



Religious Education Policy

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Our Mission Statement

At St Joseph's we pride ourselves on our mission statement: 'Growing in Love, in the Spirit of Christ, for the benefit of all'.

We feel our Mission statement 'Growing in Love, in the Spirit of Christ, for the benefit of all' reflects all we stand for as a community. We put the example of Christ at the centre of all we do to help us grow socially, academically, spiritually, morally and physically in our learning and our friendships. We do this for ourselves as well as for the members of the school, parish, local, national and international communities in which we live.

Our Vision

At St Joseph's, our mission is to nurture a compassionate Catholic community inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, embracing every individual and all aspects of our school life. Guided by His message of love and forgiveness, our pupils, staff, parents, and governors work together to uphold and strengthen the school's Catholic ethos.

We are committed to offering a stimulating and well-balanced curriculum that reflects our values, while supporting each child in reaching their fullest potential. At St Joseph's, every person is valued, and we encourage mutual respect for one another and for the world around us.

Statement of Intent

As a Catholic Academy, religious education and faith development are at the heart of our school curriculum developing the Catholicism and spirituality of our pupils.

Religious Education is an integral part of our lives at St. Joseph's School. We are members of the Body of Christ and members of a Christian Community and recognise that we are all at different stages of our faith journey. Therefore, through our Religious Education program and the way we use Christ's teaching within every aspect of our school and lives, we can develop a deep understanding of our faith which will help us to love and serve God in our daily lives, both now and in the future.

Equal Opportunity Statement

The Governors and Staff at St Joseph's believe that all people are entitled to equal opportunities, respect, and consideration regardless of race, colour, creed, gender, disability, or personal circumstances. Therefore, we are opposed to any form of prejudice or discrimination which denies people this equality. This principle applies to both adults and children in our school.

Rationale

Within Catholic education, Religious Education holds a central and vital role. At the core of every Catholic school is the Christian understanding of the human person, and it is through Religious Education that this vision is explored and expressed. For this reason, Religious Education is not just one subject among others, but the foundation that shapes and inspires the whole learning journey. The beliefs and values studied in this subject influence and unite every part of school life.

Every pupil has the right to receive a comprehensive Religious Education that, guided by the faith of the Church, helps them engage with life's most profound questions and discover the hope that lies within them (1 Peter 3:15). This is why Religious Education is recognised as a core subject within Catholic schools, forming part of their distinctive mission and purpose (Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2014).

At St Joseph's, we also acknowledge and celebrate that our children come from diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities. Our approach to Religious Education reflects this diversity, ensuring inclusion and equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, gender, disability, or special educational needs.

Aims and Objectives

Our aims for Religious Education will be to enrich the lives of the children in the;

- Love of God for everyone and everything He has created.
- Understanding of the Good News of the Lord, to enable them to respond to His love.
- Teaching of the Catholic faith and how their lives should be shaped by their beliefs and values.
- Growth of faith by relating the Gospels to their lives and levels of understanding.
- Development of worship and prayer, allowing children to take a leading role.
- Awareness and respect of other Christian faiths, world faiths and cultures.
- Standards to be high and children to be challenged in their understanding so that they can deepen this.

We feel that the best way to achieve these aims is a three-way process involving the Home, School and Parish. We endeavor to make these links wherever possible, acknowledging that the foundation of Religious Education is presented to children from a very wide range of backgrounds and commitment to the faith.

Based upon the varied backgrounds and experience of Church and Religious Education we tailor our programme to meet the needs of all pupils.

Whilst we are first and foremost a Roman Catholic School with a strong mission and vision statement, we do support other religious backgrounds within our school, focusing on the similarities within the beliefs and celebrating the differences.

The objectives of curriculum religious education in catholic schools are:

- 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, ability to listen; to think critically, spiritually, ethically, and theologically; to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively; to make informed judgements.
- To foster appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth; respect for the views 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, multifaith society.

Religious Education in the Classroom

The primary role of Religious Education in Catholic schools is to deepen the faith and understanding of those who are baptised, helping them grow in the beliefs they have received and to support others in their faith. It exists in harmony with prayer, liturgy, and the call to live according to the goodness and truth revealed in Jesus Christ. Religious Education is the space where faith engages with understanding, while also offering every pupil—whether a believer or not—the opportunity to learn about and reflect upon the Catholic faith. To reflect its importance, Religious Education is allocated 10% of the total teaching time across each Key Stage.

Programmes of Study

St Joseph's Primary has started trailing a new curriculum in 2025, using the Religious Education Directory (RED). Last academic year each class completed teaching from Come and See. From October 2025 we are in a position to teach purely from the new curriculum using the Religious Education Directory throughout year Nursery – Year 6.

