

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Under review January 2015

MISSION STATEMENT

At St. Patrick's school we will provide excellence in education inspired by the practice of our Catholic Faith.

We will make the most of all our gifts in our safe, happy and caring school. With Jesus Christ as our friend and model, we will help each other to grow in the love of God, developing self esteem, and a love of learning.

Vision and Values

This policy was drawn up with the current vision for the school in mind namely that.....

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School will be a model of educational excellence, consistently within the top 5% of schools in England. The School will have achieved this through the delivery of a creative and rigorous curriculum which inspires and motivates all our children to realise their God-given potential. Children will leave St Patrick's happy with who they are, confident in their abilities, polite and articulate, and ambitious for their future growth.

Our values are rooted in the teaching of the Catholic faith.

We value

- **every individual** as a unique gift of God
- **community**- our school, the parish and the other diverse communities
- **virtue** especially the Christian virtues of Charity, Faith, Hope, Justice, Temperance, Courage and Prudence which will help us to grow in communion
- **learning**- excellence in it and the efforts which bring progress in learning and understanding.
- and we value being valued- our **reputation** which will partly depend on our contribution to the common good.

This policy reflects those values.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the staff and governors of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School and with the Diocesan Religious Education Advisor.

WHAT IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ? - A DEFINITION

RE is a means by which children are supported and encouraged in their faith journey, acquiring knowledge and experience of beliefs, practices and values of the Catholic faith as well as knowledge of and respect for other faiths.

"The outcome of religious education is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills - appropriate to their age and capacity - to think spiritually and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life."

Religious Education needs to be regarded

*“...as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth which with other disciplines present their knowledge. However it should not simply be regarded as one subject among many, but rather **it should engage in interdisciplinary dialogue.***

...Religious Education in schools underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational and catechetical activity of the whole school.”

Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012

For this reason Religious Education informs and impacts on the teaching of all curriculum subjects.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Curriculum Religious Education in our school aims to promote:

- knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life;
- knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose;
- the skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.
- to develop the spirituality of the individual child

The objectives of curriculum Religious Education in our school are:

- to develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the Church, and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold;
- to develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behavior and of the vital relationship between faith and life, life and faith;
- to encourage study, investigation and reflection by the pupils;
- to develop appropriate skills: for example, to listen; to think critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically; to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively; to make informed judgements;
- to foster appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth; respect for the views of others; awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural, multifaith society.

(Religious Education Curriculum Directory 1996)

HOME/SCHOOL/PARISH PARTNERSHIP

We believe that a child's religious education cannot be undertaken by the school alone. Religious education begins at home, long before the child comes to school, with the parents being the child's first teachers, providing the child with his/her first religious experiences. It is important that the school works in partnership with the parents and the parish in supporting children on their faith journey.

We provide the children with **the Wednesday Word**. We aim to inform the parish about the RE topics and about the school in general via a display board in church. Work from throughout the school will be displayed along with information regarding school events and news. In addition, school information is published in the parish newsletter.

The school aims to regularly support parish events and causes. The school aims to attend the Sunday 11am family mass once a term where the children participate in the leading of the ministries.

At present the school chaplain is the parish priest. The school chaplain visits classes at different times during the year to provide children with opportunities to enrich their prayer experiences and to explore passages from scripture, **to celebrate the Eucharist**, or simply to strengthen relationships between children and priest. The visits, prepared in advance with the class teacher, may take different forms e.g. exploring a gospel story, stations of the cross, meditations, a thanksgiving service etc. The important thing is that they build on what is already happening within the class, helping the children to take another step on their faith journey. Each class also prepares a class mass once each term to which parents are invited.

The chaplain celebrates mass in school at the beginning of the school year and is involved in the Leavers' Mass at the end of the Summer term. He also celebrates mass in school on other special occasions during the school year.

The parish priest together with members of school staff invite parents to attend a weekly prayer group held in school every Tuesday morning.

The parish priest can be contacted by parents or by the school with parental consent to talk through problems and issues with individual children.

