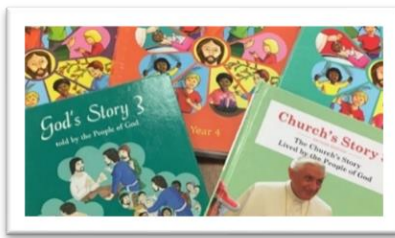


St Mary's Catholic Primary School

*Living and Learning Together –
Shining in our Faith*



Religious Education Policy Summer Term 2024



CONTENTS

The Mission Statement

Living and Learning Together – Shining in our Faith

Aim:

This policy provides a framework for all staff, which includes guidance on planning, assessment, recording and reporting in Religious Education. It offers guidance on teaching styles and opportunities for meeting the needs of all pupils, as well as giving advice on equality.

Our School Mission Statement

Living and Learning Together – Shining in our Faith

Our mission statement shapes the way we live out our lives as a thriving Catholic community here at St Mary's. The children have ownership of this mission and clearly feel supported by staff, governors, families and the parish in being able to grow and develop in accordance with Christian teaching.

Our school works in active partnership with parents, who are the prime educators of their children and, in partnership with the parish, aim to provide an education that will offer opportunities for growth in the Catholic faith. This is expressed in the Gospel values of love, justice, peace and reconciliation.

The aims of the Religious Education Curriculum

The overall aims of Religious Education at St. Mary's are:

The comprehensive and systematic study of:

- the mystery of God;
- the life and teachings of Jesus Christ;
- the teachings of the church;
- the central beliefs that Catholics hold and the basis for them;
- the relationship between faith and life.

These are explored in a manner, which encourages investigation, and reflection by the pupils, develops the appropriate skills and attitudes and promotes free, informed and full response to God's call in everyday life.

In the words of the Curriculum Directory 2012, the outcome of Catholic Religious Education –

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



The staff of St Mary's Catholic Primary School will work to give each child the entitlement of a broad, balanced, differentiated curriculum (irrespective of ability) encouraging in every individual a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. All teaching and learning is underpinned by the school mission statement.

St. Mary's Religious Education curriculum will:

- include analysis and critical appreciation.
- provide opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection.
- provide children with the language of religious experience - a 'literacy' in religious activities, places, stories, symbols and rituals, people and objects.
- present a systematic presentation of the Christian event, message and way of life, in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child.
- require that all adults involved, understand the underlying theological as well as educational principles.
- include appropriate materials about other faiths.

Our Religious Education curriculum

"For all children Religious Education is a proper subject in its own right in the school's curriculum. It is a rigorous academic discipline, and as such it is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject. For those already engaged in the journey of faith religious education will be catechesis, and for some children religious education will be evangelisation, the first opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel."

(p.10 Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools 2012)

Since the whole curriculum in our school is based on the values of the Gospel and because we see all education as revealing the mystery of God, we recognise two aspects of Religious Education in our school:-

- Implicit, or unstructured Religious Education - those opportunities which arise in the course of the school day to lead pupils through curriculum content or through relationships to a religious understanding of their implications. It is the policy of this school to use such opportunities as they arise.
- Explicit, or structured Religious Education – those opportunities timetabled and planned periods of time given to an explicit consideration of Religious Education in the classroom. It is the policy of the school to give 10% of the timetable at Key Stage 1 and 2.

To fulfil our aims and objectives we use the 'Come and See' programme of Religious Education recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. We are in the process of introducing the new Religious Education Directory, 'To Know You More Clearly', which will be using in all year groups from September 2025.

The Religious Education Programme in Years EYFS – Year 2

The programme of study for Religious Education in Catholic schools is presented in the new Religious Education Directory 'To Know You More Clearly'. It has a framework with four structural elements: knowledge lenses, ways of knowing, expected outcomes, curriculum branches.

- *Knowledge lenses* set out the object of study for pupils; they indicate what should be known by the end of each age-phase.
- *Ways of knowing* set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey.
- *Expected outcomes* are a synthesis of the content outlined in the knowledge lenses and the skills described in the ways of knowing.