The aims of religious education are:

1. To engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life.
2. To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively.
3. To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society.
4. To give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own.
5. To develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.
6. To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith.
7. To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

Teaching about other faiths is an important part of our curriculum, in keeping with the Church's recognition of the holiness and wisdom present in them, which "often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all people." While remaining rooted in our Christian faith, we are called to listen with openness, engage in dialogue, and be willing to learn from those of different faith traditions, many of whom are part of our local community.

At St Joseph's, pupils formally study other world religions five times throughout the school year. One week is dedicated to the focused teaching of Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, and other Christian denominations. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children also celebrate a variety of religious festivals as they occur throughout the year.

Process of Teaching

The Catechism of the Catholic Church highlights humanity's search for meaning, God's initiative in Revelation as He comes to meet us, and our response of faith. This pattern shapes the structure of the programme, guiding each topic through the process of *understand, discern, and respond*. The RED programme further explores learning through six lenses: *hear, live, believe, celebrate, dialogue, and encounter*.

These knowledge lenses define the focus of study for pupils, outlining what should be understood by the end of each age phase. They are described as lenses because they represent perspectives through which learning is approached. The programme is divided into four lenses

dedicated to the study of Catholicism (*hear, believe, celebrate, live*) and two lenses for the study of other religions and worldviews (*dialogue* and *encounter*). Each lens sets progressive learning outcomes appropriate to each year group.

The model curriculum is organised into six components, referred to as *branches*, which correspond to the six half-terms of the school year. Each branch centres on a core theme and invites pupils to reflect on Revelation, Scripture, life in Christ, and life in the Church. This structure enables pupils not only to gain academic knowledge but also to reflect on their experiences of faith, encouraging them to *see, judge, and act* with a deeper understanding of the Christian life.

1. Creation and covenant: ‘The heavens are telling the glory of God’ (Ps 19:1). In this branch,

pupils will encounter the God who creates and calls a people.

1. Prophecy and promise: ‘In many and various ways, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets’ (Heb 1:1). In this branch, pupils will explore the Christian understanding of the teaching of the prophets as they point to the fulfilment of God’s promise in a messiah, Jesus Christ.

2. Galilee to Jerusalem: ‘God’s only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known’ (Jn 1:18). In this branch, pupils will experience the ministry of Jesus, the Word of God. They will learn about the call of the disciples and the nature of being a follower of Jesus.

3. Desert to garden: ‘Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day’ (1 Cor 15:3). In this branch, pupils will study the season of Lent and its culmination in the events of Holy Week. They will learn about the Paschal Triduum at the heart of the Catholic Church’s Liturgy and life.

4. To the ends of the Earth: ‘Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 28:19). In this branch, pupils will study the events that flowed from the Resurrection and Ascension in the coming of the Holy Spirit and the work of the apostles and early Church.

5. Dialogue and encounter: ‘For “In him we live and move and have our being”’ (Acts 17:28). In this branch, pupils will learn how Christians work together with people of different religious convictions and all people of goodwill towards the common good, respecting the dignity of all humanity.

Lessons

Each lesson contains the same components and follow a similar pattern of teaching, to ensure that all lessons are knowledge rich and focus on the understanding, whilst also including room for spiritual reflection. Each lesson contains:

1. Feedback from the previous lesson
2. Retrieval from previous learning
3. Prayer focus
4. New learning
5. Independent tasks to embed new learning
6. Self-assessment opportunities

“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

Feedback

Feedback should be given in a timely manner, have an impact upon the pupils’ learning and be in line with the Feedback Policy. It is expected that written and verbal feedback is only given for the benefit of the pupils, a sample of the class work is marked per lesson and marked in three different groups.

Children should assess their learning at the end of each lesson using the topic pages. Each lesson should open with general feedback from the previous lesson.

High frequency spellings should be identified and key religious vocabulary should be corrected to age expectations.

Assessment and Monitoring

Pupils are assessed against the expected end of age-phase outcomes from the Religious Education Directory. Each component will open with a title page which lists the expected end of age-phase outcomes for that component. The page will have opportunities for pupil self-assessment and teacher assessment. Children will assess their knowledge at the end of each lesson, then a teacher will assess the child’s knowledge at the end of each lesson.

	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
The following list gives an indication of the ways in which these skills develop through the use of 'driver words and phrases' that are applied progressively as pupils move through the different age-phases of the curriculum content:			
Driver words and phrases	- Recognise... texts, beliefs, rites, ways of life. - Name... - Remember... - Recall... - Retell... - Describe... - Make links... - Explain... - Show understanding... - Interpret within a historical context...	- Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions. - Say what they wonder about. - Recognise similarities and differences. - Point out what is the same and what is different. - Express a point of view or a preference. - Listen to different viewpoints. - Support a preference with reasons. - Explain differences. - Construct arguments. - Weigh strengths and weaknesses. - Arrive at justified conclusions. - Recognise complexity with reference to different interpretations and historical context.	- Talk about their own feelings and experiences. - Respond personally to questions that are difficult to answer. - Make links between their own feelings and beliefs and their behaviour or way of life. - Compare their own and other peoples' responses. - Explain differences of belief and ways of life with reference to religious commitments. - Critically reflect on their own beliefs and ways of life in response to dialogue with others. - Respond with integrity to personal conclusions about questions of value and meaning.