The priest is available as a valuable source of reference for teachers and also provides a vital link between school and parish.

RE PROGRAMME

At present, we follow Dr Margaret Carswell's scheme of work .provided by the Islington Religious Education Project using the whole school 3 year cycle of topics. Two/three topics are studied each term, with each topic lasting approximately four weeks.

RE constitutes 10% of the curriculum time at both Key Stages.

There should be at least three RE lessons per week. These lessons can be cross curricular. RE can be taught along with other subjects. All of these lessons need to have a distinct RE objective- but the activities can support learning in other areas of the curriculum. If the Passion were being

taught, the children's learning would also be enhanced in Art, Literacy, PSHE Drama, etc but there would be an underlying RE objective running through all the learning.

RE topics are planned on individual planning sheets, specifying the learning intentions, key words, teaching, pupil activities, including differentiation where appropriate, and any assessment opportunities.

Each teacher has copies of the following documents for their own reference:

- What We Are to Teach
- Broad Areas of Attainment
- Religious Education Curriculum Directory
- Levels of Attainment in Religious Education

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RE

Knowledge and understanding of beliefs, teachings and sources

Here pupils will be learning about what people believe, about the faith they hold and how that helps them to make sense of the world; they will learn about the teachings of different religious traditions and the answers those traditions give to questions of meaning and purpose; they also will learn about the sources that different traditions use to guide them in their understanding of faith, belief and practice; they will learn how to engage critically with such source material.

A range of teaching strategies and learning methodologies will be employed depending on the individual teacher, the needs and abilities of the children and the nature of the activities being undertaken.

Knowledge and understanding of celebration and ritual

In this strand pupils will be looking at the ways in which faith is celebrated; how that takes different forms in different times and for different traditions; they will be able to explore different liturgies (the public worship of the Church) and different rituals (such as the festivals of a different tradition) and the place of actions, words and symbols within them; they will learn about the significance of these celebrations for believers and see how the spiritual life can be analysed and expressed.

Knowledge and understanding of social and moral practices and way of life.

Pupils will learn about the ways behaviour is influenced by what people believe, whether that is in religious practice (e.g. actions) or their general way of life, for example the ways in which the Catholic Christian interacts with the world; they will learn about the ways in which religious belief shapes their lives and the way they see and interpret society and the world; they will learn to understand the religious and moral basis for certain belief systems.

Work will be differentiated in terms of activity or outcome according to the needs and abilities of the children.

Approaches will include whole class teaching, group activities and individual work. Children will have opportunities to work individually as well as co-operatively and collaboratively, developing their own knowledge and expertise as well as sharing their experiences with others.

A great deal of work will involve thought-provoking discussion, encouraging the children to develop their moral and spiritual consciences, helping them to become aware of the implications of different kinds of behaviour and challenging them, enabling them to understand that they are part of society and do not exist in isolation to it and thus, have influence over it.

THE WIDER CURRICULUM and MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The formation of the children as religiously literate and morally developed young people is not confined to the curriculum religious education lessons. In the light of our Mission Statement we understand moral development to be about the growth of each person as a moral decision maker. This involves the formation of a moral conscience and the motivation to behave in a moral way. We strive to base moral development in our understanding of the truth about the human person as revealed by God. The human person is not for self alone, but to live in, with and through the community.

We aim to help children to make good decisions by helping them to consider others (School Behaviour and Anti Bullying and Racial Equality Policies), by involving them in decision making through the Student Council and class discussion work.

We aim to motivate them to work for the “greater good” in a positive way, e.g. collecting for Lenten charities or working towards an award for Virtuous (Good) Behaviour.

Spiritual and Moral Connections

English

Through the teaching of English pupils are given the opportunity to recognise, reflect on and identify with the experience of others. Pupils are also encouraged to develop a growing awareness of moral questions and moral choices.

