



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

July 2017

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Mission Statement

In following the Gospel values of Jesus, we are called to love, to learn and to respect one another.

Aim

In the light of our mission statement we aim to enable the children to know God, to understand the relevance of Christian teaching and display Christian values in their relationships with others.

Objectives

1. To help children become more aware of themselves and their feelings and develop sensitivity to others.
2. To nurture a sense of Christian values in children i.e. caring, sharing, listening, forgiving.
3. To help children deepen their relationship with Christ through prayer and worship.
4. To explain the Catholic faith and help the children to understand the Gospels of Jesus and the relevance of the Good News in today's world.
5. To develop respect for the world and an awareness of human responsibility to creation.
6. To help children reach an understanding and respect for other people's faiths.
7. To develop understanding and respect for others and the uniqueness of each individual.
8. To ensure that the liturgical year is reflected in the life and activities of the school.

At St Joseph's we work together to provide an atmosphere in which everyone is helped to reach their full potential. We try to promote within each child a positive self-image, a sense of ownership and a natural curiosity.

We hope to see in our school community the values of God's kingdom: prayer, truth, justice, love, forgiveness and peace. We want St Joseph's to have a living faith in which Religious Education is right in the centre of our school practice and permeates all areas of the curriculum.

To fulfil our aims and objectives we use 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' programme. Links are made with the children's own experience and integrated into Literacy and topic areas, wherever possible. Children are also introduced to other faith traditions.

'Learning and Growing as the People of God' comprises of seven stages (one for each age group).

The main themes running throughout the programme are:-

- Seasons of the Church
- Ourselves and our relationships with others
- Families and friendships
- Belonging to the community - home, school, parish, world
- Growth in faith
- Scriptures
- Creation
- Celebrations
- Church
- Sacraments

The 'This is our Faith' scheme is also used to support the strategy.

The Scheme of Work for RE-entitlement

Religious Education is allocated 10% of Curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference (this includes Mass). Prayer, Assemblies, Christmas Plays, Circle Time, PSHE and Hymn Practice are not included in this time. At Christmas, during Holy Week and during some parts of Sacramental preparation, RE is taught in blocks.

Links with other curriculum areas

Much written work in RE can be linked to the English curriculum. It also contributes to PSHE by providing opportunities for children to explore what is fair and unfair, to recognize what is right and wrong and to understand and exercise personal, social and moral responsibility. In RE pupils reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues which develop their knowledge and understanding of other people. Opportunities are also sought to link the RE curriculum to the foundation subjects such as Art, History, Geography and Music. The teaching of RE is therefore approached through a variety of activities including storytelling, drama, music, visits, discussions, pictures and art. RE is therefore taught in a cross-curricular way in addition to explicit subject teaching.

Legal Right

St. Joseph's is conducted in accordance with the rites, practices and observances of the Catholic faith. Parents have the right to withdraw their children both from RE and collective worship, but it is anticipated that those who specifically choose Catholic education will fully support the spiritual and religious life of the school.

Worship and Liturgy

Collective worship takes place in our school every day

(1)	Monday	Whole-school Assembly
	Tuesday	Individual class prayers/Class assembly/ Class mass/Liturgies
	Wednesday	Meditation Reception, KS1 and KS2
	Thursday	Individual class prayers/Assembly-KS1
	Friday	Praise Assembly

The whole school assembly, led by the Principal or Vice Principal, often focuses on the readings and themes of the Sunday Mass or has a specific moral and spiritual slant.

The Friday Praise Assembly gives an opportunity for individual children to be praised for improved work or demonstrating the Catholic virtues. Children who have succeeded in sport, music and other extra-curricular activities are also praised at these times.

- At St Joseph's we see our assemblies as important Acts of Worship and so they are carefully structured to include prayer and liturgy.
- We have staff prayers at the beginning of each day

Meditation

St Joseph's is a school in which meditation takes place in a range of groups or settings.

