days / weeks ahead, in hope they will be truly forgiven.

Providing opportunities for children to develop their spirituality is a precious aspect of St Mary's school life. We promote a healthy spirituality by offering times for children to experience:

- A sense of awe and wonder
- Care for nature and living things
- Wanting to love and be loved by people

We offer the children such opportunities through times of quiet (lighting a candle, watching nature), keeping in touch with larger communities (parish groups, The Little Company of Mary), developing our outside area (working with the gardener, using the outside altar to reflect), singing, teaching our children to play, showing that relationships matter and modelling that everyone's dignity matters.

Marking

Religious Education work should be marked according to the school Feedback Policy. Work should be marked in relation to the learning intentions. The feedback should encourage children to reflect, analyse and should be interactive, often desiring a response from the child, in order to take their learning forward. Children should be familiar with the RE driver words and recognise them within their marking as their target to consolidate or achieve their next step in the RE learning. Marking should regularly refer to our school mission and school values in terms of how it is lived out and impacts on our daily lives.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years, as detailed below. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Completed by: Celine Toner & Linda Valencia

Date: July 2019

Approved by Governors: 26th September 2019

To be reviewed: September 2021



St Mary's Catholic Primary Academy



Primary RE Curriculum Co-ordinator Job Description

To be responsible to the Executive HT & Head of School for the monitoring of teaching, assessment and planning of the RE Curriculum based on the development of the children at each key stage. Monitoring occurs in order to support staff and should include classroom observation, book scrutiny, planning and discussion with pupils.

To support the management of resources and facilities for the Religious Education Curriculum.

To liaise with the Diocesan Department for Education particularly through attendance at the Co-ordinators' meetings, and inform the Head of School and colleagues of current standards and developments within Religious Education.

To attend appropriate In-service training for Religious Education, keep up-to-date with current developments and feed these developments back to staff.

To advise individual colleagues and induct new members of staff as required on the Religious Education process and teaching methods.

To set up and maintain a portfolio of work (including moderated sample of work) in order to monitor progression and continuity. Samples of work should reflect the appropriate End of Year Expectations for each year group.

To track data and use this, in consultation with the SLT, to set realistic targets in RE.

To ensure that cross-curricular concerns such as literacy skills, multi-cultural issues, equal opportunity, the use of Information Technology and PSHE are reflected in Religious Education.

In consultation with the Head of School to communicate with parents, governors and the parish community regarding issues associated with Religious Education.

To liaise with other primary and secondary colleagues, particularly within the Our Lady of Lourdes Multi Academy Trust

To maintain the subject files for RE

1. The Religious Education Policy and Guidelines
 2. Teaching plans which represent schemes of work in school.
 3. Assessment and monitoring procedures for teaching and learning and evidence of that monitoring.
 4. Audits and reports to Head teacher about progress made in RE.
 5. A record of Staff Professional Development in RE
 6. Data and current targets in RE.
 7. RE Action Plan
- Working with the Headteacher and colleagues, to undertake a regular audit/review of Religious Education in line with the school development plan.
 - To be familiar with the current inspection framework and to work alongside the SLT to produce the school SEF