Mathematics

Mathematics permeates creation. There is a beauty of different approaches to mathematical investigation. There is a truth in reaching correct conclusions, through co-operation, writing, discussion, logging and evaluating guides children towards development. Opportunities for reflection, respect for achievement and learning, leads to praise and reward.

Science

Through the teaching of Science and Health Education respect for oneself and others is encouraged. The visits to places of environmental importance give the children a first hand opportunity to see the beauty of God's work and enable them to reflect on and debate issues surrounding the environment and our responsibilities. We make a clear distinction in Years 5 and 6 between the scientific explanations for the origin of the universe the 'how' of things coming to be and the Christian explanation of why things came to be as a result of God's great love for men and women. We are clear and make clear to the children that there is no contradiction between Science and Religion.

History

Through the study of history children learn to recognise and reflect on the experiences of others, to reach beyond their own knowledge, experience and imaginings. We encourage pupils to search for the truth and to consider peoples opinions. They learn to look beyond their own experience and empathise with others. They learn of heroic deeds and achievements and of moral dilemmas. The study of history helps children study ways of searching for peace and harmony with others and in carrying out God's wish for us to love and care for others. They learn about the use and abuse of power and to question and look critically at the world. They can be helped to analyse and reflect on their own responses to moral problems and to be encouraged to think rationally and impartially.

Geography

Geography enables children to study their own environment and the wider world. In looking at the magnificence of God's creation children can be encouraged to reflect on the wonders and beauty of the universe and can try to understand the way God works in the world and in our lives. We can work with the pupils in considering ways in which we can contribute to God's creation. We can discuss the importance of governmental decisions affecting the environment and learn of the moral dilemmas faced when altering the natural world to develop modern industries, roads and homes. We can study the interdependence of communities and our responsibilities to each other in the world.

Art

In the teaching of art we encourage children to express their innermost thoughts and feelings through the study of shape, form and colour. Through learning artistic skills they can express their imaginative thoughts. In the study of the artistic works of other artists they can appreciate the skill and beauty of their works. They gain an understanding of human creativity and how we can respond to God and contribute to God's creation. Through art we can give joy and pleasure to others.

Physical Education

Through PE children can develop and care for the bodies that God has created and to appreciate the wonder of the human body. They can express themselves through physical efforts and an appreciation of line and form. They learn to work as a team and to respect others gifts and talents. They learn the importance of perseverance to love and develop their skills.

Music

Through the teaching of music children can often obtain an insight into the beauty and wonder of God's creation. The opportunity to learn the skills to play a musical instrument or to use the human voice to help develop perseverance, but also joy and wonder at the sounds created. Music can help in contemplation and spiritual renewal. Music helps us communicate with others and share in the performance of a work through active involvement or through appreciation in listening. The appreciation of the works of composers and musicians help us to respond and contribute to the marvels of God's creation.

Design and Technology

Through the teaching of design and technology children learn about the discipline of planning and organisation and structure. They learn to use their skills to create models. They can marvel at the works of inventors and designers who contribute to God's creation through their inventions. They can learn to respect the needs of others and ways in which inventions can help the lives of others. They need to consider the effects of machines and inventions and to respect the skills needed to bring designs to fruition in each stage of their manufacture.

Information Technology

The teaching of IT is seen in all areas of the curriculum. The rapid development of information technology is another wonder of God's world, but it also leads to an opportunity to discuss with children how it can be best used for the good of mankind. The possibility of rapid communication with others around the world can be a source for good, but also can create moral dilemmas.

PSHE

Personal Social and Health Education provides further time for reflection and strategies for promoting good (virtuous) behaviour. It also affords time for links between the practise of the virtues, our faith and what the DFE defines as British Values to be drawn. For example, the virtue of Temperance is emphasised in Paul's letter to the Ephesians where he urges them to "bear with one another" despite their differences, and is connected to the modern British emphasis on the importance of Tolerance of others with different political or religious beliefs.

It is precisely because we value the Catholic faith so highly that we can understand and value other individuals' and communities' beliefs and views.

