

Learning to love, loving to learn.



ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND WORSHIP POLICY

Mission Statement

'St Joseph's vision is that together we are the architects of the future, building lives on the firm foundations of the Gospel.'

Inspired by Christian values we aim to provide love and security within a curriculum designed to meet the complex needs of all individuals, in order to prepare them to take their place in the ever changing world of today and tomorrow.'

Religious Education and Worship

Religious Education and Worship support and flow from our Mission Statement, which was created by the whole school community and permeates all areas of school life. They are essential for the children's spiritual and moral development. They also contribute to the children's growing ability to form personal relationships and to their understanding of the curriculum as a whole. A curriculum at St Joseph's which is broad, balanced, relevant, meaningful and inclusive recognising that each child is unique and is created in the image of God and which we believe deepens and enriches their relationship with God, the creator and his creations.

We believe that the responsibility for children's religious education is shared by the parents, school and parish. The RE programme in school constantly refers to these links and begins with the children's religious experiences within the home, leading them towards a greater awareness of their parishes and the wider role of the church in the world.

Worship draws on all aspects of the children's lives and encourages their offering of their best to God and invokes his blessing on their future learning. Parents and members of St Thomas a Becket parish are invited to masses and assemblies and they are included in as many aspects as possible of the life and work of the school.

The values and language of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are also central to our ethos.

Responsibilities

"Catholic Religious Education is the 'core of the core curriculum' (Pope St John Paul II) and the foundation of the entire educational process."



Governors

- To provide appropriate support and challenge.
- To ensure that R.E. is taught as a core subject and is well resourced and monitored.
- To regularly review the identity of the school as a Catholic Community and to ensure that the Section 48 Self-evaluation is regularly reviewed and updated.
- To appoint as R.E. Subject Leader a practising Catholic and to ensure parity of status and remuneration with the leaders of other core subject areas.

Headteacher

- To ensure that the school's management style supports the Catholic ethos.
- To ensure that R.E. is taught as a core subject and that 10% of the timetable is designated to the teaching of R.E..
- To enable members of staff to enrich their own spiritual lives.
- To foster and maintain parish links.
- To liaise with other Catholic schools in Wandsworth L.A.

Co-ordinator

- To take part in the induction of all new teachers in matters concerning RE and worship.
- To monitor the quality of R.E. teaching and provide or arrange support for any non-Catholic class teacher.
- To provide support for all teachers with regard to planning and assessment of RE.
- To keep an inventory of resources and to keep resources up to date.
- To ensure that resources are easily accessible, utilised and respected.

Aims of Religious Education

At St Joseph's School it is our aim to provide faith development and religious knowledge for our children in a setting which is inspired by and seeks to live out the values of the gospel.

We do this by:

- Providing a systematic presentation of the Catholic faith
- Providing opportunities for our children to develop a personal relationship with God and support as they continue on their faith journey.
- Providing for our children the experience of belonging to a faith community
- Explicitly teaching Gospel values.
- Enabling the children to become familiar with religious language, symbols, signs and gestures of worship and prayer
- Helping children, according to their age, to respect and appreciate other faiths and to be aware of similarities and links between the Catholic faith and other faiths.

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The school endeavours to help children understand that religion is not only for learning but for living.

"The outcome of excellent 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, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life." (Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19) for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales 2012).

The Religious Education Curriculum

The programme used is "The Way, The Truth and The Life"

We have adopted a whole school approach to implementing the programme, where each year group follows its own programme of six topics which form part of the syllabus for each Key stage.

Cross curricular links are frequently made to enhance learning and understanding. Teachers are encouraged to explore a variety of approaches to the teaching of R.E. i.e. integrated with other curricular areas, topic based, subject specific lessons and through Circle Time and Philosophy for children.

Teaching about the Sacraments is carried out through "The Way, The Truth and The Life". Time is also allocated to teach aspects of the Mass and to reflect on the Sunday Gospel Readings. All children also receive the "Wednesday Word" weekly, to take home and share with their families to deepen their understanding of the Faith.

Other materials to be taught include the liturgical year, the Rosary, major feast days and devotions and aspects of the lives of some saints, especially those connected to the school such as St. Joseph and our House saints St. Patrick, St Francis, St Bernadette and St Teresa of Avila.

Recognition and respect for other faiths is addressed through the provision suggested in "The Way, The Truth and The Life" and in Key Stage 2, the children study the Jewish and Muslim faiths and make visits to the local Mosque and Synagogue.

