



# ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

*At St. Mary's, we live and learn sharing God's love.*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**"As a Catholic school community, we strive to live as a Christian family, showing our love for God in the way we treat each other with dignity and respect, and by promoting the development of each child as a unique individual."**

September 2024 - our Mission statement has been considered by our staff and our Faith In Action group, and it is felt that it still encapsulates the mission shared by all at St. Mary's.

**OUR CORE MISSION IS TO SERVE OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY, ENSURING GOD IS AT THE CENTRE AND CHILDREN ARE AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO. WE WILL ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT EVERY CHILD TO ACHIEVE THEIR UNIQUE, GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL.**

### OUR AIMS

- 1. To ensure that our school is a place where Christian values are central to the lives of the whole school community. We will fulfil this by:**
  - creating a school atmosphere and tradition within which is developed a sense of pride, identity and purpose by each individual pupil, members of staff and parents
  - encouraging behaviour which shows respect for everyone and contributes to successful learning both in and outside the classroom
  - joining together to worship
  - treating everyone with dignity and respect, and so showing our love of God and each other.
- 2. To maintain a caring school community in which each individual is given a sense of security and personal recognition. We will fulfil this by:**
  - enabling every pupil to achieve their full potential in academic progress and achievement
  - endeavouring to be an inclusive school for those with additional needs by encouraging and supporting pupils who find aspects of their learning difficult
  - encouraging our children to recognise and appreciate achievement in all its forms, and helping them to fulfil their own personal ambitions and aspirations by developing lively and enquiring minds.

**3. To foster the understanding and support of parents and the wider community.**  
**We will fulfil this through:**

- involving parents in our wider curriculum, and through the provision of opportunities for our children to acquire the skills and experience necessary to ensure lifelong learning
- spreading the Gospel values of love, justice and peace, through our prayer life, our support for charities and our involvement in the local community.

**AIMS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The aim of Religious Education at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is to promote an R.E. programme with objectives which consider and account for the religious and educational needs of our children:

- those from supportive Catholic homes
- those for whom the school may be their first and perhaps only experience of church
- those from other Christian traditions
- those from other faith backgrounds. R.E. is for 'all'. It is a collaborative activity that respects and promotes the child's innate capacity for wonder, awe, reverence and imagination for the spiritual.

We aim to provide:

- a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the church, the central belief that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life
- opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection in implicit and explicit ways
- the language of religious experience
- a 'literacy' in religious activities, places, stories, symbols and rituals, people and objects so children can continually deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively
- an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society
- a systematic presentation of Christian events, messages and way of life, in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life and between faith and culture
- appropriate materials about other religions and world views present in our community and our world today and the skills to engage in respectful dialogue with those whose views differ from their own
- an understanding of, and compassion for, people less fortunate than ourselves, and the importance of charitable activities

## THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

To fulfil the aims and objectives of our school and those of Religious Education, we use the two programmes recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. These are

- Come and See in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The Religious Education Curriculum Directory, 'To know you more clearly', in Nursery, Reception, years 1, 2 and 3

### Overview of Come and See

'Come and See' is developed through three themes. They are

- Church
- Sacrament and
- Christian Living.

It is explored through:

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

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

1. **AUTUMN** - My story – my family – Domestic Church
2. **SPRING** – Our story – local community – Local Church
3. **SUMMER** – The story – the worldwide community – Universal Church

**Sacraments** - The Sacramental themes occur in each season time and each theme gradually builds on the understanding of the previous theme.

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

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

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

Each theme is explored through a different topic in each age group.  
The themes of each season

## **AUTUMN**

The three Autumn themes are developed in the light of an understanding of creation:  
Family - Domestic Church.  
Belonging – Baptism/Confirmation.  
Loving – Advent/Christmas.

## **SPRING**

The three Spring themes are developed in the light of an understanding of Incarnation:  
Community - Local Church.  
Relating – Eucharist.  
Giving - Lent/Easter.

## **SUMMER**

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.

## **TOPICS**

Staff should make themselves familiar with the themes/ topics for the age – range taught, by referring to pages 44- 46 of 'Come and See'.

## **THE PROCESS**

### **Knowledge/understanding/skills/attitudes**

The process for delivering the topics in 'Come and See' has three stages –  
Explore  
Reveal and  
Respond

This enables the pupils to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.  
(Refer to Come and See pages 20-22).

The process encompasses a variety of teaching and learning styles which enable the needs of individual pupils to be met.

## **Years 4 to 6**

The structure within Explore and Reveal comprises of the following sections:  
1. Learning focus: the overall focus of the session.

2. Content: some suggestions for input to develop the focus.
3. 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.
4. Some suggested activities: this section offers some activities. The children are not expected to complete them all; they are guidelines. They need to be differentiated where possible and take into consideration the needs and abilities of the children.

The Respond structure is the same for all year groups.

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.