For example:

Staff morning prayers
Class meditation
Whole-school meditation

The purpose of this programme is to deepen our knowledge and relationship with God and to provide a first-hand understanding of God's love through the experiential process of meditating.

By helping children to experience Christian Meditation for themselves, we believe children will discover more about themselves and encourage them to enter into the mystery of true faith.

Our children will meditate for periods of time which are age-appropriate. After providing initial in-service training, we will update our practice each year

Celebrating the Mass

Whole school Masses are held in the school hall on Holy days of Obligation and at significant times in the school year e.g. Christmas, Easter and the beginning and end of term. Children from different classes are involved in the preparation of the School Masses.

In addition, every year group celebrate a class Mass or liturgy every term.

During the year, each Key Stage One class has a class liturgy or a Mass.

Parents and the parish community are invited to these class Masses and liturgies, all of which are followed by an opportunity for refreshments. This expresses the school's desire to offer and share hospitality with both parents and the wider parish community.

The teachers and children prepare the readings, music and processions for the 10.30am Sunday Mass twice per term.

- New children and their parents are welcomed by the parish in the first school-led Sunday Mass of the Autumn term
- There is an Enrolment Mass for children and adults at the beginning of each of the sacramental programmes
- There is a Celebration Mass after each sacrament

Non-Liturgical Celebrations

Non-Eucharistic Liturgies are also held at

- Harvest
- Advent
- Lent

- There is an opportunity for older children to take part in a liturgical celebration and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Christmas and Easter.
- A tradition of 'handing on' of the faith from Year 6 to Year 5 is held as part of the Pentecost celebrations each year in preparation for the celebration of Confirmation in the Autumn Term.
- As part of the programme during the residential at Alton Castle, there are many opportunities for engagement in liturgy.

- In RE lessons, we ensure opportunities for reflection and liturgical experience.

Prayer

- Children are taught daily prayers and also the various prayers and responses of the Mass as appropriate to their age.
- Each classroom has a prayer corner and children pray together with their teacher at the beginning and end of the day and at lunchtimes.
- Children are given opportunities for spontaneous prayer and individual reflection both in collective worship and in the Classroom.
- The formal prayers suggested for Key Stage 1 and 2 in 'This is our Faith', are also introduced to the children at appropriate times. We also use the traditional prayers which are customary in our faith.

The School and Community

The links between the school and the community are characterised by:-

- Parents and other visitors, including parishioners, being always invited and welcomed to our celebrations of Mass and assemblies followed by an opportunity to meet together over refreshments.
- Visitors from different faiths occasionally coming to lead our assemblies during the year.
- During the year we are greatly helped in our Bible Study of the Old Testament by a visitor from another Christian tradition. He helps to bring alive the scenes and people from the Old Testament and leads us to a deeper knowledge and understanding.
- During Christian Unity Week a Unity service is held where we meet with groups of children from neighbouring schools. We share music, song, poetry, drama and dance to help us celebrate that we are all part of God's family.
- To develop this practice, we have initiated a reciprocal programme in the locality.
- At St Joseph's we encourage our children to show concern and charity towards others in the community. They become involved in charity fund-raising events throughout the year especially during Harvest and Lent.
- At Harvest the children are encouraged to bring gifts of food, which are displayed during the service and then sold back to the parents again. The proceeds are then sent to help others in need.

- CAFOD is one of the main beneficiaries of our fundraising.
- During Lent, Key Stage 2 children organise their own fund-raising events and the money raised goes to a charity of their choice.
- At various times during the year and particularly at Christmas and Easter the children sell soft toys to raise money for Mary Stevens Hospice. (The local Hospice)
- The Good Shepherd Appeal (Fr. Hudson) is supported during Lent.
- Children are encouraged to support charity events which become necessary because of circumstances arising throughout the year e.g. Hats for Haiti, Callum Loveridge Appeal.
- Children preparing for Confirmation help with parish lunches for Senior Citizens.
- The SVP Masses in church for the house-bound, followed by tea in the Parish Centre, provide opportunities for our children to become involved in parish life.