Driver words and phrases are used to direct the children's thinking and outcome. The pupils must know where they are working at the end of each unit: working towards expectations, working within expectations, working at expectation, or working above expectations.

Each component ends with a knowledge capture which is a task that allows each pupil to showcase the knowledge they have gained and developed throughout the half term. Teachers will use their judgement to assess whether each child is working below the expected standard, working towards the expected standard, working at the expected standard, or working above the expected standard.

Other aspects of Religious Education throughout the year

At St. Joseph's School, we do take into account the different seasons celebrated in the Church's Liturgical Year. This partly takes place in lessons, but it also focused on in our assemblies and other activities during the year.

Areas covered in the academic year:

- Harvest Celebration
- Advent preparation for Christmas
- Lenten preparation for Easter (including a Lenten service which the parents and parishioners are invited to attend)

- Important feasts of the year celebrated and focusses on – all Holy Days and our Patron Saint Joseph

Quite a number of the topics within the ‘Come and See’ lend themselves to some of the above and can and are incorporated at the appropriate time.

Home-School Parish links

We warmly welcome opportunities for parents to be involved with the religious education we give the children, and for us to assist parents in the difficult responsibility they have in encouragement and guidance, through their example, for their children to nurture and grown in their faith journey.

All parents receive a letter at the start of the term informing them of the topics their child will be learning about in Religious Education. In addition to this they are also invited to celebrate their child’s learning in each topic at a ‘Come and See’ assembly.

We also welcome opportunities where we can join with parishioners and other groups and where we can invite them to join us. We work hard to foster such links and organise a number of opportunities throughout the year:

- A weekly class Mass
- Assemblies
- Lenten and Advent services
- Parents and Grandparents help in School
- Parents help on educational visits
- Christmas concerts – with performances for both parents and local Senior Citizens
- Sports Day and Summer Fair
- Word of the Week videos
- Parish Ambassadors

A number of parents have formed a “Friends of Saint Joseph” fundraising and social group. Their support tremendously adds to our Christian community in action.

Display and Prayer areas

Within each classroom there is a display of the current R.E topic in the class. This should include a range of children’s work as well as key words and questions to promote thought. These displays are monitored by the R.E Lead, the Headteacher and each House Captain.

In the Hall there are many religious displays which the children across the school contribute towards.

Impact

Our curriculum has ambition for high achievement of all pupils irrespective of background and starting point.

The teaching and learning process is cyclical, therefore assessments are used to inform teaching, but also to measure progress.

Progress is measured through the use of post learning challenges at the end of each unit of learning.

Outcomes at the end of both Key Stage One and Two are a useful indicator of pupils' learning and one which supports staff in measuring the impact of the school's curriculum. However, at St. Joseph's, we continually measure the impact of our curriculum by scrutinising pupils' books, speaking to pupils about their learning and the use of internal assessments.

Provision for SEND

Religious Education is an integral part of our lives at St. Joseph's School. We are all members of the Body of Christ and members of a Christian Community and recognise that we are all at different stages of our faith journey. Therefore, we ensure that Religious Education is differentiated so that all can access the curriculum. Careful consideration is taken to remove any barriers to learning for example English. The Religious content should therefore be at the core of all lessons ensuring that all children can access the religious content at an appropriate level.

The Role of the Religious Education Leader

The Headteacher has the responsibility for the leadership of the Religious Education curriculum and delegates responsibility to key staff:

The R.E Leader should:

- Keep informed of religious issues and inform and support colleagues
- Maintain resources- update and order when appropriate
- Ensure delivery of R.E is taking place in line with the school policy through lesson observations, monitoring planning, monitoring the Catholic life of the school and monitoring children's work.
- Attend Diocesan R.E Lead courses, as well as other related courses
- Lead INSET and staff meetings
- Ensure the Diocesan termly newsletter is sent to parents
- Moderate work within school and with other schools to ensure assessment and levelling is accurate
- Monitor displays in classes and around school
- Support staff in planning and delivery of the new RED.

Class teachers ensure that the curriculum is taught and that the aims are achieved for their class. They plan collaboratively to ensure parity across the year group.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher ensure that the progress of each pupil is tracked and that there is appropriate challenge support and intervention.

Governors monitor the success of the curriculum at whole Governing Body meetings through the Headteacher's report and reports from subject leaders.

This policy is monitored by the Religious Education Lead. It is evaluated and reviewed annually by the school Governors, and the whole staff.