## Planning

### Come and See

- Long-term planning – *Come and See* (b) page 23 plus pointers for long-term planning\*.
- Medium-term planning – *Come and See* (c) page 23 plus pointers for medium-term planning\*.
- Short-term planning – *Come and See* (d) page 25 plus pointers for short-term planning\*.
- Differentiation – *Come and See* (f) page 26.
- Additional learning needs and/or disabilities (g) page 26
- \*These are provided by the Archdiocese.

## Overview of the Religious Education Directory – To know you more clearly

### EYFS to Year 3

Schemes of work for each branch are provided by the Primary Advisory Team from the Archdiocese. These are used to support planning by teachers at St. Mary's.

Ways of Knowing		
Understand	Discern	Respond
See	Judge	Act
What will I see and hear to help me understand?	How will I discover more?	What can I do now?

## **The Process - Branches and Lenses**

There are six branches in 'To know you more clearly' - one per half term. The branches are:

1. Creation and Covenant (Autumn 1)
2. Prophecy and Promise (Autumn 2)
3. From Galilee to Jerusalem (Spring 1)
4. From Desert to Garden (Spring 2)
5. To the Ends of the Earth (Summer 1)
6. Dialogue and Encounter (Can be Summer 2 but can also be throughout other branches if and when appropriate.)

Each branch follows:

- Here
- Believe
- Celebrate
- Live

At the end of each branch and lenses the children will:

- Understand
- Discern
- Respond

### **Planning**

Each year, six branches will be taught, two each term.

With 2½ hours of RE per week, a branch should last for half a term.

### **Long Term Planning**

The Religious Education Directory sets out the programme for the year.

### **Medium Term Planning**

The RE subject lead provides a Scheme of Work and associated resources which has been planned by The Archdiocese of Liverpool.

### **Short Term Planning**

Short term planning is the responsibility of the class teacher who uses the agreed planning model.

The class teacher will: -

- Allocate time for each branch to be taught and covered
- Plan the branch to ensure achievement of the expected learning outcomes.
- Select appropriate activities for the whole class or groups of children.

## Assessment

### **Guidelines for the Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Religious Education**

Assessment is focused by the overall aims and objectives of Religious Education. In 'Come and See' and 'To Know You More Clearly' it is related to the concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed through the exploration of these themes and the expected learning outcomes for each topic. Assessment establishes what children know, understand and can do. ***It does not assess faith or the practice of faith.***

Cumulative knowledge of children's understanding and progress must be used to inform overall judgements when undergoing the process of assessment. The RE subject leads complete moderation of samples of assessments to ensure consistency in levelling and also to support staff in their work.

Each teacher tracks the progress of his/her own class. This is done termly, with teachers completing Excel tracker sheets, in line with all other subjects. RE subject leads analyse the progress of the class, groups and individuals.

The information shown on the tracking sheet will be shared and discussed with the head teacher and RE Link Governor each term. The progress of the pupils in RE is also reported to the Governors termly.

### **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 the staff through the:

- Assessment of written work
- Moderating of children's work/formal assessments
- Contributions made by the children through discussion and questioning
- Observation of children working on tasks and activities set
- Observation of contributions made to classroom displays
- Reviewing at the end of a task, activity, lesson or topic.

### **Formal assessment**

#### **Come and See**

Alongside this, formal assessment is undertaken using the standards so that each theme is assessed formally. This follows the cycle provided by the Christian Education Department.

The tasks set by the Liverpool Archdiocese Department for Christian Education are followed. These tasks are assessed by the class teacher with samples given with 'context sheets' to the RE Subject Leader for moderation, which happens internally and externally at Cluster Meetings. Each teacher retains all assessed pieces of work.

The formal assessment provided by the Diocese forms only part of a teacher's judgement of the level a child is working at in RE. Informed judgements are made using a wide variety of evidence, including children's responses in class, written work, drama, and artwork.

### **Religious Education Directory (RED)**

There is no prescribed assessment approach in RED. But there are clear expectations for each age phase, at the end of the year group teaching pages, and these will be used for assessment.

**EYFS – p71**

**Age 6 – p95**

**Age 7 – p113**

**Age 8 – p131**

To assist with the assessment process, all children being taught from RED will complete a task at the beginning of the branch and then repeat the same task at the end of the branch.

At the beginning – children will be asked a question (verbal or written responses as appropriate to the age and ability of the child). This will be asked 'cold' before any teaching of the content is delivered. This will inform the teaching of the branch, as it will be adapted depending on the children's prior knowledge.

At the end – the children will be asked exactly the same question as they were at the beginning, to demonstrate their learning through the branch.

All year groups will complete this on a leaf shaped outline, to show their growing understanding as they progress through the branches.

Foundation Stage staff will complete a floor book, which will include recorded and photographic evidence of children's experiences.

All other year groups will record their work in an RE book, alongside a floor book which is used as appropriate.

### **Evaluation of Learning**

Evaluation is an important element in Religious Education as it

- 1) provides feedback to individual children on their achievements and progress through:
  - Informal discussions
  - Regular and constructive marking of work
  - Compilation of floor books.