- *Curriculum branches* are the way this programme of study presents its model curriculum. The model curriculum presents the expected outcomes in six curriculum branches that correspond to the six half-terms of a school year.

The Religious Education Programme in Years 3-6

To fulfil our aims and objectives we use the *Come and See* programme of Religious Education recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. In the scheme, each theme is explored through different topic in each age group:

AUTUMN

The three autumn time themes are developed in the light of an understanding of Creation:

- Family: Domestic Church focuses on life as gift, myself as a unique and loved creation, the creative love and care that can be expressed in family groups.
- Belonging: Baptism/Confirmation focuses on the call to belong, the creative potential that belonging develops; and Baptism and Confirmation, sacraments of the gift of God's life and friendship.
- Loving: Advent/Christmas focuses on the capacity for entering into loving relationships and the perfect gift and revelation of God's love, Jesus, born of Mary, born as one of us.

SPRING

The three spring time themes are developed in the light of an understanding of Incarnation:

- Community: Local Church focuses on the people of God gathered in Christ, united in the journey of faith, in care for one another, in sharing their story and in celebration.
- Relating: Eucharist focuses on the invitation to know Jesus, to live in communion with him and with one another.
- Giving: Lent/Easter focuses on Jesus' loving self-giving on the cross, the Father's love that raises him to new life and the challenge to Christians to follow Jesus' example of self-giving.

SUMMER

The three summer themes are developed in the light of an understanding of Redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit.

- Serving: Pentecost focuses on the on-going mission of Jesus Christ in the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Inter-Relating: Reconciliation focuses on the love, compassion and forgiveness of God the Father revealed in Jesus and poured out by the Spirit to bring forgiveness and reconciliation in the sacrament of Reconciliation.
- World: Universal Church focuses on the same love revealed in the diversity of the world and its people, and in the gifts of the Spirit that bear fruit in love, joy, justice and peace for all people.

To fulfil our aims and objectives we use the *Come and See* programme of Religious Education recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool.



Overview of content

The process for delivering the topics in 'Come and See' has three stages – Explore, Reveal and Respond which enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. The process encompasses a variety of teaching and learning styles, which enable the needs of individual pupils to be met.

EXPLORE

The teacher helps the children to begin to look at and focus on the experience within their own lives – concerning themselves, their relationships and their world. In this way the children are led to a deeper understanding, clearer vision and the discovery of significance and value of the experiential events of everyday life.

This will involve:

- Exploring experiences through story, music, drama, dance, art, etc.
- Investigation
- Story telling
- Consideration of the big questions
- Discussion
- Becoming aware of the questions raised
- Reflecting on significance of these experiences.

'Religious Education learns from evangelisation and catechesis that learning and growth involve active participation and response. For this reason, personal experience plays a significant part in the exploration, discovery and assimilation of the saving truth of God's revelation'.

Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012

Explore will take one week of Religious Education time to complete.

REVEAL

Reveal is the heart of the process. The teacher and the children together discover the Christian understanding of the mystery of the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They explore the mystery of human life as revealed in the person, life and gospel of Jesus Christ Christians. It will involve learning about Scripture, the teaching of the Church, prayers, rites, psalms, hymns and other expressions of Christian faith and the lives of outstanding Christians.

The process of delivery will involve:

- meeting new knowledge of religious education;
- developing an understanding of this new knowledge;
- reflecting on the wonder of the mystery;
- gathering information and collecting facts connected with this knowledge;
- researching, collating and classifying;
- becoming aware of the questions raised;
- working with problems and grappling with puzzling experiences;
- exploring experiences through story, music, drama, dance, art;
- exploring what leads to understanding and meaning;
- asking questions and discussing;



- exploring in creative and practical ways through drama, writing, poetry, song, dance, music, Computing and service of others;
- making links between Christian understanding and the shared life experience;
- valuing life experience;
- acknowledging and respecting difference(s);
- being open to new perspectives.

Reveal will take two weeks of Religious Education time to complete.

