

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School



## RE Policy



## RE POLICY

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Date Policy Approved: July 2023

Date for Review: September 2025

## **1. School Mission**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School our Mission is:

**TO LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS  
BY  
LEARNING TOGETHER  
LOVING OURSELVES  
LOVING EACH OTHER  
LOVING ALL PEOPLE  
LOVING LIFE ITSELF  
AND  
CONSTANTLY STRIVING FOR  
EXCELLENCE  
WORTHY OF OUR GOD GIVEN GIFTS.**

## **2. Introduction**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Jesus Christ is central to every aspect of school life. We strive to bring faith and culture together, relating and applying Christ's message to human living today. RE in our school is not solely taught as a curriculum area but as a way of life, promoting the gospel values, giving praise and reverence to God. It is an opportunity for everyone to develop their own personal faith through word, action and to enter into a communion with God, made possible, through the divine work of Jesus his Son and the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is achieved through liturgy, collective worship, assemblies, R.E. lessons, Citizenship and roles and responsibilities throughout the school, which deepen our Catholic life and highlight our belief that Christ is at the centre of all that we do.

Our school offers 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.

We attach great importance to good relationships within the school community and recognise that the strong 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 centered environment for the children in our care.

### 3. Our Aims of Religious Education

At St Mary's, our ultimate aim is to guide our pupils to grow in knowledge, understanding and love of God through Prayer, Liturgy, Sacraments and Scripture.

In addition to this, Religious Education at St Mary's should:

- Nurture children's faith.
- Promote in a gradual way children's understanding and appreciation of Catholic teaching and practice.
- Develop the children's involvement with the Church and local community.
- Help children to develop personal, spiritual and moral values, respect and tolerance for others and an understanding of interdependence between groups and nations.
- Develop the skills required to be able to examine and reflect on religious belief and practice, including those from other faiths and cultures.
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder.
- Involve parents in the spiritual development of their child.
- Make our Mission a lived experience for our school community.

### 4. Overview of Religious Education Curriculum

The schools of the Archdiocese of Birmingham use the Diocese's own curriculum strategy from Foundation (Nursery) to Year 6 called 'Learning and Growing as the People of God.' (often referred to as 'The Strategy').

The Strategy was written using the Learning Outcomes provided in the Bishop's Conference document the *Curriculum Directory* as a basis.

The Strategy provides teachers with a range of suggested cross-curricular activities which can be differentiated to suit the learning needs of the children in their class in order for them to explore the Catholic faith and achieve the learning outcomes. There is a strong emphasis on pupils engaging with and responding to questions of life in the light of religious teaching.

This flexible approach enables teachers to incorporate their own creative teaching ideas into the delivery of the Strategy.

The Strategy is divided into a number of units for each year group, usually 12, which cover four main areas of study:

- **The Liturgical Seasons of the Church's Year:** The children find out about the significance of each season, its particular signs and symbols and the different liturgies celebrated in each season.
- **Scripture:** The children study both Old Testament and New Testament Scripture in order to give them familiarity and knowledge of Scripture as well as enabling them to explore and understand how Catholic beliefs are rooted in what Scripture reveals to us.

- **The Sacraments:** There is a strong Sacramental focus in each year group. The Year 3 and Year 6 books fully prepare the children to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist in Year 3 and Confirmation in Year 6.
- **Living as Christians including Prayer:** The children learn about what it is to live as Christians today, how the Church is organised from global to parish level and also the opportunities which exist for them to participate in the life of the Church.

In each unit, there are additional planned opportunities to pray and time to reflect.

## 5. Building the Kingdom/Catholic Social Teaching

As a 'Building the Kingdom' school, we are encouraging our children to be ambassadors of our faith and to implement the teachings of Jesus' Gospel values and to put Catholic Social teaching in to action. In doing this, we aim to develop the leaders of tomorrow. Preparing our children to live and lead in a world that is quickly evolving, knowing that the decisions that they make will impact the future. Our children will leave St. Mary's understanding their responsibility in contributing positively to the world. Their learning and experiences throughout their time at our school will equip them with the skills and resilience needed to flourish and overcome challenges, as they move in to the next stage of their lives.

Catholic Social Teaching is 'an aspect of the life and the thinking of the Catholic Church.' It concerns what the Church has to say about social issues and the way in which Catholic faith should be lived out within society. These teachings are rooted in Scripture and especially in the teachings of Jesus found in the Gospels.

The model we base our CST on is that developed by CAFOD. 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.

The principles of CST are integral to our wider curriculum planning and are outlined below:

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. Right and Responsibilities
6. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
7. Stewardship of God's Creation

At St Mary's, it is part of our responsibility to participate in social action to make a difference for the common good of all and not just our own immediate community.

