



## St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

# Religious Education Policy

***“Believe, Succeed and Soar.”***

Policy Updated	January 2025
Review Date	January 2027
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## Our School Mission

### ***We Believe, We Succeed and We Soar***

*Christ is at the centre of St. Mary's as we strive to nurture and care for our community and encourage them to Believe, Succeed and Soar. Through God's love, we support our pupils in recognising their God given gifts, strengthening their work as missionary disciples.*

*'Do little things with great love' St Therese of Lisieux*

The mission of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is that of Jesus Christ; to build a teaching and learning community where we show due regard for the development and understanding of the uniqueness and dignity of each person. At St Mary's, each child is valued as a unique individual, a child of God, made in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## Our Gospel Values

Our school values influence the whole school culture at St Mary's. They shape everything we do and every decision we make. They are the central thread, interwoven throughout our curriculum, our behaviour system and our pastoral support. Our pupils and staff endeavour to live these out every day.

### **With God's love we show:**

#### **Love**

**'My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you.' John 15:12**

We recognise God's unconditional love to be our source of love. A Christ-like love respects the talent of each person in our school.

#### **Respect**

**'In everything, then do to others as you would have them do to you.' Matthew 7:12**

We believe that, as children of God, we have a duty not only to respect our friends and teachers but also to show respect to our environment as we are stewards of the earth.

#### **Honesty**

**'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.' 1 John 3:18**

We show honesty in all we say and do, in the pursuit of justice and fairness.

#### **Forgiveness**

**'Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.' Luke 6:37**

We believe that mercy will be shown by the way we forgive others, finding God in all things.

#### **Generosity**

**'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Acts 20:35**

Just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, we have a role to serve our neighbours and the wider community. Through fundraising and prayer, we will strive to help the people in our world, our common home.

#### **Patience**

**'Jesus replied, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' John 13:7**

We remember to be patient and trust in God as we know he has a much greater plan for us. He allows us to be tested so that we learn to walk in his ways and trust in him.

## **Introduction**

As a Catholic School, Religious Education is at the heart of our curriculum as we strive to proclaim and live the Christian values taught by Jesus Christ, within the Catholic tradition. This permeates every aspect of our school life. RE is not taught solely as a curriculum area but as a way of life, promoting the gospel values, giving praise and reverence to God. With parents and Parish, we hope to lead children to a greater understanding of who God is and to celebrating with deeper faith and understanding, the liturgy of the Church. It is an opportunity for everyone to develop their own personal faith through word, action and to enter into a communion with God, made possible, through the divine work of Jesus his Son and the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is achieved through liturgy, collective worship, assemblies, lessons, including curriculum content, and roles and responsibilities throughout the school, which deepen our Catholic life and highlight our belief that Christ is at the centre of all that we do.

Religious Education is about the 'meaning' of life and the need to discover answers about human existence. As a Catholic community, we seek our meaning for life in God and in following the example set by Jesus Christ. We teach that God is love and faithfulness but understanding of this can only grow from our own experience of love and kindness. Every effort is made to create in the school and in the classroom, a community in which children know they are loved and feel confident, secure and wanted, in this way, religious education is at the heart of all we do.

### **The Nature and Purpose of Religious Education**

The whole curriculum of a Catholic school is based on the values of the Gospel and because we see all education as revealing the mystery of God, we recognise the following aspects of Religious Education:

- Implicit, or unstructured Religious Education – those opportunities which arise in the course of the school day through the curriculum or through relationships, which lead pupils to a 'religious understanding' of their implications. It is the policy of this school to use such opportunities as they arise.
- Explicit or Curriculum Religious Education - those planned or timetabled periods of time given to a systematic and comprehensive study of Religious Education in the classroom. This requires 10% of the length of the taught week for each Key Stage of education.

As well as school, the home and Parish are also responsible for the Religious Education of children. Parents are the first educators and so the co-operation and support of parents are indispensable at every stage of the child's religious and moral education.

In the religious development of the child in a catholic school, the atmosphere and ethos of the school is vitally important to foster the idea of community. The ethos must be tangible so that children can sense what is important and respond accordingly.

## **Curriculum and Implementation**

St Mary's Catholic School follows the religious programme 'Come and See' to explore the religious dimension of questions about life, dignity and purpose within the Catholic Tradition. Come and See is a Catholic Primary Religious Education programme for Foundation and Key stages 1 and 2. The programme of study, written by a group of experienced diocesan advisors was introduced across the Federation in September 2012 and has been warmly received by staff and pupils. The child friendly material provided within Come and See allows children to explore the teachings of the Catholic church using age-appropriate resources and activities.

Each year group from Foundation 1 to year 6 have their own list of focus topics to consider throughout the academic year. The topic will coincide with the church calendar; however, the depth in which the topic is explored depends upon the respective age of the child. For example, during Lent, whilst all children will learn about the plight of Christ, our Early Years children will consider the importance of growing and new life; Key Stage 1 children explore the effect of change and opportunities, with Key Stage 2 children considering the importance of self-discipline, sacrifice, death and new life.

At the heart of the programme is the mystery of God's self-revelation of love through Jesus Christ. Come and See gives pupils the opportunity to explore the mystery of faith through Scripture and Tradition. Links are made with pupils' own experiences and with the experience of other faith traditions.

The aims of the programme are as follows:

- To help pupils recognise and appreciate the religious and spiritual dimensions of life
- To encourage pupils to search for their meaning in life and address some ultimate questions
- To challenge them to examine their own life stance, their religious attitude, values and practice
- To create a religious ethos of love and understanding between staff and pupils

The 'Come and See' Programme will be followed across the whole school. Each class explores a different topic with the same themes based on the theological foundations of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Catechism and the revised RE Curriculum Directory. As far as possible, this scheme is enriched by using a wide range of resources to stimulate, engage and challenge the pupils. These include relevant film clips, music, posters, stories and use of the Bible, both hard copy and electronically.

### **Overview of Content**

'Come and See' is developed through three themes. They are Church, Sacrament and Christian Living. The basic question – belief for each season time is explored through three kinds of themes:

Community of faith – Church  
Celebration in ritual – Sacraments  
Way of life – Christian Living

#### **Church**

The Church themes occur in each season and each theme gradually builds on the understanding of the previous theme.

1. **Advent** - My story – my family – Domestic Church
2. **Lent** – Our story – local community – Local Church
3. **Pentecost** – The story – the worldwide community – Universal Church

#### **Sacrament**

Sacramental themes occur in each season and each theme gradually builds on the understanding of the previous theme.

1. **Advent** - Belonging – born into God's life (Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination)
2. **Lent** – Relating – God's love in our lives - Eucharist
3. **Pentecost** – inter-relating – service to the community - Reconciliation

#### **Christian Living**

The Christian living themes occur in each season and each theme gradually builds on the understanding of the previous theme.

1. **Advent** - loving- celebrating life- Advent /Christmas
2. **Lent** – giving – the cost of life-giving (Lent/ Easter)
3. **Pentecost** – serving in love -feasts to celebrate -Pentecost

Each theme is explored through a different topic in each age group.

## **Themes**

### **Advent Term**

The three Autumn themes are developed in the light of an understanding of creation:

Family - Domestic Church. Belonging – Baptism/Confirmation. Loving – Advent/Christmas.

### **Lent Term**

The three Spring themes are developed in the light of an understanding of Incarnation:

Community - Local Church. Relating – Eucharist. Giving - Lent/Easter.

### **Pentecost Term**

The three Summer themes are developed in the light of an understanding of redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit:

Serving – Pentecost. Inter-relating – Reconciliation. World – Universal Church.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Religious Education is of central importance and should be taught with the same systematic demands and rigour as other core subjects, taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment.

A minimum of ten percent of the weekly taught curriculum is assigned to the teaching of RE.

- Approximately 2 hours minutes per week in Key Stage 1.
- Approximately 2 hours 30 minutes per week in Key Stage 2.

The process for delivering the topics in 'Come and See' has three stages - Explore, Reveal and Respond which enable the pupils with the development of knowledge, understanding, skills and the fostering of attitudes. The process encompasses a variety of teaching and learning styles which enable the needs of individual pupils to be met.

**Search** – Explore (1 week) This is the introduction to the topic where the children's life experience is explored, the questions it raises are wondered at, shared, investigated and their significance reflected on.