The explicit teaching of Christian Values

Every month the whole school learn about and apply to their daily lives the "Value of the Month". A central display captures in a range of forms the work happening across the school.

We explicitly teach 22 core values on a two year cycle. The values were agreed after consultation with all members of the school community and reflect their views. We aim to



fully prepare our children for life in British society and for their role as citizens, able to make the strongest possible contribution to the Common Good of all.

Through our two year cycle, each value is taught in depth to enable our children to gain a greater understanding of what it means to live a good life and our teaching draws on examples from the life of Jesus and his welcome and inclusion of all and as such it underpins our teaching of British values too.

Classroom Practices

All classes receive RE teaching. Each class experiences a variety of teaching styles, including whole-class teaching, group or paired discussion and individual work. Children are encouraged to express their own ideas and developing concepts in their work and to make an individual response to the content of the lesson. The use of ICT is encouraged in RE.

All classrooms must have a "Holy Table" and focal point for prayer, reflecting the R.E. topic or Liturgical year and "Value of the Month" display.

Time Allocation

The Bishops of England and Wales recommend that 10% of school time be given to Religious Education.

For Collective Worship: 60 - 70 minutes per week.

For RE lessons per week:

Nursery 1 hr (am session and pm session)

Reception - Year 6 2hrs 30mins

In all classes the total weekly time includes two or three lessons at least, taught separately or as a block.

This time does not include time allocated to activities such as drama, art, creative writing etc. which may be connected to Religious Education.

Planning, Assessment and Recording

The RE Co-ordinator offers support with Topic Planning and Assessment. "The Way, The Truth and The Life" scheme provides each teacher with a Teacher's book, resource pack and assessment materials. "Stick,Mark,Boom" materials support the planning and assessment of R.E. and can be used to support peer and self-assessment and provide evidence of progress.

All plans are kept in the teacher's own file. Samples of planning are seen from time to time by the Assistant Headteachers. All annotated plans are monitored regularly by the RE Co-ordinator.



Assessment is ongoing throughout each topic and the principles and strategies of assessment for learning are embedded. "I can statements" and the Levels of Attainment in RE in Catholic Schools as agreed by the Bishops' Conference are used to inform judgements about pupils' progress and attainment.

The R.E. Co-ordinator has developed a portfolio of assessed samples of work to support teacher assessment. These samples have been assessed internally and externally via the Wandsworth Catholic Schools Network in collaboration with an external Consultant.

Special Needs and Differentiation

All children are unique and it is recognised that children are at different stages of development and this is as true for RE as for other subjects. Children's understanding of their faith is affected by their intellectual capacity and their home experience of religion. The work that they produce is also affected by any difficulties that they may have with literacy, pencil control or interacting with others.

The school recognises that some children have individual needs that require special support if they are to access to the R.E. programme effectively. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to plan effectively to meet the needs of all the children within their class.

Teachers meet individual needs by:

- Varying the level of instruction and discussion so that each child may learn something from each lesson.
- Setting differentiated or open-ended tasks drawing on a variety of skills so that each child may complete a satisfying piece of work or contribute to a group effort.
- Providing opportunities for children to use their knowledge from home or to rise to an intellectual or creative challenge.
- Valuing and affirming the individual responses of all children and commending children's performance for effort as well as achievement.
- Emphasising at all times the inclusive nature of the kingdom of God.

The school also admits some children whose families are not Catholic. These children are encouraged to participate in lessons, but their different faith backgrounds must be respected and their contribution valued.

Marking of work in Religious Education

In marking RE work, it is particularly important that the teacher should examine the child's effort in the light of the original learning intention. There should be a response from the teacher indicating recognition of the child's understanding, interest or effort,



especially when the child has made personal revelations or shown a strong involvement in the task.

As in other subjects, the teacher tries to disengage the specific subject learning from fluency and accuracy in writing and from artistic ability. This is not easy. The final comment may reflect the teacher's conversation with the child while the task is being completed rather than the apparent quality of the work on the paper.

Drawings by younger children are particularly significant and should, whenever possible, be briefly discussed with them as they give indications of the child's ideas and feelings, which may be scribed by the teacher.

As in other subjects, children should be encouraged to do their best. The children should be reminded that any targets set for writing apply to all pieces of writing in all subjects. RE work should be marked in accordance with the teacher's expectations of the child and comments on content should recognise the child's progress towards the learning intention of the lesson and are useful for assessment.

