



St. John the Baptist
Catholic Primary School

We will prepare the way by loving, living and learning with the Lord

Religious Education Policy

We are guided by the mission of our school:

We Will Prepare the Way, by Loving, Living and learning with the Lord

Audience: Staff/Governors/Public
Frequency of Review: Annually
Postholder Responsible for Review: R.E Leader

Recommended Associated Documents:
Catholic Life Policy
Prayer and Liturgy Policy
RSE Policy
Curriculum Policy

Approved by the Full Governing Body –
Review – December 2024

Introduction and Mission

St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School aims to be a living, loving and sacramental community which is inspired by the life of Christ and our patron St John the Baptist, the teachings of the Church, and is rooted in Gospel Values and Catholic Virtues.

At the heart of the Church's very being is her mission to teach. Christ's own words to his disciples are addressed to his Church today.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time". (Matthew 28: 18-20)

We see St John the Baptist School as having an integral role in fulfilling this command of Jesus, our Lord.

The challenge that Christ sets us in the gospel is a goal we seek to attain within our school community. The importance of sustaining and promoting our Catholic faith is central to our school's mission for the children in our care.

Our school will offer a high standard of Catholic education where children can grow in understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and values in all subject areas.

In delivering the curriculum we recognise the uniqueness of each child and respect the value, dignity, and individuality of each one, celebrating diversity and learning the values of mutual respect, individual liberty, and tolerance.

Within our school, great emphasis is given to Religious Education. Prayer and Liturgy, the celebration of the Mass and preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharist and Confirmation are given great importance. Every effort is made to live by and promote the teaching of Our Lord and his Church concerning faith and moral living.

We attach great importance to forging strong relationships within the school community and recognise that the partnership, which exists between school, home, and parish, must be nurtured if we are to grow and develop as a living and worshipping community and truly provide a Christ centred environment for the children in our care.

Our Aims of Religious Education

We aim to lead children into a close, loving relationship with God through Prayer, Worship, Sacraments and Scripture.

- To place at the heart of the curriculum, the essential truths of our faith and along with these, the understanding of their significance in terms of celebrating and living the Christian life.

- To help children to know, understand and reflect on the spiritual and religious dimensions of life as expressed in the Catholic faith tradition and are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- We seek to develop within our school a respect for the dignity of each human being and provide children with the opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate the diverse nature of our society.
- We strive to make our Mission and Aims of the school a lived experience for our school community.

How We meet Our Aims

We work together to meet these aims through:

- a) Following the Diocesan Scheme of work- 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'
- b) Sacramental Education and preparation
- c) Prayer and Liturgy
- d) Gospel Values education and promotion
- e) British Values
- f) Catholic Virtues education and promotion
- g) Promotion of the 'We Are All Saints... Children's Charter
- h) Personal Daily Witness

Religious Education and Entitlement in Our School

Religious Education in our school is an integral part of our ethos, aims and relationships, as Christian values and virtues permeate all aspects of the curriculum and all relationships.

Religious Education is allocated 10% of the curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference. It is provided each week of the school year. RE will be taught in two or three lessons, one always in the morning. In EYFS RE is taught as a discrete lesson. Prayer, assemblies, Christmas plays, Christian Meditation, PSHE, RSHE and hymn practice are not included in this time.

Our primary aims for Religious Education lessons are to help our children to become religious and literate in their faith.

We seek to include opportunities to make links to RE across our whole curriculum, ensuring we see every subject area through 'a Catholic lens.'

Religious Education Scheme of Work

Our current long-term overviews and detailed medium and short- term plans for Religious Education are based on the Archdiocese of Birmingham curriculum strategy for Religious Education 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'. It provides the core of spiritual and

doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church as proclaimed in the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church.' Teaching and learning methods are appropriate to the child's age and level of maturity.

The aim of the scheme:

- To help children to become aware of and reflect on their experiences of living in the world with others. (Life in Christ)
 - To help them respond to God's love in their lives. (Life in Christ)
 - To reveal to children some aspects of God's plan for our salvation. (Revelation)
 - To help them to listen to and respond to God. (Celebration)
 - To help them to see God's offer of salvation in the sacraments and respond to it. (Celebration)
 - To show that every human person is made in the image of God and is called to reflect God's people; (Church)
 - To help the children be aware that the Church is world-wide and multi-cultural; that love, and service of God and others are universal human values and signs of God's Spirit in the world. (Church)
- By following 'The Strategy': continuity and progression (which are intrinsic elements of the programme) are ensured. Pupils' understanding of the Catholic faith and traditions grow commensurately with other subjects.