**Revelation** – Reveal (2 weeks) This is the heart of the programme where knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith is revealed through the Word, in Scripture, Tradition, doctrine, prayers, rites and Christian living.

**Response** – Respond (1 week) This is where the learning is assimilated, celebrated and responded to in daily life.

Planning identifies specific assessment strategies for each topic, which are be integrated into teaching. Assessment also takes place through various assessment for learning strategies, including: classroom discussion; end of lesson reviews; end of unit reflections and assessment for learning marking tools.

## EYFS

Religious Education makes an active contribution to the areas of learning outlined in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage but has a particular and important contribution to:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language ☐ Literacy ☐ Understanding the world
- Art and Design

## Years 1 – 6

The structure within Explore and Reveal from Year 1- Year 6 comprises of the following sections:

1. Prayer
2. Learning intention: the overall focus of the session.
3. Content: some suggestions for input to develop the focus.
4. Scripture/religious artwork/hymn lyrics/prayer: will encourage the children to wonder and reflect on what it means
5. Some key questions: these questions will encourage the children to wonder and reflect on what they have seen or heard; other questions that may arise.
6. Independent/Group task or activity to apply learning
7. Reflection – AT2 and AT3 e.g. wonder cloud

The Respond structure is the same for all Key Stages.

1. **Remember:** the children will be prompted by a variety of means to demonstrate what they wonder about (AT2) and what they remember (AT1).
2. **Rejoice:** is the opportunity to celebrate the children's new knowledge and understanding of the topic. The children will contribute to the celebration by recalling and suggesting readings, songs and prayers.
3. **Renew:** is where the children can make an individual response to what they have learnt and experienced and consider how they may apply it to their daily lives.

## Other Faiths

Other faiths will be taught in line with the thinking of the Church. The formal teaching for this will begin from EYFS onwards. There will be 2x 'Other Faith Weeks' set aside for the teaching of Judaism in the Advent Term and another faith chosen from Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam in the Pentecost Term.

## EYFS

The educational experience of other religions will be an introduction through story and ritual objects. This learning will contribute to the Early Learning Goals.

## The process

**Look** – short introduction to the topic, starting with children's own familiar experience.

**Discover** – the main section of teaching and learning about the religion and includes a range of activities.

**Respect** – the plenary where children are given the opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt, appreciated and respected and what it means for the followers of that religion.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is focused by the overall aims and objectives of Religious Education. In 'Come and See', it is related to the concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed through the exploration of the themes and the learning outcomes of each topic. Assessment establishes what pupils know, understand and can do. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith. Assessment in 'Come and See' emphasises a wide range of achievement.

### **Baseline**

A base-line assessment will be carried out when children enter Reception. This is then repeated at the end of the year.

### **Informal Assessment**

Teachers assess pupils on a daily basis in RE. Every teacher has knowledge of what the children in their class are capable of achieving.

Regular assessments are made by staff at St. Mary's through:

- Assessment of written work
- Moderating of children's work
- Contributions made by the children through discussion and questioning
- Observation of children working on tasks and activities
- Observation of contributions made to classroom displays
- Assessment for/of learning marking tools
- Review and reflection at the end of a task, activity, lesson or topic

### **Formal Assessment**

Each teacher records the progress of his/her own class by using the online assessment tool OTrack, with termly teacher assessment recorded here. The RE Subject Leader monitors the progress of the class, groups and individuals. At the end of the academic year, using the assessments provided by the class teachers, the RE Subject Leader completes analysis of the RE data and this is used to celebrate the progress of the children in our school, identify any groups of children in the next academic year which may need extra support or challenge and to monitor individual classes' progress. The information shown on the analysis is shared and discussed with the Headteacher. The progress of the pupils at St. Mary's in RE is reported to the Governors.

### **EYFS**

EYFS will collect a portfolio of recorded and photographic evidence of children's experiences. Teachers in the Foundation Stage are not expected to submit samples of children's work until the summer term of Reception. They are expected to submit observational notes which provide evidence of attainment.

### **Inclusion**

Graduated Approach Forms (GAF's) are to be referred to when planning activities for children on the Special Educational Needs register where relevant. Children with a variety of additional learning needs will be considered and planning will reflect this accordingly.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of any new developments. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.