- 2) informs colleagues of the progress made and achievements of pupils to inform future planning by the sharing and passing on of:
  - Summative records
  - Floorbooks
- 3) informs parents /carers of progress and achievement through:
  - Written reports
  - Parent and teacher discussions
  - Assemblies
  - Displays of children's work
  - Photographic evidence/posts on ClassDojo
- 4) informs parents, governors, parish and external agencies of the content and quality of Religious Education provided by the school and the achievements made by the pupils through:
  - Curriculum documents
  - Curriculum meetings
  - Displays of work
  - Religious Education assemblies
  - Headteacher's report to governors
  - Photographic evidence

### **Staff Development**

- The RE subject lead/s attend training days and subject lead meetings organised by the Archdiocesan Education Department.
- The head teacher attends meetings organised by the Education department
- RE subject leads belong to a local cluster
- The RE subject leads report back to the staff as appropriate.
- CPD opportunities are open to all staff, who ask the RE subject leads or head teacher if they wish to attend.
- Termly RE staff meetings take place.

### **Communication**

- Time is always available at staff meetings for information throughout the year, and staff are able to speak to the RE subject leads whenever necessary.
- Staff make themselves available to support throughout the year.
- The Head Teacher passes on any information from the Christian Education Department or other relevant parties.
- Masses, whole school and class, are communicated to staff through the weekly diary.
- Worship, whole school and class, are timetabled.
- The dates of masses and other religious events are given to staff during staff meetings and included on the half termly diary dates.

## **Staff Induction**

- All new staff members are given access to the schools' policies on RE, prayer and liturgy, Spiritual and Moral Development, Relationships, Sex and Health Education.
- The RE team is responsible for explaining the delivery of the RE curriculum to all newly appointed staff.
- The RE team will give a brief overview of the scheme and explain the structure of teaching for each topic and is available for further advice and support if necessary

## **Prayer**

- Some of our children will come to school having experienced prayer and worship at home. Others may have no experience of prayer at all.
- As teachers in a Catholic school, we have the responsibility and opportunity to introduce and encourage positive attitudes towards prayer, building upon the children's natural response of wonder and awe at the beauty of God's creation all around them.
- The children's prayers can be natural responses to events in their lives and formal prayers. The children are taught the Our Father and the Hail Mary, along with daily prayers which are said in the morning, before lunch and before home time.
- The children are provided with opportunities for 'retreats'.
- The children are encouraged to make staff aware of any personal intentions they would like prayers being offered for.
- Teaching staff participate in a reflection time at the beginning of each staff meeting.
- All are encouraged to add their own intentions to a Prayer Box, which is located in the school hall.

## **Links with parents & parish**

Throughout the year, opportunities are taken to support the religious education of the children by close co-operation with the parents and with the Parish. All staff are committed to fostering this partnership by:

- Making parents welcome
- Being available to talk to parents about their children
- Providing opportunities for parents to share in a variety of school activities including 'Stay and Pray' sessions
- Inviting parents to special assemblies and Masses
- Supporting parents whose children are being prepared to receive Sacraments
- Encouraging the children to attend Parish Masses / liturgical celebrations
- Visiting the community i.e. nursing homes to sing Christmas Carols
- Supporting a number of charities throughout the year.

## **Preparation for the Sacraments**

The school supports the Parish Priest and parish catechists as needed in preparing our pupils to receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

This can include liaison with parents, passing on information, ensuring children learn any prayers, hymns required, providing opportunities for the celebration of the children's achievements.

### **Pastoral support**

At St. Mary's, we will always strive to provide our families with effective and compassionate pastoral support.

We achieve this through:

- Full time family support worker, whose role includes:
  - always being available to speak with parents
  - providing support at home ie with toileting, sleeping and eating issues
  - ensuring financial support ie dinner money debt, providing uniform, paying for school trips (close links with Nugent Fund who support school to help families in need)
  - sourcing food hampers at Christmas
  - making referrals to the local food bank
  - sorting toys/gifts into hampers at Christmas
  - transporting/accompanying parents to appointments
  - any support required by a family
- Part time learning mentor who provides emotional support for children with:
  - friendships
  - low mood
  - low self esteem/confidence
  - bereavement
  - behaviour choices
  - poor resilience

### **Equal Opportunities**

At St. Mary's, we aim to provide a breadth of education which meets the needs of each individual, offering them equal access to the full range of learning opportunities.

### **Special Educational Needs**

We treat every individual child with dignity and respect. We support them in their educational, social and emotional journey through school, encouraging them to grow as individuals, relative to their own ability.

### **Displays**

Every classroom has a display board linked to the current topic, celebrating pupils' work and their learning across the topic. There are non-negotiable elements in every classroom.

However, we celebrate the uniqueness of our staff and the ways in which they choose to present these elements.

The school's Mission Statement is displayed in all areas of the school.