Examples of how we do this are:

- participating in fundraising activities for suitable causes
- collecting for local food banks

- recycling preloved uniform
- contact by letter/face-to-face events with local councillors or MPs
- child led groups including: CAFOD club and Spiritual Council

## **6. Planning in Religious Education**

### ***Long Term Planning***

- The RE subject lead should complete a long term plan each year which clearly defines which units are being taught, when and for how long each unit lasts. It should also include which three units are to be assessed by highlighting.
- Timetables in KS1 and KS2 must indicate that the required 10% of curriculum time is being met.
- 10% Curriculum Time: this does not include daily prayer (although it does include liturgies/prayer services planned for within Learning and Growing as the People of God), assemblies, hymn practice or Mass. It does not include PSHE/RSE.

### ***Medium Term Planning***

- Those responsible for teaching RE should complete a medium term plan for each unit of work.
- In RE, medium term planning always refers to the planning of a unit as a whole rather than the usual reference to a half term plan.
- It is acceptable for this planning to be completed by downloading and highlighting/annotating the relevant units.
- Teachers may substitute alternative activities as long as the Learning Outcome is being met.
- Teachers can identify which Attainment Targets from the Age Related Standards are being covered.
- There is no expectation that every teaching strategy should be used.

### ***Short Term Planning***

- Those responsible for teaching RE should complete a weekly plan for RE.
- Short Term planning should indicate how the activities are being adapted to meet the needs of the different learners within the class.
- Short term planning should indicate which skills from which Attainment Targets of the Age Related Standards (National) have been incorporated into that week's lessons (by highlighting coding).
- Short term planning should include key questions aimed at specific learners or groups of learners based on the Age Related Standards (National).
- Short term planning should indicate the focus for prayer within the classroom that week.
- Opportunities to make links with SMVSC, CSPP (Virtues) and Catholic Social Teaching should be identified.

- Comments about Assessment for Learning should be made when relevant.

## 7. Assessment in Religious Education

### ***Formative Assessment: Assessment for Learning***

- Marking and verbal feedback should be given in relation to the RE Learning Outcomes.
- Marking and feedback should give guidance to the child about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve and extend their learning.
- Marking and feedback can be linked to the skills identified in the Age Related Standards
- All work should be marked in accordance with the school policy.

### ***Summative Assessment: End of Unit Assessments (Dioecian)***

- The Diocese will select the strand of RE for monitoring and assessment for all schools to follow (The Liturgical Year, Scripture, The Sacraments or Living as Christians including Prayer).
- Each year, the RE subject lead will provide teachers of RE with a schedule of which three end of unit assessments are to be completed during the year.
- Teachers of RE should complete the end of unit assessment sheets (Excel Record Sheets) for each child in their class.
- Evidence of standards must be kept ***either*** by retaining books (1 per band) for each class ***or*** by teachers of RE providing the RE subject leader with samples of work for a portfolio: 2 per band i.e. 6 per unit.
- The work must be monitored by the RE Subject Leader.
- Evidence Books and/or Learning Journals should be retained for three years + the current year.

### ***Summative Assessment – Age Related Standards (National)***

- Three focus children should be selected for each class and tracked over a phase ( one children working below age related standards, at age related and above age related)
- RE teachers should assess pieces of work throughout the year (at least one piece per unit) against the Age Related Standards (National) for the relevant phase using the appropriate template.
- Evidence of the Age Related Standards must be kept by the RE subject lead ***either*** by keeping samples of book ***or*** compiling a portfolio of work.
- A selection of work samples should be moderated.
- At the end of the academic year an overall assessment judgment should be made for each of the focus children.

## **8. Monitoring in Religious Education**

The RE subject lead and Headteacher will be responsible for:

- reviewing samples of pupils' work across the age and ability range
- monitoring and evaluating medium and short term planning
- observing lessons and undertaking learning walks
- conducting pupil interviews
- monitoring prayer areas and displays
- analysing outcomes from end of unit class assessment sheets, including significant groups
- analysing outcomes of Reception baseline assessment
- monitoring Catholic Life provision

## **9. Sacramental Preparation**

At St. Mary's we believe that it is important for children in our Catholic school to take a full and active part in Sacramental Preparation. The Parish lead a strong programme on Sacramental Preparation. School supports the work of the parish and further prepare children for this. In school, children will learn about the Sacrament they are receiving through RE units, retreats and visits. We also celebrate the Sacraments in school as a whole school community through prayer and assemblies and by representing the children in their special Masses.

## **10. Learning About World Religions**

In the autumn term, to link in with Inter Faith Week in November each year, we focus on the following religions in the following phases:

YR - Sikhism  
KS1 - Hinduism  
LKS2 - Judaism  
UKS2 - Islam

In addition to this, throughout the year, the children learn about other world religions through assemblies and our broad and balanced curriculum.

## **11. Prayer**

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

- Dedicated class time – prayers said throughout the school day
- Liturgies and collective worship assemblies – whole school, key stage, year group and 'God-given gifts' assemblies
- Masses – whole school, phase and year group
- Whole class prayer services (with parents)
- Child led collective worship



- Meditation
- Hymn Practice
- Prayer bags
- Staff prayer – briefings, staff meetings and INSET days
- Staff and pupil retreat days

*For more detailed information, please see Prayer and Liturgy Policy.*

## 12. **SMSVC**

SMSVC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, Vocational and Cultural Education) is a fundamental part of all learning that takes place at St. Mary's. SMSVC focuses on the development of the whole child and embodies our Catholic ethos in which the children can grow and develop to their full potential.

