

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



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| | Author: | SENIOR LEADERSHIP |
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School motto

Our motto is 'Let Your Light Shine' and this underpins all we are aiming to achieve at St Mary's. It enables us to prepare the children to be life-long learners who achieve their unique God-given potential.

School mission statement

Our aim is for children to leave our school with a love of God and with strong values of respect for one other. We intend to do this by ensuring our Catholic ethos is at the core of our curriculum. This helps children to develop their social and moral code, as they build their sense of uniqueness and self-worth as an individual. We have excellent links with the Parish community. All classes undertake a range of charitable acts and outreach work in the local and wider community so that children see themselves as part of the community and develop social responsibility.

The school was founded by and is part of the Catholic Church. The school is to be conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and in accordance with the Trust deed of the Diocese of Hallam and in particular:

- ***religious education is to be in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, disciplines and general and particular norms of the Catholic Church***
- ***religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic church;***
- ***and at all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.***

In light of this statement within the Instrument of Government, Hallam Diocesan schools are to provide Religious Education for all of their pupils. In this context, Religious Education is a taught programme, which is distinct from liturgy, prayer and the general Catholic life of the school. In Catholic schools, the programme and provision follow the directions issued by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. These directions are laid out in the Statement from the Low Week Meeting of the Bishops in 2000, the RE Directory (2023) and subsequent statements. The Bishops have reaffirmed their requirement and expectation that 10% of the length of the taught week for each key stage of education be devoted to Religious Education in all schools up to the end of Key Stage 4.

Each school's Religious Education policy will be rooted in the educational vision of the Diocese, the school's ethos statement and their unique mission. The Religious Education Subject Leaders will work in close co-operation with the Headteacher, governors, parents, SENDCO, parish priest or parish representative as appropriate.

Rationale of 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.'*¹
- 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.'*¹
- 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 rigour as other disciplines.*² 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

¹ Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 4

² Religious Education Directory, Catholic Education Service, 2023, p.6

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.”³

- 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.
- 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, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life”.*⁴

The Aims of Religious Education as stated in the RE Directory are:

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;
2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church’s moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils’ imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.⁵

Religious Education - Curriculum Time Allocation

We recognise two aspects of Religious Education in our school:

- *Implicit or Informal Religious Education:* those opportunities which arise in the course of a school day to lead pupils through curriculum content or through discussion of relationships and issues 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 timetabled or planned periods of time given to an explicit consideration of Religious Education in the classroom.

10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education, as required by the Bishops’ Conference. This does not include ‘Collective Worship’.

Programme of Study

It is Diocesan policy that primary schools will fulfil our Bishop’s requirement by using a CES approved RE programme. Schools will follow the programme guidelines, including those for the teaching of other world faiths and for the assessment of pupils’ learning. The Diocesan Schools’ Department, working collaboratively with other diocesan advisers and colleagues in diocesan schools, will provide additional advice and resources as appropriate.

To fulfil the above aims and to address the programmes of study outlined in the Religious Education Directory, 2023 the ‘Magister Resources: Firm Foundations’ RE programme is used as recommended by Hallam Diocese. Additional material will be used to complement the programme and to address the distinctive circumstances of the school and the needs of its pupils.

³ Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 7

⁴ Religious Education Directory, Catholic Education Service, 2023, p.6

⁵ Religious Education Directory, Catholic Education Service, 2023, p.6

Process

Religious Education is taught through the three ways of knowing: *Understand, Discern and Respond*.

- **Understand** deeply the **meaning** of sacred texts, religious beliefs, sacred rites, and the lives of individuals and communities who are shaped by these texts, beliefs, and rites.
- **Judge wisely** in response to **different interpretations** of the meaning, significance, and implications of texts, beliefs, rites, and ways of life so that they can arrive at justified conclusions about what is true, what is good, and what is beautiful.
- **Reflect personally** and **with integrity** on what they have learned and consider the **implications for action** these may have for their own lives and the world in which they live.

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 Directory.

As the Directory states:

*The objective we are striving to provide...is a forum where 'reason enters into dialogue with faith', where the pursuit of truth opens the mind and then the heart to address the 'deepest questions of the human soul.'*⁶

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.

Inclusion and Equality

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme.

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

Other Religions

Other religions are taught from Year 1 to Year 6 in the 'Dialogue & Encounter' Branch in 'Magister Resources: Firm Foundations'. The scheme covers Judaism, Islam and a Dharmic belief (Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism) which are taught in the final term. At least three week's teaching and learning time per year is given to this.

Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

This year, St. Mary's is collaborating with Magister Resources and trialling assessment methods to establish a robust and consistently-applied process across school.

- Assessment of standards is carried out following Diocesan guidelines and is responsive to updates issued.
- Each teacher has a class record of pupils' attainment.
- A school portfolio of pupils' work contains samples of work from across the school, covering a range of abilities.
- Moderation take place in-house and externally with our local Catholic schools and schools across the Diocese.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning involves a variety of activities including learning walks, lesson observations, book looks, pupil voice and data reviews. Governors and clergy are actively involved in these quality assurance processes.
- Pupils are assessed at the end of each branch and this information is used to ensure progress and attainment is recorded and tracked on EAZMAG.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to families in a written report at the end of each academic year.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to Governors in the Headteacher's report.

⁶ Religious Education Directory, Catholic Education Service, 2023, p.3

Leadership of the Subject

Alex Downing and Lucy Kerry, the Subject Leaders have responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education.

Policy Monitoring and Review

The governing body is required to regularly monitor Religious Education and ensure necessary allocation of time, resources and accommodation for the subject. The governors will be involved in the school self-evaluation process through the development of the Catholic Self-Evaluation Document (CSED). They will receive termly reports on the development of the Religious Education within their school.

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Governors, Headteacher and Subject Leads and updated annually.

APPENDIX 1

Primary RE Subject Lead Job Description

- To be responsible to the Headteacher and colleagues for the monitoring of teaching, assessment and planning of Religious Education based on the development of the children at each stage. Monitoring occurs in order to support staff and should include classroom observation, book scrutiny, planning and discussion with pupils.
- To manage resources and facilities for Religious Education.
- To liaise with the Diocesan Schools' Department particularly through attendance at the Co-ordinators' meetings, and inform the Headteacher 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 in order to monitor progression and continuity. Samples of work should reflect the appropriate attainment target strands and levels.
- To track data and use this, in consultation with the Headteacher, 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 PHSE are reflected in Religious Education.
- In consultation with the Headteacher to communicate with parents, governors and the parish community regarding issues associated with Religious Education.
- To liaise with other primary and secondary colleagues.
- To maintain a Subject Leader's file containing:
 1. The Religious Education Policy and Guidelines
 2. Medium term 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 Headteacher about progress made in RE.
 5. A record of Staff Professional Development in RE
 6. Data and current targets in RE.
- 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 consult with the Headteacher to complete the school's CSED document.
- To keep up to date with any changes to the Programmes of Study (Religious Education Directory).