We hope that through these and other activities, our children will become aware of the needs of others, both at home and afar, and will develop sensitivity, generosity and a sense of responsibility towards their neighbour.

Preparation for the Sacraments

The children's understanding of the Sacraments is developed throughout their years at St Joseph's through a great variety of experience and celebrations in which the children take part. We feel that the sacramental awareness of the children is cumulative and developmental.

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

These are an integral part of 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' programme.

The children in Year 3 are prepared for these sacraments using a parish based programme in conjunction with what we do in school. The programme based on 'The Greatest Gift' involves the school, home and parish. This begins in September when the children are enrolled and the catechists are commissioned. Throughout the year, there is a parents' session led by Father Des, a Saturday morning session with the children and a Sunday celebration at the 10.30 Mass. Children from the parish who do not attend St. Joseph's are always welcomed and receive extra tuition from Catechists on additional Saturday mornings.

The programme is divided into six main themes:

- ❖ Belonging
- ❖ Listening
- ❖ Making Peace
- ❖ Caring
- ❖ Sharing a Meal
- ❖ Thanksgiving for New Life.

Children receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during a special family service following the Making Peace session.

The First Holy Communion celebration takes place on a Saturday morning close to the feast of Corpus Christi. All children participate through readings, prayers, drama and processions. A special Thanksgiving Mass and party take place the following weekend.

Confirmation

Preparation for this Sacrament is also an integral part of 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' for children in Year 6. Other sources are also used.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is school and parish based and children from the parish who do not attend St. Joseph's are always welcomed. They receive extra tuition as appropriate.

The Sacrament takes place in the Spring term and usually, Bishop David visits the school prior to Confirmation.

As part of their Confirmation preparation, the children in Year 6 help at the monthly lunches for the elderly of the parish. When possible, they also assist at the SVP Masses for the sick.

Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting

Parents receive an annual written report on their child's progress based on teacher assessment at the end of the year. Teachers also discuss children's work and progress with parents at parent consultation meetings in the Autumn and Spring Terms. There is also an Open Evening held during the Summer Term for parents to look at their children's work and discuss end of year reports.

Pupil interviews are to be carried out annually by the coordinator.

Baseline assessment is carried out in Reception class soon after entry to school. This assessment is repeated again at the beginning of Year 1 to ascertain progress.

Book scrutinies take place twice a year by the coordinator, Principal and link Academy Committee representative.

Lessons are observed in accordance with an agreed protocol (Dudley HR).

Teachers assess three children annually against the End of Phase Expectation bands. The annotated samples of work are moderated by staff. The work is stored in the coordinator's assessment file.

Work is marked and questions referring to the Learning Objective are asked for a response by the children.

Resources for RE

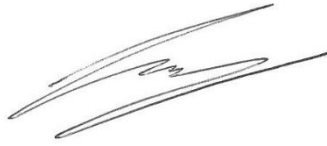
To assist the delivery of RE in our school, we aim to review, extend and replace our resource bank regularly. This exercise is carried out annually, although resources are provided on an 'ad hoc' basis in response to need or new initiatives.

An example of the scope of our resources:

- Bibles
- Prayer books
- Teachers' Resources
- Assembly Books
- 'Big Books' of Stories
- Noah's Arks
- Jigsaws
- Prayer bags
- Online resources
- Music for Liturgies
- CDs
- DVDs
- Artefacts
- Multi-Cultural resources
- Library resources
- Resources in the Classroom
- Clothes, drapes, candles and symbols for reflection
- Meditative support books
- Circle time resources
- Dressing up clothes
- Mass set
- Children's Sunday Liturgy Books
- Teaching the Mass Resource Box

Reviewed and Amended: July 2017

Signed (Principal):

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that are difficult to decipher as specific letters.

Signed (Chair of Academy Committee): _____