RESPOND

Remember is the first part of this section. The children will respond by remembering and celebrating all that they have learnt. This new understanding will enable them to make a personal response in their daily lives. This part begins by reflecting on what the children wonder about. This is followed by providing the opportunity for the children to remember what they have understood and learnt.

This may be done through:

- creating a quiet, prayerful atmosphere for reflection
- looking at and thinking about the work done
- drawing attention to different aspects of this work
- sharing thoughts and feelings.

Rejoice is the second part of the section. There will be the opportunity to plan and take part in a celebration. It will be essential to involve the children in the choice of material to be used in the celebration.

Renew the teacher helps each child to make an individual response, to hold on to and make their own, what they have understood of the topic. In this part the children will think about how they can apply their learning to their lives.

Respond will take one week of Religious Education time to complete.

Planning

A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used from across the curriculum adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of pupils.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage describes the phase of a child's education from the age of 3 to the end of Reception at the age of 5. In the Early Years Foundation Stage Religious Education drives the whole curriculum. Through engaging, practical, integrated activities, children can learn more about themselves, other people and the world around them and develop their religious knowledge, skills and understanding. Religious Education makes an active contribution to the prime areas of learning:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Religious Education also makes an active contribution to the following specific areas of learning:

- literacy
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design



Throughout Pre-School and Reception the process will be divided as follows:

- Whole class core Input; (teacher led).
- Adult directed group activities and; (teacher or assistants work with groups of children).
- Continuous provision (child centred learning across the areas of learning in the foundation stage).

Years EYFS to Year 2

The RED model curriculum has six components that will be known as branches, which might, in practice, map helpfully onto the six half-terms of the school year. Each one has a core theme and invites pupils to learn about an aspect of Revelation, Scripture, life in Christ, and life in the Church, and to discern what their learning means academically and experientially enabling them to see, judge, and act through a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith. The six branches are titled:

- Creation and covenant
- Prophecy and promise
- Galilee to Jerusalem
- Desert to garden
- To the ends of the Earth
- Dialogue and encounter

Year 3– Year 6

Within the structure of 'Come and See' both Explore and Reveal from Years 3 to 6 comprises of the following sections:

- Learning Focus: the overall focus of the session linked to the assessment foci.
- Content: some suggestions for input to develop the focus.

Some key questions follows the input, these are suggested questions which will encourage the children to wonder and reflect on what they have heard or seen; other questions may also arise.

Some suggested activities, the third section offers some activities, it is not an exhaustive list nor is it to be supposed that the children will complete them all; they are simply guidelines. Wherever possible they are differentiated but will of course need to be adapted to the ability and interests of the children. There are some links for special needs children using symbol supported text.

Planning

The Planning of Religious Education at St Mary's follows recommendations from Liverpool Archdiocese. As with other curriculum areas, there is no set planning format for RE lessons and teachers are free to organise their planning in whichever form is most helpful to themselves.

Time Allocation

In each class 10% of teaching time is specifically for Religious Education.

Collective Worship and Assemblies are in addition to this throughout the week.

Long Term Planning

The RE Subject Leader shares the medium-term plan with the staff, highlighting the dates for each RED/ Come and See Topic to ensure continuity throughout the school. Teachers use ideas from the Liverpool Archdiocese planning template to complete their short-term plans.



SEND

At St Mary's we work hard to ensure staff provide scaffolded opportunities for all children in their classes. Lessons are scaffolded in a variety of ways for children of all abilities and specific activities planned for those with SEN, using suggestions from the Come and See and the new RED.

The school uses a variety of teaching and learning styles in Religious Education lessons. The principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers ensure that the children apply their knowledge and understanding when developing ideas, planning and making products, and then evaluating them. We do this through a mixture of whole-class teaching and individual or group activities. Within lessons, we give children the opportunity both to work on their own and to collaborate with others, listening to other children's ideas and treating these with respect. Children critically evaluate existing products, their own work and that of others. They have the opportunity to use a wide range of materials and resources, including IT.