In addition to Diocesan Curriculum Strategy, pupils:

- Research into the life of their Class Saint at the start of the academic year,
- Research the life of St John the Baptist as part of a whole school focus on the celebration of his feast around 24th June.
- All classes follow the 'Ten Ten' Scheme as part of the school's delivery of Relationships and Sex Education.
- Experience the Catholic Schools Profile by focusing on two paired virtues each half-term in line with the Diocesan plan.
- Celebrate and learn the liturgical traditions of the Catholic Church through, for example, saying the Rosary, May procession, the Stations of the Cross.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Religious Education teaching is delivered through a variety of teaching methods. We aim to provide a balance between:

- Exposition by the teacher
- Class discussion
- Kagan Cooperative learning
- Group discussion
- Individual research

- Personal reflection
- Understanding through use religious art and artefact

For religious education teaching to be effective, teachers need to:

- Have a secure knowledge and understanding of the faith, of religious education and of the programme in use
- Set high expectations to challenge pupils and deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding
- Plan effectively, with lessons having clear religious learning objectives which are shared with the pupils, and which meet the learning needs of all pupils
- Incorporate prayer into the lesson in a meaningful way
- Use teaching methods and strategies which match learning objectives and the needs of all pupils
- Manage pupils well and achieve high standards of behaviour
- Use time and resources, including computing, efficiently and effectively
- Assess pupils' work thoroughly and constructively and use assessments to inform teaching and show pupils how to improve their work
- Set retrieval practice to reinforce the work done in previous lessons
- Use resources to have a positive impact upon the quality of pupils' learning and the standards, which they achieve
- Computing will be used wherever appropriate and as facilities allow. It is our intention to present the Catholic faith in a stimulating and yet reverent way, and thus demonstrate its relevance to contemporary life by using modern technology as and where appropriate.

When teaching is effective pupils will:

- Acquire new knowledge
- Remember what they have learned
- Show interest in their work
- Sustain concentration
- Think and learn for themselves
- Work at a good pace.
- Understand what they are doing
- Develop ideas

We consider adaptation in RE to be important in planning; extension activities for the higher attaining pupils are necessary and pupils with special needs are supported when appropriate.

Excellence in Religious Education is celebrated during lessons, through displays, performance and the dramatisation of spiritual events and stories, through debating and Godly Play. Opportunities are created by staff for cross-curricular activities that link with and often stem from RE lessons. We hold regular RE workshops, where parents can work with their child making for example, prayer bags, Christmas Cribs and Easter Gardens.

Sacramental Preparation

At St John's we believe that it is important for children of the Catholic faith to take a full and active part in the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation and their preparation.

The children have an excellent understanding of how taking part in these sacraments provide a greater relationship between themselves and God.

Reconciliation

In Year 3 children receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In preparation for this Sacrament, the children reflect on the fact that they are children of God and that this impacts on the way they treat others. Through studying Bible stories such as Zacchaeus the tax collector and parables like the Prodigal Son, the children learn about Jesus' teachings on repentance and forgiveness. They learn to appreciate that God created humans with free will thus allowing them to decide to make good and bad choices.

The children learn to think about the consequences of their actions and how this affects their relationship with God.

The children learn the structure and sequence of the Rite of Reconciliation and are fully prepared to make their Reconciliation in Lent.

Opportunities for the Celebration of Reconciliation is offered to each Key Stage Two class during Advent and Lent.

First Holy Communion

Once the children in Year 3 have made the Sacrament of Reconciliation, they receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion. This usually takes place on a Saturday during June. The children work hard at home, in school and in the parish to ensure that they are fully prepared to receive Jesus into their hearts.

The school and the parish work together to help prepare children for this Sacrament. Parents are invited to meet with the priest, headteacher and the Year 3 teacher and are given the outline of the programme. They are invited to work with the school and parish in preparing their child, particularly ensuring that the children build up their relationship with Jesus by regular family prayer and attendance at weekly Mass. Other meetings are held throughout the year.

During Religious Education lessons in school, the children study the Last Supper when Jesus shared his last meal with the disciples. They look at the breaking of the bread and how this is like the celebration of the Mass. By examining the words of Jesus at the Last Supper and the priest at Mass, they learn to appreciate that we are present with Jesus every time we go to Mass.

