

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



*Rooted in faith
Growing in love
Learning for life*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School Religious Education Policy

In our Catholic school, 'God is at the heart of our school'.

We recognise and value the sacredness of each individual in our community

As a Catholic school, the main vehicle for the delivery of the Mission Statement is through the teaching of Religious Education, through relationships and the celebration of our Catholic Faith tradition within our school and parish community.

Aims

- To create a Christian community where the Gospel values are evident in all aspects of its life, and to help pupils come to an understanding of these through experiencing and celebrating their faith.
- To nurture pupils' spirituality and to help pupils to know and appreciate the spiritual and religious aspects of life as expressed in the Catholic faith through the sacraments and their participation in them, particularly Eucharist and Reconciliation.
- To develop an open minded, reflective and enquiring response to the children's own environment and to those of others in the wider global community.
- To explore the relationships between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations and world faiths, so that pupils develop respect and knowledge of other religious traditions and cultures.
- To challenge and ask basic questions about human existence through various sources, so that they deepen their personal faith, commitment and respect for others.
- To develop religious and scriptural knowledge and to teach children to pray reverently and to participate in worship.
- To develop a knowledge and understanding of people, signs, symbols and their roles in the Church.
- To encourage an awareness of their moral responsibilities to people in their own community and the world around them, thereby helping each child to develop a sense of dignity, valuing themselves and others.
- To develop a respect for God's world and responsibility for it.

Ethos

We understand that these aims will only be achieved in an environment where everyone perceives themselves to be valued, loved and are learning to value each other.

Programme

The programme used in the school as the core of its RE provision is "Come and See" for Years 3 and 4. The new programme, from Catholic Education Service is the RED (Religious Education Directory) which has been implemented in EYFS, 1 and Year 6. In 2024, Years 2 and 5 will be moving to the RED and by September 2025 the school aims to be fully compliant with the RED. Other sources will be used to supplement this as deemed appropriate.

Provision

In accordance with the Bishops of England and Wales recommendation, our policy is that at least 10% of the timetable will be allocated to Religious Education. Two hours and 15 minutes for KS1 and two hours 30 minutes for KS2.

WORSHIP – see Collective Worship Policy.

See Appendix III – Strategies to develop prayer

CELEBRATING

In order to more fully understand and celebrate the faiths and cultures of peoples other than Christians, the children are given opportunities to explore other religions; all children study Judaism in the summer term. Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism are studied across the whole school on rotation during the summer term. Similarities are drawn with Christianity, more specifically, Catholicism. Activities and study focuses upon key themes such as feasts, relationships, community, places of worship etc. Artefacts and other support materials are available for each religion to allow children a more elaborate understanding of the aspects of other faiths. This theme is also explored through the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

LINKS WITH PARISH

Our links with the parish are mainly through the Mass. The new Parish Team settled in June 2020. Traditionally, clergy visit the school to deliver the Sacrament of Reconciliation to those children who wish to participate during Lent and Advent. All KS2 children visit the Parish Church in December for the annual carol concert. Children in Year 6 have a Leaver’s Mass in July.

Children learn about certain Sacraments at different times in accordance with the ‘Come and See’ and RED programmes. First Holy Communion, though wholly parish based, is supported in school with representatives of the teaching staff attending the parishes we serve. We then celebrate with the whole school community a “Going Forth Mass” where the children can wear their Communion clothes and their families can join in.

We encourage the children to participate in charitable events for organisations such as CAFOD, The Catholic Children’s society, The Good Shepherd Appeal, Oxfam etc. Children learn about the wider community through the study of other world faiths.

RECORD-KEEPING AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment in Religious Education cannot, and should not, assess the faith development of children. Learning about religion and learning from religion are assessed through the RED and Come and See topics. Only the knowledge they have acquired can be assessed.

This is achieved through discussions with individuals, by observations made in large group situations and by marking written work.

Assessment data is collected termly, reviewed and recorded on Target Tracker. Moderation meetings are organised internally and externally with other schools.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

In conjunction with the ‘Feedback’ Policy, work should be marked against the learning objective, and as soon as possible before the next lesson, so that where there are ‘Green for Good’ and ‘Think Pink’, the children are able to respond whilst the theme of the lesson is still concurrent. Many ‘Think Pink’ – particularly in KS2 - will invite children to reflect and endorse their own personal experiences.

However, in KS1 this will be less frequent as Verbal Feedback will be more prominent. An extended piece of writing will be planned for each topic where appropriate.

EXTENDING THE PROVISION OF CHALLENGING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

We will use strategies for developing the learning opportunities offered to the more able, gifted and talented children in RE, including:

- Raising expectations of achievement among staff, through sharing examples of the best work done by the most able pupils.
- Building up our resources for extension reading in each unit of the curriculum.
- Making more and better provision for enriching the language of religion and spirituality used by the talented pupil.
- Setting extension tasks based on fundamental or ultimate questions in relation to each unit of the curriculum.
- Using tasks from beyond the particular key stage to provide a challenge to the most able.
- Recognising and praising work which shows religious depth, profundity or particular features of excellence.
- Structuring classroom groups to enable the most able pupils to work together at the highest levels on suitable occasions.
- Using self-assessment techniques to raise pupils' awareness of their own achievements.