In all classes, there are children of differing ability. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies:

- Setting common tasks that are open-ended and can have a variety of results;
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty where not all children complete all tasks;
- Grouping children by ability and setting different tasks for each group;
- Providing a range of challenges through the provision of different resources;
- Using additional adults to support the work of individual children or small groups;
- Providing specialist support where individual children have particular gifts or talents

Assessment

Assessment in Religious Education is related to the concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed through learning about and learning from religion. Assessment establishes what children know, understand, can do and how to get there. It offers support and motivation to the learner. It does not assess spirituality or the practice of faith.

Assessment of Religious Education at St. Mary's closely follows the guidelines given by the RED and Liverpool Archdiocese. In our school it involves:

- Informal assessment – Each topic contains a range of activities that focus on different attainment targets. These are recognised in medium and short term planning formats. At the end of each topic, teachers make informal assessments on their planning sheet to highlight those children who have exceeded expectations and those who are working towards expectations.

Recording

Religious Education evidence is recorded in the form of RE Books in Key Stage 1 and 2 and evidence based for children in Foundation Stage. Supporting photographic and video evidence is frequently used and recorded in the class floorbook. Our marking policy is to be updated to include Religious Education separately to ensure driver words are included in marking when possible. The marking policy of our school will require all activities to have a lesson objective and in RE, this is given in the form of a Learning Focus. Comments in marking reflect upon the achievement of this Learning Focus and next steps are given when possible to help with progression towards it. We have a high expectation of presentation in all subject areas.

Reporting

In line with Liverpool Archdiocese recommendations, Religious Education is reported first in the children's end of year report.



Evaluation of Teaching

Monitoring and Evaluation contribute to the development of Religious Education at St. Mary's. We are developing a yearly planner that indicates when areas are to be assessed and monitored, lesson observations will take place etc. evidence is gathered, analysed and acted upon.

Staff development

Staff development is considered important at St Mary's and being up to date with any new initiatives and ideas contribute to our development in Religious Education. The Religious Education Subject Leader takes part in as many professional development opportunities as possible offered by Liverpool Archdiocese. Termly updates for Subject Leaders are attended and moderation will take place with other subject leaders.

Annual inset for staff covers areas such as Collective Worship, Planning, Displays and Assessments. The Religious Education Subject Leader is actively involved in the local Cluster of Catholic schools who meet regularly to plan joint events, work collaboratively on curriculum development and to complete moderation activities.

Staff induction

All staff and visiting staff receive induction when joining St. Mary's. Our expectations of behavior and how we speak to and treat our children are shared.

Staff communication

Weekly staff meetings take place for teaching staff and support staff. This is opportunity to share information and time for in-service to take place.

Weekly newsletters are sent home for parents with detailed information about school life and events taking place. The Head teacher provides a weekly briefing which illustrates all events and staff changes taking place that week.

Resources – staff members

Resources are kept in the Religious Education cupboard or electronically on the staff network. Teaching staff have access to the following resources:

- Artefacts for Collective Worship and display
- Good News Bibles
- Selection of Big Books – Bible stories and Other faiths
- God's Story Books 1 and 2
- The Church's Story Books 1,2 and 3
- Selection of teacher resources books including themes – Biblical, Assembly, Mass, Services, Sacraments, Prayer.

11. Relationship of RE to the whole curriculum

Please see separate Collective Worship policy.

Additional opportunities and links with whole curriculum include examples such as:

- Spiritual Development; for example visits from CAFOD volunteers.
- Moral Development; during PSHE/ RSHE lessons, developing rules and expectations for classes, assembly monitors, Whole School assemblies and Collective Worship.
- Parents have been invited to join us for spiritual development on a number of occasions including Advent reflections for KS1 and KS2 and taking part in weekly Collective Worship. We have also included their input in our visual displays in the entrance by encouraging them to take part with the display at the time.
- We work closely with the parish to ensure the process of 'With You Always' is as smooth as possible for our Year 3-6 children and parents.



Self-evaluation document (SED)

The SED will be updated for 2024-25. This will be presented to Governors at the Autumn Term Curriculum Governor meeting.

Review

We are aware of the need to monitor the school's Religious Education policy, and to review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy every two years, or earlier if necessary.