The children study all the parts of the Mass in detail over the year but focus particularly on the Liturgy of the Eucharist leading up to the celebration of First Holy Communion. By exploring each of the parts of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in detail, the children learn that the Mass is a celebration of thanksgiving and that during the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest asks the Holy Spirit to change the gifts of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus.

The children are encouraged to read bible stories together and discuss their Religious Education lessons. The children are given various tasks to complete at home linked to their First Holy Communion. The children have a retreat day before their Holy Communion. This is provided by 'One Life Music.'

Confirmation

During their final year in school, the children prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation; this is usually celebrated during November. The children prepare for the Sacrament at home, in class and in the parish.

During Religious Education lessons in school, the children study the Holy Spirit in detail. They look at the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit and think about how these will work in their future lives. The children study the events of Pentecost and think about how they will be like the disciples when the Holy Spirit comes down upon them. As Confirmation is a Sacrament of initiation, the children explore how Baptism and Confirmation are linked, focussing at the signs and symbols used in both. As part of their work, children prepare a project on the saint of their choice. They are encouraged to select the name of a saint who has inspired them in some way. A sponsor is also chosen and has the role of supporting the child in their spiritual life.

The pupils are helped to become witnesses of the Gospel and active members of the Church. Alongside their lessons in school, the children attend Mass with their families and pray at home as a family.

Other Faiths and Religions

During the year, the whole school community takes part in a range of workshops, visits to places of worship and celebrations to learn more about other faiths and religions. We ensure that our teaching does not compare Catholicism to other faiths, instead focusing on the fact that with greater knowledge and understanding, comes greater tolerance and care for our fellow man.

We plan to teach about festivals celebrated by other faiths at the time they are celebrated in the calendar year. This gives more meaning and greater opportunity to engage with members of each particular community.

THE Catholic Curriculum

Spiritual Development

We join the pupils on the spiritual quest we all have, to recognise God in all the circumstances of our lives and to help them respond to that invitation/meeting. By encouraging their belief in God, as revealed in Jesus and that He is the author of life, beauty, goodness, and truth, we support and help the pupils promote a proper care of self and one another. Care and respect for the created world is also encouraged. This can be supported by Catholic Social Teaching themes and through our daily Christian meditation.

Prayer

We encourage our children to take part and experience many different forms of prayer.

- All classrooms have attractive prayer areas that include liturgical images, artefacts, school, and class prayers. These are updated in accordance with the Liturgical Year and children are encouraged to have an input in each display.
- All assemblies and prayer services have a religious prayer focus.
- The children are provided with a variety of prayer experiences and are encouraged to pray thoughtfully and with respect.
- Children are encouraged to develop their individual prayer life through daily participation in morning prayers, grace before and after meals and prayer at the end of the day. They also have opportunities to participate and lead prayers. Pupils are encouraged to know they can pray at any time or in any place, including during hymn practice and meditation.
- Our prayer garden provides a wonderful outdoor environment for prayer and reflection.
- There is a time in each act of worship where the children can talk to Jesus in their own words. The teacher encourages prayers that are relevant e.g. thanksgiving prayers, concerns for others, prayers for guidance and protection. Staff are sensitive to the feelings of pupils. It is also possible to offer up a prayer to Jesus to listen to the prayers in our hearts that have not been spoken.
- Our children plan and lead prayer sessions for their peers. They also take part in evaluating each other's prayer services.
- Staff pray together before every meeting.

We also work hard to include families in the prayer life of our school. We do this by:

- Encouraging parents and families to attend Masses, prayer services and other acts of prayer and liturgy
- Sending prayer bags home for all year groups containing liturgical materials.

Moral Development

We teach morality in light of our Catholic beliefs. Morality flows from the faith as a response to God's gracious work of creation. Religious education is, therefore, an essential foundation for moral education in the school.

Pupils learn about Catholic morality both by being taught what the Church teaches and by the attitude and actions of their teachers. Teachers in Catholic Schools regard their work as a vocation. They present the love and wisdom of God to their pupils by the way that they live as well as by what they say. They seek their task and privilege as that of passing on the living Christ to their pupils.

We can help pupils to develop morally through the love and message of Jesus. This message is summed up in the word "love" and is at the heart of the Gospel. Love is not an empty concept but rather it is a challenging way of life.

Jesus shows us the way to love through the commandments, the beatitudes, the Cardinal virtues of courage, self-control, wisdom and justice and the Theological virtues of faith, hope and love and responsibility. These are the basis of the British Values of:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

Morality is not presented simply as a set of rules or arbitrary commands, but as a call to personal growth in the light of our nature as images of God. By being responsible and by choosing rightly we believe that each person grows onto the kind of person he/she is intended to be, through his/her own free acts. We make ourselves into certain kinds of persons through what we choose. We believe that the good choices we make gradually transform us into people fit for heaven.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils are encouraged to examine their responsibilities and influences not only on the school community but also in their families, the parish community, and the local and wider community. They are encouraged to use their skills, talents, and gifts, whatever they are, for the good of others.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Cultural diversity is welcomed and positively fostered in our school. Teachers show that they value the special talents and achievements of pupils from ethnic minorities and ensure that their expectations of these pupils are the same for other pupils in their care. This is based on the example of Jesus who took active measures to break down, or transcend, the religious and cultural barriers so deeply entrenched between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Cultural development is not just to be developed within RE teaching as it involves the whole curriculum as well as the “hidden curriculum”, staff and governor attitudes and the ethos of the school.

VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vocational development enables our pupils to have a profound understanding of what it means to have a vocation and to be able to joyfully offer their gifts in the service of others. It is vital that we provide the pupils with models of service and commitment; to learn from people of the past and people of the present who provide examples of lives inspired by and committed to following in Jesus’ footsteps.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL PROFILE

We follow the Catholic School Pupil Profile which is rooted in Jesuit values. There are eight pairs of virtues which help children to lead better, happier, and more fulfilled lives. Each half term, we focus on one set of virtues and what they mean in our lives. The sets of virtues are:

- Curious and Active
- Intentional and Prophetic
- Grateful and Generous
- Attentive and Discerning
- Compassionate and Loving
- Faith-filled and Hopeful
- Eloquent and Truthful
- Learned and Wise

CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHING

We feel that it is important to consider the needs of our local community, and local charities are always welcome in the school to talk to the children about their work and to involve them in fundraising activities. At Harvest Time we collect food for local people in need. We have fund raising events throughout the year to support the work of the Father Hudson Society, CAFOD and other charities, some of which visit our school to speak to the children about their work. At Christmas time the children are involved in the Birmingham Irish Association Christmas Toy Appeal. Moreover, in our teaching, learning and other faith-related activities within school, Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is threaded throughout. The model we base our CST is that developed by CAFOD. CST is rooted in Scripture, formed by the wisdom of Church leaders, and influenced by grassroots movements. It is our moral compass, guiding us on how to live out our faith in the world. Our faith calls us to love God and to love our neighbours in every situation, especially our sisters and brothers living in poverty. Following in the footsteps of Christ, we hope to make present in our unjust and broken world, the justice, love, and peace of God. Modern Catholic social teaching is said to have originated in 1891 with the

encyclical letter, Rerum Novarum. Since then, a wealth of teaching continues to give new life to the Scriptures and shape the Church's response to our modern world. From these Catholic social teaching documents and encyclicals are derived seven core principles.

1. Dignity of the Human Person
2. Family and Community
3. Solidarity and the Common Good
4. Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
5. Rights and Responsibilities
6. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
7. Stewardship of God's Creation

PLANNING

LONG-TERM PLANNING

The RE Subject leader has responsibility for long term plan indicating which units are to be taught, when and for how long. This plan is reviewed in the RE monitoring cycle throughout the year.

MEDIUM TERM PLANNING

Medium term planning is the responsibility of the class teacher and should be completed on a unit by unit basis according to the long-term plan.

WEEKLY PLANIING

Short term planning is completed weekly with access available to the RE subject leader for monitoring purposes and other year group teachers to view prior learning/work covered. It is saved on the 'w drive'.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The fair and equal treatment of all individuals irrelevant of race, creed, disability, or gender, are integral to the Gospels' Revelations and the Church's message and is central to our school mission.

All children are given equal access to the Religious Education curriculum, promoting their understanding to their full potential. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed to try to meet all children's different needs e.g. whole class, group, pair and individual work, also investigative, closed, and open-ended activities.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Marking in RE is based on the quality of RE work produced in pupils' books against the assessment criteria stipulated in the diocesan scheme "Learning and Growing as the People of God." Marking should not make reference to English targets.

In line with school marking and feedback policy all work should begin with a WALT (We are Learning to) statement; which should be highlighted green if it has been demonstrated by the child in the lesson or pink if they have not.

Children will know what they have done well in the lesson as evidence will be highlighted green by the teacher. Misconceptions will be highlighted pink.

Teachers should make a comment only when they feel it is appropriate or to give a Gap Task to clarify an element of the child's learning a little further. Where a Gap task has been given pupils will be given time and be expected to respond to the Gap task in purple pen.

ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

All RE monitoring is in line with the whole school monitoring system. Monitoring takes the form of a multi-faceted approach including: Books evaluated by Senior Leaders, evaluated by peers, moderated lineally through each year group and external validation from other schools.

Any moderation receives detailed feedback and reporting which feeds directly into Self Evaluation and action plans.

End of Unit Assessment takes the form of a four-year cycle set by the Diocesan Education Service with the focus on:

- The Liturgical Year.
- Scripture.
- Celebrating the Sacraments.
- Living as Christians.

End of Unit Assessments are carried out by class teachers three times a year as identified in the Assessment Schedule.

Each class will also have three children of different abilities, assessed for age related standards in every unit taught. This will be based on the Diocesan Proforma which can be found on the w drive.

All assessments are monitored by the Subject Lead and SLT as part of a cycle of constant improvement. Trends, patterns, and possible underachievement – including achievement for groups of pupils are identified. This work is shared and discussed with staff and governors. Where appropriate, action is taken which includes support for staff and further monitoring.

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

In line with Diocesan recommendations, Nursery and Reception aged children are assessed at the beginning of Nursery and Reception years. It is used to find out what children's prior religious knowledge, vocabulary and experience is.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

Reporting to parents/carers Parental consultations, in Autumn and Spring, and written reports (Summer) enables teachers to inform and discuss their children's progress with their parents/carers

MONITORING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The RE Subject Leader in conjunction with the Catholic Education team will be responsible for:

- Reviewing samples of pupils' work across the age and ability range.
- Monitoring and evaluating medium- and short-term planning
- Observing RE lessons
- Conducting pupil interviews
- Monitoring prayer areas and display
- Analysing outcomes from end of unit class assessment sheets, including significant groups and levels of attainment work samples
- Analysing outcomes of Nursery and Reception baseline assessment
- Monitoring Catholic Life provision
- Monitoring Enjoying Our Faith books

All outcomes from the monitoring are discussed and targets set to raise standards.

RESOURCES

Each class has their own Bibles and books that relate to the Units in Learning and growing. Advent wreaths, cribs, Paschal Candles and Liturgical Cloths are available in all classes. Shared resources are available in the Sacristy.

RE DISPLAYS

In order to support the teaching and learning in RE one Display Board in every class should display high quality current RE Work. The expectation is that there will be two displays per term based on the termly schedule. When the display links to the Liturgical Year then please use the colour of the season for the backing paper e.g. Purple in Advent and Lent. Work from all pupils should be valued by being displayed to provide a stimulating learning environment.

LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE PARISH

Celebrations and events related to the Catholic Life of our school are shared in school newsletters and published on the school website. Parents, families, and parishioners are regularly invited to join the school community for weekly Mass and other celebrations, Inspire Workshops, and fundraising activities. Parents of children in Sacramental year groups are also invited to Sacramental Meetings and Commitment Masses as part of the Sacramental Preparation Programme. Parents and families also support the school in being able to offer an extensive range of educational visits to various places of worship. Children in each class can take home a Prayer Bag, promoting opportunities for children and their families to talk and pray together.

THE ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADER

The Role of the Religious Education Leader is outlined in the job description.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CPD is implemented through INSET, staff meetings and phase meetings. The RE Subject Leader disseminates information from attended cluster meetings and training regarding current themes, changes, and requirements. The RE Subject Leader attends regular meetings led by the Diocese. The focus of training is to facilitate best practice in the teaching and learning of RE.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All relevant risk assessments for visits are carried out, overseen, and stored by the Head teacher.

LEGAL RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

It is a parents' / guardians' legal right to withdraw their child from RE and Collective Worship. Further information can be obtained from the school.

GOVERNING BODY

RE is always a key part of the School Improvement Plan and is reported upon termly as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors. In addition, the RE Subject Leader reports back to the Ethos and Ethics Committee. Governors are also invited to join with other members of the whole school community in the celebration of a Commitment Mass at the beginning of the academic year and attend INSET Days relating to the Catholic Life of the School.

One member of the governing body has the role of RE Link Governor, this is currently Sister Susan Collins, she meets regularly with the Head Teacher and RE Subject Leader, forming the Catholic Education Team. The RE Link Governor is involved in the monitoring of pupils' work and lesson observations.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The RE Subject Leader will monitor the implementation of the policy. All staff will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy in helping to improve standards of teaching and learning. This evaluation will inform the process for reviewing this policy.