Links with Home, School and Parish

We recognise that parents are the principal educators of children in their faith. We believe a partnership between home, school and parish is the best way to support our families in this task.

We do this by:

- meeting with parents and discussing ways in which the school will endeavour to support them in their responsibility for the faith development of their children. (This also includes providing information on the RE scheme and the Catholic life of the school for families of other faiths).
- our published "on-line" curriculum
- providing a half-termly newsletters for parents about the RE programme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'.
- annually providing a written report to parents about their child's progress in RE
- sending home weekly copies of the "Wednesday Word" to every family.

Fr Davis and Fr Martin visit the school regularly. They contribute to the RE curriculum, by giving specialist input e.g. on the Sacraments, the Mass or the life of a priest. Fr Martin comes in to hear confessions in Key stage 2, say Class Masses and has lead Benediction. All Key Stage 2 classes when possible take it in turn to attend the First Friday Mass at St Thomas a Becket Church.

In Year 3, when the children are being prepared to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, the school works in collaboration with St Thomas a Becket Parish. Several members of staff join with members of the parish to become Catechists working under the direction of Fr Davis to prepare the children of the parish. The work



done in the school during the year supports and compliments that of the Catechists and parents. There is a Thanksgiving Assembly, for all those who have recently received their First Holy Communion and their parents which provides an opportunity to celebrate as a school family.

Collective Worship and Prayer

Worship has a central place in the life of our school community.

Collective Worship includes:

- A mass in the school or in St Thomas a Becket Church on Holy Days of Obligation, and special occasions and a Mass on or near the feast day of St Joseph for the whole school.
- A Welcome Mass in September.
- An Advent Mass.
- A Thanksgiving Mass for Year 6 as they prepare to leave the school.
- Whole school assemblies on Monday, Thursday and Friday. The Friday assembly is often given by a class, Thursday is the "Wednesday Word" Assembly and the Monday assembly is a Praise Assembly.
- Key Stage Assemblies every Wednesday
- Singing Assembly/Hymn Practice every Tuesday.
- Lunchtime and home-time prayers for all classes.
- Praying the Rosary every morning as a school family school during May and October.

Nursery children attend all class assemblies.

All assemblies are predominantly acts of worship. Any other announcements or celebrations are markedly separated from the main prayerful part of the assembly.

Prayer includes:

- Formal prayers to be learned by heart and recited aloud.
- Formal prayers with which the children are familiarised eg those used in the Mass
- Response prayers eg psalms, bidding prayers and litanies, in which all make the responses aloud.
- Prayers read aloud for listening.
- Prayers improvised for listening or repeating phrase by phrase.
- Prayers to be read silently eg display captions or class prayer books.
- Prayers composed by children for their own use.
- Class prayer books, which are taken home for children to compose prayers to share with the class and/or whole school.
- Collective meditation.
- Individual reflection or contemplation.
- Prayer of movement, dance or gesture.



The school endeavours to give all children a variety of prayer experiences. Each classroom has an area of focus for prayer, displaying items and pictures appropriate to the season and some written forms of prayer. Children are encouraged to choose or compose prayers for class use and to suggest prayer intentions. They may also bring items from home to display. Children's work is featured in this area.

Aims of Collective Worship

The aims of *Collective Worship* and what we hope to achieve through the collective worship in the school community are to:

- To provide opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with God.
- To support enable the spiritual development of each child.
- To enable each child to become familiar with the traditional forms of prayer used in the Catholic Church.
- To provide the children with experience of good liturgy
- To introduce a variety of formal and informal prayer settings and forms
- To facilitate growth in a knowledge of the person and teaching of Jesus Christ
- To encourage a social and individual moral consciousness
- To help children to experience a sense of loyalty and belonging to a worshipping Christian community.

Statement of Principles

In accordance with the aims stated above, it is the practice of the school:

- To provide opportunities for all to take part.
Each School Mass is planned by one of our Key Stage 2 Classes. They are responsible for choosing the theme (usually reflecting the Liturgical Year or influenced by "The Way, The Truth and The Life"), selecting readings, composing bidding prayers, choosing hymns, making invitations to the other classes and sometimes posters, bringing items for the offertory procession and flowers for the altar.
Teachers ensure that every child has a significant role to play at some time during the year.
The same policy is followed for the *Class Assemblies*, in which every child is seen or heard individually as well as collectively.
- To make worship relevant.
Themes are chosen through which links can be made between the Gospel and the children's own lives. Children's suggestions are used whenever possible. Themes of acts of worship are explored beforehand by the class which prepares the Mass or Assembly. These could be linked to the liturgical season or the topic being covered in RE.