MONITORING

Religious Education will be monitored by:

- the Head and the subject leader checking medium-term planning;
- classroom observations by the subject leader and Head
- the subject leader monitoring pupils' R.E. books
- agreement trials to moderate assessment
- teaching and learning meeting(s) with the Head
- the subject leader and children monitoring Collective Worship
- the subject leader/Headteacher visiting classes and advising on focal areas.
- Support visits by the diocese

EVALUATION

Religious Education will be evaluated by:

- the knowledge and understanding of the teachers towards R.E
- pupil enjoyment of the subject
- the knowledge and understanding of the pupil
- the behaviour of the pupils towards others
- delivery of the subject
- informed planning
- appropriate assessment and recording using levels of attainment
- Scrutiny of pupils books each half term
- Pupil and parent questionnaires

RE DISPLAY

Each class has a dedicated area in the classroom for prayer and reflection. There is a prayer focus and display both in the reception area and the school hall. Prayer tables are interactive and they reflect the current RED/Come and See topic. The colours should reflect the liturgical year: purple during Advent and Lent and green at other times. During other feast days, the appropriate colour cloths are used. RE Displays should be forward facing and that the background colour remains green.

RE Displays and Prayer tables:

All prayer tables must have the following:

Crucifix, an appropriate bible (Good News bible), a candle, flowers, key words for the current R.E. topic and a prayer box. In September 2024, there has been the addition of a class prayer journal. Children should be given opportunities to use the prayer table in lessons for spontaneous prayer. The prayer table is draped with the correct liturgical colour. Prayer tables must be ready by the end of the first week of each term.

Lesson Procedures

Reflections must take place at the beginning and end of every R.E. lesson. (2-3 minutes). Children leading prayer at this time is encouraged.

Beginning

Children must be offered a way into their R.E. lesson and given an opportunity to distance themselves from their previous activity. It does not have to relate to the lesson they are about to do. It's a good idea to start with "As we gather together round the prayer table, and light the candle to show that Jesus is with us".....Examples: Close your eyes and think about one thing that happened in the playground that made you happy. Talk to God and thank him for your friends/Think about one thing you were proud of in your last activity. How can you make yourself and your teacher proud during your next lesson?

End

The reflection at the end of the lesson must be linked to the lesson

Have a focal point for the children to look at: Picture, candle, flower ,etc

Read out a prayer, poem or short piece of scripture

Play a piece of music and children to close their eyes

After a few minutes give the children something to think about

Invite children to write their reflection on a post-it and place on prayer corner if they wish

WITNESS TO OUR FAITH

Our children raise money for charity as part of our mission in Catholic Social Teaching. In this way, we donate to:

- Missio
- St Vincent de Paul
- CAFOD
- Open House (Harvest)

There is a section on the website with most recent information relating to our support for the Common Good.

SUBJECT LEADER TIME ALLOCATION

The Subject Leader has time set-aside and recorded in the Monitoring Schedule for monitoring purposes and for supporting other staff.

APPENDIX I

LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

Class liturgy
KS1 and KS2 liturgy
Christmas liturgy
Carol Concerts
Christmas service
Ash Wednesday
Stations of the Cross
Holy Week Liturgies
Easter liturgy
Reconciliation
Mass in school, class or Church
Harvest Festival
CAFOD Family Fast Days
Fairtrade Liturgies
May Liturgy
May Procession

Care should be taken that a variety of different children participate in each celebration. Children can be actively involved in preparing for worship and liturgy by:

- Allowing them to decide on the form and content
- Choosing the readings
- Praying in their own words in their own way
- Arranging the classroom, hall or focused display
- Welcoming visitors – preparing invitations
- Performing music, drama dance etc
- Bringing gifts, dressing up.
- Preparing a Gospel reflection

APPENDIX II

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYING WITH CHILDREN

It is important for children to be silent before God, to listen to him. They need to be familiar with the gestures of prayer. Time and thought should be given to create atmosphere and setting.

To help children develop a sense of prayer it is important to have places of quiet and reflection. This is developed within the classroom with an attractive focal area set aside with a candle and selection of appropriate books, key words and Bible references. This extends to communal areas such as the main display in the hall, the Prayer Garden and the School Chapel.

Each day should begin and end with prayer. However, prayer should occur at any time and any place in the midst of their everyday work.

STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP PRAYER

Help them appreciate the language line by line or phrase by phrase;

Use gestures, music drama;

Share them in small group situations;

Rewrite them in their own words;

Use simplified texts such as H Richards "The Our Father for Children" and "The Hail Mary for Children".

Write their own.

It is important to:

Enable pupils and teachers to relax, to use their breathing to help them relax

Make the best possible use of silence

Make the best possible use of music

Lead the children in a meaningful experience of traditional prayers

Lead the children to feel free to pray with openness and spontaneity

Have the courage, as adults to share with the children

Always respect their right to listen and be silent

Ensure that our prayer reflects the essence of our lives, joy and sorrow, a sense of belonging, a feeling of loneliness, celebration and peace, anger and upset

Introduce the children to traditional meditation techniques – stilling exercises, use of mantra rhythmic prayer

Prayer boxes and books

Next review June 2026

SW/AB/EJ