PSHE is focussed on our relationship with others. As Pope Francis points out other people 'prolong the incarnation' for Christians since Jesus said that whatever we do to others we do to him. So we owe each other reverence as well as respect, and need to see Christ in others in our daily lives.

Our teaching within PHSE and the work done will foster the practice of the virtues of Charity, Faith, Hope, Justice, Temperance, Prudence and Courage and reflect the value that we place on each individual, community, excellence and effort in learning and on caring about what others think of us and the trust which they place in us (our reputation and contribution to the common good).

Part of the teaching in the wider curriculum concerns the 'things of Caesar' and has nothing or little to do with our faith, but the faith and fostering the children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development remains central and frequently informs lessons other than curriculum religious education.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

It is possible to comment on the level of a child's knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes which have been taught in RE and can be demonstrated through the child's discussion, written work and the way the child interacts with others. It is difficult to assess the precise level or nature of a child's personal faith.

The Assessment section of each topic provides children with the opportunity to comment on what they have gained from it. The children will complete an assessment piece of work and this will be assessed using the Agreed Understandings as provided by the Diocese of Westminster.

Teachers should complete a Religious Education Assessment Recording sheet at the end of each topic.

Marking should be undertaken in accordance with school policy. However, it is essential that all the Key Words for each topic are corrected so that children can learn and use these words effectively.

Written comments, in relation to the learning intention, should be affirming, encouraging, thought provoking and challenging, above all being sensitive to the children's needs. Children are encouraged to pay attention to the presentation of their work at all times.

Teachers are encouraged to make cross-curricular links when planning RE, incorporating opportunities for ICT and extended writing where possible and links with other subjects as appropriate.

Children record RE work mainly in RE exercise books with additionally, some work for display, and some RE work may be found in books from other subjects.

Comments relating to RE are made on the Annual Report to Parents.

MONITORING

In order to monitor RE teaching and learning, the RE leader views RE planning throughout the school. If time is available, the leader works alongside class teachers. RE lessons should be reviewed on a regular basis.

The leader and staff moderate children's work once a term, viewing a selection of children's work to ensure continuity and progression in RE and also to ensure that the content of topics is being covered appropriately.

RE teaching and learning is observed with the same rigour as all other core subjects and with regard to its central position within our curriculum. RE has the most prominent position in the monitoring cycle, and in the annual cycle of lesson observations.

The leader will regularly study the RE Assessment Recording sheets to monitor pupils' attainment in RE.

OTHER FAITHS

For two weeks of each school year, pupils from the end of Year One onwards should study other faiths. The whole school will focus on one particular faith for one week during each of the longer terms.

All children will study Judaism at their own level and then will study one other faith each school year.

At the Foundation Stage and the beginning of Year One, pupils will study stories from the Old Testament during the 'Other Faiths' weeks. In addition the children will learn about a variety of festivals from other faiths.

A collection of other faith resources and artefacts is currently being developed in school. The School Library Service also provides a range of valuable resources which will supplement our own resources.

Where possible, people from other faiths will be invited into school to talk to the children and the children will make visits to other places of worship, museums etc to enhance their understanding of other faiths and to promote social cohesion.

WORSHIP

“Where two or three meet in my name, I am there among you.”
(Matt 18:20)

Each school day begins with an act of worship in the playground in which the children, staff and parents participate.

We come together twice each week for whole school assemblies. During these times there are opportunities for traditional prayer, quiet reflection on different themes and ideas as well as song. Once a week, there is a whole school hymn practice. Once a term, each class prepares an assembly, either celebrating the theme on which they have been working, or focusing on a relevant aspect of the liturgical year, to share with the rest of the school community - children, parents, teachers and support staff. Once a term, each class is also responsible for preparing their own class mass to which parents are invited.

Mass is held in school at the beginning and end of the school year, with masses at other times of the year for special reasons.

