

St George's Catholic Primary School ***'Achieve, Believe, Care.'***

Religious Education Policy

'The task of handing on the faith to future generations is both a privilege and responsibility of the local Church. Its primary purpose is to bring young people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Catechesis aims to draw people into discipleship. Discipleship must always involve not only a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, but knowledge of Scripture, of what has been declared in the Creeds and defined by the Church.'

(Cardinal Hume, 'Religious Education: Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, December 1996.)

'Pupils have a right to receive authentic Church teaching and to have a curriculum that draws them into a systematic study of the saving mystery of Christ, which the Church proclaims.'

(Bishops' Conference of England and Wales; 2000.)

1. MISSION STATEMENT

At St George's Catholic Primary School, we welcome everyone as a member of God's family.

With Jesus in our hearts, we pray together, we work together, we show respect for each other and the world around us. We love God, ourselves and one another.

2. RATIONAL

"Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject amongst many but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school, life." (Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1988).

We also recognise that our children come from a range of backgrounds and abilities and that our teaching of Religious Education will reflect this.

3. SCHOOL VISION

The school will be widely recognised:

- As a Christian community that encourages everyone to realise the gifts they have received from God to their full potential
- As a centre of excellence that values all its members, offering a broad, enriched and challenging curriculum
- For pupils who are happy, confident, caring, independent and well equipped to take on the challenges of life
- As a secure and flexible learning environment that nurtures and inspires everyone

4. AIMS

The vision will be achieved by:

- Encouraging the development of Faith within the context of a Catholic worshipping community
- Ensuring the best academic, spiritual, emotional, social, moral and creative development of our pupils
- Preparing our children to take their place in an ever-changing world as witnesses to Christ and as good citizens

5. OBJECTIVES

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ, of the Church and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold
- To develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and of the vital relationship between faith and life, life and faith
- To encourage study, investigation and reflection by the pupils
- To develop appropriate skills: for example to listen, to think and to respect the view of others: awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural, multi-faith society

6. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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 the school:

- Implicit or unstructured RE: 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 the school to use such opportunities as they arise

- Explicit or Curriculum RE: those timetabled or planned periods of time given to an explicit consideration of RE in the classroom. It is the policy of the school to give RE 10% of the timetable in KS1 (2 hours) and 10% in KS2 (2.5 hours)

7. CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

To fulfill our aims and objectives, we use the 'Learning and Growing as People of God' programme, (A curriculum strategy for Religious Education in the Catholic Primary Schools of the Archdiocese of Birmingham).

8. TEACHING METHODS

Lessons will usually be whole class lessons but there is no single teaching method that will be adopted by all staff. Teachers will use a variety of approaches that will suit all learning styles and abilities of their pupils.

It is important to bear in mind that factual knowledge relevant to RE is best learnt in interesting contexts in which pupils can see its significance and meaning in their lives. Pupils should not merely recall information but should be helped to explore areas of learning so that they can arrive at knowledge which they can interpret and evaluate.

Religious concepts may be explored and understood at different levels and in different ways. They can be explored not only through the intellect but through emotions, imagination and experience.

In order to meet the children where they are and to promote their development we believe children's questions about all aspects of religion should be valued, encouraged and the answers considered as carefully as possible.

9. PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS

The sacraments are a celebration of the presence of Christ permeating every moment of our lives.

Preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation is an integral part of the RE strategy, and work begins in Reception and is deepened and developed throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.

Year 3 is the year of celebration when the children receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for the first time. The course for this is held separate from school, in the Parish, led by Catechists. All work done in the Parish classes is supported and enriched in school lessons.

Year 6 pupils receive the gift of Holy Spirit in Confirmation. Again, the course is held in the parish, with support from the school, including visits to St. Chad's Cathedral and Harvington Hall.

In each of the preparation programmes, parents are seen as a vital part of the teaching, and are asked to work alongside their children. The aim is that parents, priests, parishioners and teachers work closely in unison.

10. NON CATHOLIC CHILDREN, STAFF AND RE

The contribution made by non-Catholic staff to the life and ethos of the school is highly valued. Where a teacher is not a Catholic, the RE co-ordinator will be available to guide them in their delivery of the religious education curriculum to the children. Those staff who would like to deepen their understanding of the teachings of the Catholic faith are eligible to undertake the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS), either at Maryvale College or online.

Children who are not Catholic are expected to participate in all religious educational activity. Class teachers are advised to adopt a sensitive approach when dealing with matters of faith and to involve these children in discussions but using their faith or perspective to allow them to share their thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

11. PROGRESSION AND CONTINUITY

The 'Learning and Growing as People of God' programme has built in progression and continuity, allowing for repetition and consolidation of work covered. The implementation of the Curriculum strategy will be monitored by the RE Co-ordinator and Head teacher, through lesson observations, book scrutinies, monitoring of assessment and planning, as well as regular moderation of the level of work being achieved in each Year group. This will enable the Co-ordinator to help, advise and observe other members of staff while learning and sharing good practice.

12. DIFFERENTIATION

All teachers are aware of the different levels of ability within their own class. As in other curriculum areas, differentiation may occur by task, by outcome and by support.

13. SPECIAL NEEDS

Each teacher is responsible for ensuring that those children who have special needs receive the full entitlement to the RE curriculum. All class teachers are aware of the range of ability within their class. Special needs in RE will be met by our normal programme of differentiation.

Proficiency in language development will ensure that a child is able to record written work or express his/her ideas orally. This will be dealt with as part of their language development. For EAL children their needs will be addressed and tasks set appropriately to their ability.

14. ASSESSMENT

Children are assessed using the 'Levels of attainment in Religious Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges,' guidance and moderated against those levels.

The focus for assessment follows a four year rolling programme based on the following themes: The Liturgical Year, Scripture, The Sacraments and Living as Christians.

The assessment schedule identifies which units are to be assessed by each year group. These assessments are completed based upon a 'best-fit' approach with judgements made from a range of work activities done throughout the unit and not on a single assessment 'test' activity.

15. CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The policy statement and RE strategy will be reviewed and changed when deemed necessary or following guidance from the Diocesan Schools Commission (DSC). The RE Co-ordinator will be able to discuss with colleagues their needs and professional development, allowing them to build up the whole school and classroom RE resources as and when required.

16. PRAYER

Children are taught daily prayers, for the start of the day, lunchtimes and at the end of the school day, as well as the Mass responses as appropriate to their age and stage and development.

Each classroom has a focal point for prayer. This may be a religious display area or 'Prayer Corner.' Children pray together with their teacher at the beginning of each morning, at lunchtime and at the end of the afternoon session. Opportunities for spontaneous prayer and individual reflection exist both in the classroom and in collective worship. The school chapel is also available for quiet prayer and reflection during the school day,

In addition to the 'Lord's Prayer', the following prayers are the basic requirement of all Catholics and are best known by memory (They are found in the school prayer book):

The sign of the cross / The Act of Sorrow / The Angelus / The Stations of the Cross

A morning offering / The Apostles Creed / The Glory Be /
Grace before and after meals / The Rosary / The responses to the Mass
The Hail Mary.

17. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

(See Equal Opportunities Policy).

18. ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR

(Please see Job Description).

19. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required by changes in legislation.