It aims to help the children to understand how they are developing personally and socially, tackling many things that are part of growing up. SMSVC helps to give pupils the knowledge skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active, responsible citizens. SMSVC is part of our everyday life and alongside the fundamental British Values and our school virtues, is at the heart of everything we do.

### **The Spiritual Development of children is shown by their:**

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings, values and faiths.
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them including the intangible.
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning.
- ability to reflect on their experiences.

### **The Moral Development of children is shown by their:**

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong, and their readiness to apply this understanding in their own lives. To have a respect for the civil law and the criminal law of England.
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour.
- ability to investigate and offer reasoned views about moral and ethical issues, and their ability to accept, respect and appreciate that others may have a different viewpoint.

### **The Social Development of children is shown by their:**

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working with pupils from different religious and ethnic backgrounds.
- participate in a variety of social settings, co-operating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively.
- willingness to help and volunteer.

- interest in, and understanding of the way that communities and societies function at a variety of levels.
- acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, respect and tolerance of those with differing faiths and beliefs. Their attitude towards these British Values allows children to participate fully and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

**The Vocational Development of children is shown by their:**

- willingness to help those in need in the community, demonstrating sacrifice and almsgiving.
- ability to show forgiveness, mercy, tolerance, peace and compassion
- ability to demonstrate faithfulness, purity and holiness.

**The Cultural Development of children is shown by their:**

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others.
- participate in and respond to artistic, musical, sporting mathematical, technological, scientific and cultural opportunities.
- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of different cultures in modern Britain as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- interest in exploring, understanding of and respect for cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their attitudes towards different religious and ethnic groups in the local, national and global communities.

In planning for our pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, we recognise that we need to provide as many opportunities as possible for our pupils to engage with culturally rich and diverse experiences. Opportunities to develop SMSVC form both part of the formal and informal curriculum, through cross-curricular activities, teaching in RE, RSE and PSHE.

### **13. 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

#### **14. Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

All children have equal access to the RE curriculum, regardless of religion, gender, culture or special educational needs and/or disabilities. Full participation in all aspects of RE is expected. As a Catholic school, Jesus Christ remains central to every aspect of school life. All pupils are educated in the beliefs and devotional practices of the Catholic Church. Parents and carers are advised that, in desiring a Catholic education for their child, it is expected that all pupils will participate in RE lessons.

#### **15. Staff Development**

At St Mary's, we aim to look at ways of further developing the theological and professional expertise of all our teachers. Our school belongs to the Catholic Primary Partnership, which organises a variety of Religious Education inset for primary teachers.

Staff also benefit for the CPDF available through the Diocese, including training for ECTs and those new to teaching in a Catholic school.

Where appropriate joint staff meetings are held with our link 'Tolkien' primary schools too.

#### **16. Links with Parents**

Celebrations and events related to the Catholic Life of our school are shared in school newsletters, on twitter and published on the school website. Parents and families are regularly invited to join the school community in celebrations, liturgy, mass and fundraising activities.

#### **17. Roles and Responsibilities**

The RE subject lead will work in close consultation with the Headteacher, Phase Leaders, Parish Priest and RE Link Governor.

The RE subject lead will:

- be familiar with each year group of 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' and be available to individual teachers for guidance and support and keep staff informed of current thinking in RE and any new materials / publications
- distribute and provide training on relevant assessment proformas
- attend RE courses and cluster meetings and share the information gained with staff
- arrange and organise INSET training to meet staffs' needs
- monitor the progress of the Birmingham Diocesan RE programme and assessment throughout the school through evaluating planning, assessments and classroom observations
- organise rotas for Masses in consultation with the Parish Priest and rotas for assemblies and liturgical displays

- be responsible for cataloguing materials and the management of the RE budget
- provide information and support Sacramental preparation
- monitor and evaluate prayer corners and RE related activities e.g. Rosary clubs, prayer bags

Class teachers will:

- ensure children attend, participate in or lead daily acts of collective worship
- deliver the programme of study ' Learning and Growing as the People of God' and utilise RE resources
- assess the children's knowledge and understanding against the criteria for the unit
- promote home/school links via the prayer bag system
- communicate with parents regarding their child's progress and attainment in RE via parents' evening appointments and the end of year report
- attend RE courses, CPDF and staff meetings and inform the RE subject lead if they feel further development is needed

### **18. Governing Body**

RE is always a key part of the School Development Plan, and is reported upon half termly as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors. In addition, the RE Subject Leader reports back to the Governing Body once a year.

Governors are also invited to join with other members of the whole school community in the celebration of Mass each week. One member of the governing body has the role of RE Link Governor (Father John Reid) and meets regularly with the Head Teacher and RE subject leader. The RE Link Governor is involved in the monitoring of pupils' work and lesson observations. The RE Link Governor also takes part in class prayer services and works with class teachers to offer support in delivering some elements of the 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'.

### **19. Monitoring and Review of the Policy**

The RE Subject Leader and Headteacher 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.

Review: September 2025