Class Assemblies involve much use of children's own prayers, Scripture accounts, stories, poems, music, dance, drama and their work in other subjects such as science and geography.

- To build a worshipping community.
Teachers ensure that no child misses Assembly regularly for any other commitment such as intervention programmes.

Parents are invited to Class Assemblies by their children. The whole school community is invited wherever possible to all our acts of worship apart from daily class worship.

Spiritual Development

The growth of the spirit in children is promoted not so much by words as by experience. Through our curriculum, the school, therefore, endeavours to provide children with:-

- Experience of beauty:
The children's surroundings are made as attractive as possible. They are provided with beautiful things to see (pictures, natural objects, sculpture, objets d'art), to hear (recorded music, live instruments, poetry) to touch (flowers, fabrics) to taste and smell (cookery, shared food).

Things of beauty created by them are valued and displayed.

- Experience of wonder:
Children are given close contact with the natural world through the use of the school grounds and park for nature walks, as well as farm and seaside visits. They are encouraged to question and speculate about the origins and design of natural objects and creatures, and to marvel at their qualities. Visits from new babies and pets are also occasions for wonder and delight.
- Experience of feelings:
Children are encouraged to explore their feelings through imaginative play, stimulated by story, drama, dressing-up and appropriate toys. Emotions are stimulated by music and poetry, expressed through the creative arts and at times, reflected upon in words or in silence.

Much of this spiritual development takes place outside the RE lessons. It may be linked with religion by evoking the memories of children's experiences in the course of the lesson or by planning an experience as part of a lesson.

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The roles of all staff in promoting both spiritual and moral development are given emphasis and importance.

Moral Education

Moral Education concerns value judgements and choices of courses of action. In a Catholic school such judgements and choices are necessarily informed by the teachings of the Church. Discussion of moral issues therefore take place in many RE lessons, Assemblies and Philosophy lessons. Children are encouraged to reflect upon possible actions, to make judgements and to commit themselves to making the right choices in the future.

The RE programme provides many opportunities for this.

The Behaviour Management Policy is based upon the Catholic ethos of the school. It aims to support the development of self-discipline. It sets out positive expectations of children's behaviour and puts them in a moral context.

Children are encouraged in their daily school life to assume personal responsibility eg for their belongings, for tidying their work area and for following class routines. All children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions.

Moral issues which arise naturally in our Learning Challenge, enquiry based curriculum are discussed by the children. The teacher provides guidance on the Church's teaching and promotes the acceptance of responsibility for the care of the earth, and all its people, and the establishment of justice and peace.

The school's involvement with local charities such as Trinity Hospice and international charities such as Save the Children offer the children opportunities to develop a sense of social concern. Our project with the British Council and partner schools in other parts of the World enhance this work and further develop the children's understanding.

Circle Time and "Place 2 Be"

The Mental Health Foundation report entitled "**The Big Picture**" contains a worrying finding that one in five children may need help with mental health problems.

Circle Time

Circle Time is used in most classes and can make a very positive contribution to the mental health of the pupils. It is a listening time and helps children develop an emotional language. Our experience shows it improves behaviour and achievement in school, helps prevent personal and relationship problems developing in school and provides inter personal skills that we hope will help children in later life. We use Circle Time to focus on relationships, morality, team building, peer support, social skills and celebrating success.

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Place 2 Be

Place 2 Be is fully integrated into the school. It offers support to pupils through one to one counselling and/or group work including Circle time. It also offers support to parents so that they are able to support their children. Place 2 Be supports the emotional health and well-being of our pupils and supports our catholic ethos.

Resources for Religious Education and Worship

Each class has the appropriate Teacher and pupil resources for "The Way, The Truth and The Life" scheme and access to "Stick, Mark, Boom" materials.

Each class also has a basic set of resources, including an appropriate Bible or set of Bibles.

There are a selection of Resource Books, artefacts and tapes, stored in a central area. Large posters and pictures are kept in the paper chest outside the hall.

We are building up our supply of stories to compliment our RE scheme of work and they can be found in the appropriate sections of the library.

POLICY REVIEW TERM: BIENNIAL

Policy reviewed: February 2017

Next review: February 2019