Liturgy and worship take different forms depending on the nature of the celebration. Children participate in a range of worship and liturgical celebrations including:-

- Masses - both class and whole school
 - in school and at church
 - communions and blessings
- Assemblies
- Reconciliation services
- Thanksgiving celebrations
- Meditations
- Celebrations of work and events
- Special days
- Feast days

Children learn about and celebrate feast days as they occur in the liturgical calendar within RE lessons and assemblies. Each year they celebrate the feast day of their class saint.

SACRAMENTS AND THE SCHOOL

Preparation for the sacraments of First Holy Communion and First Reconciliation is parish based. The school supports and reinforces work undertaken within the parish programs. The school celebrates Holy Communion by presenting each child who has received the sacrament of Holy Communion with a special gift.(cross, prayer,)

Children who have already received the sacrament of Reconciliation have opportunities for Reconciliation within the school environment e.g. at class Penitential services or Reconciliation services.

Sacraments are discussed and explored as part of their religious teaching. It is hoped that through their experiences throughout the school, the children will develop their understanding of

the nature of a sacrament, that it is a sign that God is present in their lives and is always able to come to them at different times in their lives in very special ways.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/SOCIAL INCLUSION

“There are many different gifts, but it is always the same spirit; there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord. There are many different forms of activity, but in everybody it is the same God who is at work in them all.”

(1 Co:12:4-6)

A central message of the Catholic faith is that although we are all different, God loves each one of us equally, regardless of race, gender or ability. Therefore it is vital that we recognise and cater for the individual needs of the children, acknowledging that all children have different gifts and talents and that these should be celebrated.

Work (activities and resources) should be matched to the abilities of the children to enable them to achieve success, helping them to develop to their full potential and developing a positive self-image.

We aim to ensure that resources do not reinforce any kind of stereotypes and that they do reflect the school community.

It is important that children are provided with images which reflect the multi-cultural society in which we live, enhancing their awareness and knowledge of other faiths and cultures, respecting the rights of the individual at all times. This is essential in preparing children to take their places in a multi-cultural society.

DISPLAY AND PRAYER FOCUS

Regular RE displays will be maintained in class. These will take the form of displays on designated boards relating to the topic being studied to stimulate further work or to celebrate the work that has been undertaken. Each class has a prayer/focus area to stimulate reflection and prayer. A display in the entrance hall will be maintained throughout the year, changing according to the liturgical year or highlighting particular issues or themes within the church.

RESOURCES

Teacher resources, specialist resources, posters and Prayer Focus resources are stored in the Lower Resource (Science) Room.

Other resources for children can be located in the Library.

‘Hymns Old and New’ is generally used during assemblies although other music and song books are available.

RE resources will continue to be reviewed, updated and replaced as money becomes available.

INDUCTION OF NEW COLLEAGUES

New colleagues will be helped to put the RE policy into practice and become familiar with the Margaret Carswell scheme of work through meetings with the RE leader and discussion with other members of staff. This will help to develop their own faith journey and encourage them to share any appropriate insights with their pupils.

All staff attend CPD at the Diocese.

ROLE OF THE RE LEADER

In keeping with the Diocesan Guidelines, the RE Leader's role is:

- To help improve the quality of the teaching and learning that the pupils will receive in RE
- To write and keep relevant documentation up to date
- To be involved in the process of assessment, recording and reporting
- To monitor the quality of teaching, the progression and continuity of RE throughout the School
- To offer support and advice to colleagues
- To provide resource requirements
- To maintain a central display in the entrance hall
- To liaise with the Diocesan RE Adviser and to attend co-ordinators meetings
- To report back to staff on any courses that have been attended
- To liaise with the Parish Priests in preparation for planned liturgies, masses celebrations and assemblies and to organise rotas for the delivery of these
- To work in partnership with the Senior Leadership and Management Teams
- To organise themed weeks for example on prayer or the Old Testament
- To prepare reports as required by the Headteacher for the Governing Body

MONITORING THE RE POLICY

The headteacher and RE leader are responsible for monitoring the RE policy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bishops' Conference of
England and Wales and CES

CURRICULUM DIRECTORY 2012

Pope Francis

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL