



Religious Education Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

*In the footsteps of Jesus,
we strive to achieve excellence in everything we do.*

Our Ethos Statement

At St Michael's our mission statement permeates through everything we do. The ethos within our school community is primarily based on us having a deep respect for others. We focus on the simple commandment Jesus gave us 'love one another as I have loved you.'

Together, we provide high quality, rounded education for all our students, so that they develop their full uniqueness and potential. Teaching the children about our Gospel values is at the heart of life here at St Michael's. Our curriculum values the importance of each and every person and promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person who is made in God's image and uniquely loved by God.

Aims

- To celebrate our Catholic faith and encourage children to be confident in their relationship with God.
- To provide a rich and balanced curriculum that enables all children to become religiously literate; to help them develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to think spiritually, ethically and theologically.
- To help children to be aware of the demands of religious commitment in their daily lives.
- To create a secure and caring environment in which learning and teaching can flourish and shared values of compassion, honesty, respect and justice can be nurtured and developed.
- To work in partnership with as well as contributing to the Parish Community.

Introduction

This policy is a statement of our aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Religious Education at St Michael's Catholic Primary School. St. Michael's School fully believes that Religious Education is the foundation of all our teaching and the entire educational process. The Christian Catholic beliefs and values inspire and unify every aspect of our school life. They are the

basis and essential influence on our school curriculum.

Religious Education is linked to all our teaching and the key areas of the children's learning. This is because we see education as being God's work, and so education is religious, in that it concerns discovering the breadth and depth of God's creation and His creatures. Hence, whatever area of the curriculum children are studying they are actively learning about:

- the mysteries and wonders of God's creation
- the challenges and discoveries that are presented to them
- the uniqueness and dignity of individual people
- how God's world can be enjoyed.

Provision of Religious Education

The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales stated in January 2000:

“In the life of faith of the Catholic School, religious education plays a central and vital part.

At the heart of Catholic education is depicted by the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in religious education. Therefore, religious education is never simply one subject among many but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values ... inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic School. We are committed to classroom religious education because all pupils have the right to receive an overall religious education which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope that is within them (1 Peter 3:15)

We consider religious education to be the core subject in our school. We deliver it through the 'Come and See' programme approved by the Bishops of England and Wales.

Catholic schools are guided in all they do by an important and coherent vision of education. This vision is based on the truth revealed by God about ourselves, our life together in community and our ultimate destiny with God. This gives rise to an educational endeavour centred on the person of Jesus Christ, who is our Way, Truth and Life. 1

In January 2000, a National Symposium on 'Expectations of Religious Education in Catholic Schools' was hosted by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The Bishops' issued a statement highlighting the following points.

What is Religious Education? (4)

- Religious education is about engaging with the deepest questions of life and finding reasons for the hope which is within them (1 Peter 3:15).
- It is about the Christian vision of the human person.
- It is the core subject which is central to the life of the Catholic school.
- Religious education is the systematic study:

– Of the mystery of God, as discovered through the Bible and particularly through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ,

- The teachings of the Church,
- The lives of the saints,
- The relationship between faith and life.

Expectations of Classroom Religious Education (7)

- Classroom religious education in a Catholic school is primarily educational.
- Excellence in religious education is achieved by:
 - Clarity of succinct religious learning objectives,
 - Key content,
 - By appropriate methodologies,
 - Rigour,
 - Richness of resources,
 - Achievement of identified outcomes,
 - Accurate methods of assessment.

The objective of religious education requires: (10)

- Analysis and reflection and critical appreciation of sources,
- Marked progression through the different stages of education,
- The unequivocal support of the management of every Catholic school,
- 10% of the length of the taught week for each Key Stage of education,
- The encouragement of investigation and reflection,
- Development of appropriate skills and attitudes which allows for a free, informed response to God's call in everyday life,
- The use of skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Allocation

In line with the recommendations of the diocese we devote 10% of the teaching week to Religious Education. This time is not in conjunction with any other subject or act of worship. This is clearly indicated class timetables.

Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 - 2 ¼ hours per week.

Key Stage 2 - 2 ½ hours per week.

10 hours each year is allocated to study Judaism and another world religion.

This excludes whole school and key stage assemblies, daily prayer, Mass and other forms of worship.

Religious Education Curriculum

Our Religious Education programme is delivered through Come and See. It is provided so that it is appropriate to the age and developmental stage of each child. The class teacher will ensure differentiation according to each child's ability and with the support of the differentiated tasks

suggested in Come and See. This will be evident in the planning and evaluation.

Come and See is developed through themes based on the Second Vatican Council documents.

A whole school approach is taken with the overall themes as set out below. Each Year Group then has its own title and focus within this theme. All Come and See topics apart from those exploring other world religions will last four weeks.

Autumn Term

Domestic church - Family

Baptism/Confirmation - Belonging

Advent/Christmas - Loving

Spring Term

Local church - Community

Eucharist - Relating

Lent/Easter - Giving

Summer Term

Pentecost - Serving

Reconciliation - Inter-relating

Universal Church - World

Other faiths (Judaism and Islam) are explored during the year for two weeks.

Each unit in the Come and See Programme is linked by an overall theme and each teaching sequence has three parts -

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, ICT and service of others;
- making links between Christian understanding and the shared life experience;
- valuing life experience;
- acknowledging and respecting difference(s);

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.

There is a reminder that the teacher will undertake an evaluation which will inform future teaching and learning and include assessment for learning.

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

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES:

Religious Education is taught in line with our Teaching and Learning Policy. Within their planning, teachers will ensure there are opportunities for the development of the child through:

INVESTIGATION – The ability to find and record information, and ask relevant questions.

INTERPRETATION - The ability to recognise metaphors and symbols when studying religion, and the ability to explain significance.

COMMUNICATION – To develop an ability to describe and explain religious ideas and practices, in line with their own personal views and feelings about religion, in a variety of ways.

CRITICAL THINKING – The ability to compare and contrast ideas and practices, and explain their own views and opinions.

EMPATHY and REFLECTION – To develop an ability to empathise with other religious beliefs, and to participate in community prayer and celebration.

EVALUATION – The ability to distinguish between rules and principles, opinions and beliefs, and to make reasoned judgements and responsible choices.

Marking

Books are marked following the school marking policy. It should be positive and supportive to encourage the child in his/her faith journey.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment in RE is now done on three Attainment Targets: AT1: Knowledge and Understanding; AT2, Engaging and responding and AT3 (mainly for KS2) Analysis and Evaluation. There is a formal assessment each term, but the task serves only as a part of the evidence used to support the 'best fit' level of attainment achieved by the pupil each term. This 'best fit' judgment will be based on evidence gathered from the full range of pupils' work and activities that term (AT1, AT2 and AT3 where appropriate), not just written work. No one piece of work can meet every strand of each Attainment Target. Religious Education data is stored electronically on the Target Tracker system.

Recording provides evidence of achievement. It involves pupils in self-assessment and progress, in dialogue with the teacher. It takes many forms:

- Notes from observations
- Written comments on children's work
- Visual evidence – for example photographs of dance, drama and celebrations
- Pupil self-assessment

At the end of every Topic teachers will complete:

- A level of assessment Progress sheet for each child
- Update the Target Tracker system

The advantages of this 'Assessing Pupils' Progress' approach are:

- Judgments are made in an informed holistic way, taking into account how independently and consistently learners demonstrate their skills.
- Evidence is gathered from a range of planned teaching and learning opportunities.
- It helps teachers identify gaps in teaching.

Prayer and Reflection

An essential part of the Catholic ethos of the school is the prayer life. The most important aspect of prayer for children is that they realise it is their way of communicating with God. Children are encouraged to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development. Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying:

- quiet reflection / meditation
- praying together
- writing own prayers
- prayers through music
- learning traditional Christian / Catholic prayers.

Staff are encouraged to pray with children, and to be an example for them. Through prayer, we endeavour to develop our relationship with God.

All classes have a prayer area which has displays of children's work. This area changes with the liturgical year. Class prayers are established throughout the school and each teacher uses prayers appropriate to age and ability of the class. Candles, pictures and objects are also used as a focus for prayer. Children take part in whole school assemblies where children and staff join together to pray. Children are encouraged to pray for the intentions of others as well as themselves. Class acts of worship and pupil led liturgies are held when there is no whole school assembly. Personal and formal prayer may reflect events in the Come and See Topic and Liturgical calendar.

Some of the opportunities for prayer and liturgical celebrations include:

- Liturgical Celebrations
- End of topic class liturgies
- Termly Class Mass
- Twice termly Whole School Mass
- Holy Days of Obligation masses
- Y6 Leavers' Mass
- Deanery Leavers' Mass - Transition Day
- Weekly Whole School Liturgy
- Services of Reconciliation (Advent and Lent)
- Daily Class worship (EYFS/KS1/2 weekdays when there is no whole school worship.)
- Achievement/Celebration

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children in the Faith and we seek to support them. We warmly invite parents and carers to become actively involved in the religious life of the school by:

- Newsletters outlining the RE topics and suggesting how they can support and help their children at home in their understanding of the topics.
- Attending achievement evenings to celebrate individual, class and whole school achievements
- Attending carol services, Christmas plays, the Easter Service and the celebrations honouring Mary in May.
- Attending school Masses
- Supporting their children to learn formal prayers and to pray spontaneously
- Encouraging their children to participate and give generously to appeals through the year for charities and Appeals supported by the school.

Partnership with the Church

Preparation for receiving the Sacraments takes place within the Parish.

- Children are invited and encouraged to take part in Reconciliation and Holy Communion preparation from age 8 (Year 3) with parents making a commitment to the Parish preparation programme.
- Staff are encouraged to attend Parish celebrations
- Our annual Achievement Evening is held in the church and open to parents and parishioners.
- The Parish Priest visits the school regularly.
- Class led Masses take place on a termly basis on a rota system.
- Children visit the Church for other liturgical activities.
- The children are members of the Mini Vinnies -a junior arm of the St Vincent de Paul Society

The School in the Community

In St. Michael's we wish to develop strong links with our local community and our children's concern for others. Our strategies include supporting local and global charities such as Bonnie Downs Community Association (BDCA), CAFOD and any other charities in need of our support. It is hoped that through our actions, the children will become more aware of the needs of others, develop sensitivity, generosity and a sense of responsibility toward their neighbour in Christ.

Links are strengthened on a Diocesan and Deanery level by participation at:

- Headteacher conferences
- Deanery Head Teachers' meetings
- R.E. subject leader Conferences and courses
- Liaison with other primary schools RE subject leaders at network meetings
- The annual Deanery Citizenship Focus
- Liaison with Secondary Schools St Bonaventure's and St Angela's.

Partnership with Governors

- Liaison with Headteacher in planning and implementation of RE curriculum
- Governors invited to attend school events, Masses and Parents evenings.
- RE link governor liaising with school and staff

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in Religious Education according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

The R.E. curriculum, as with other areas of the curriculum, is differentiated to meet the needs of our children through our planning.

In the classroom we intend:

- to provide a happy, caring environment so all children achieve their potential
- that plans should indicate a variety of learning styles for all children
- that children's work should show a variety of recording to suit all abilities that teaching focuses on learning outcomes
- to build on the child's strengths to allow maximum participation in all activities which allow children to grow spiritually and develop a strong sense of the value of God's world.

Equal Opportunities

The teaching of R.E. makes a particular contribution to the school's policy on equality of opportunity in that it deals specifically with the values and beliefs of other races and cultures, encouraging tolerance, understanding and respect. It teaches about people's rights to be treated fairly and

provides children with opportunities to reflect upon human capacity for kindness, unselfishness and sympathy for the feelings of others.

Leadership of Religious Education

Religious Education is the responsibility of the R.E. subject leader and the Headteacher (spiritual coordinator). The main task of the co-ordinator is to:

- support and encourage the class teachers and to lead INSET in RE as appropriate.
- keep abreast of the continuing changes and new foci in RE by attending training and reporting back to the Head Teacher and staff.
- order in conjunction with the staff and the school scheme of work the necessary resources to enable RE to be taught effectively.
- liaise with the Head Teacher who will report back annually to the school governors.
- monitor RE work throughout the whole school, in conjunction with the staff and SLT.
- take the lead in policy development and scheme of work to ensure continuity and progression.
- ensure the policy and programmes are implemented as agreed through the monitoring of plans and lessons.
- support staff to assess pupils' progress in RE.
- recommend targets for whole school development when appropriate.

Teaching Staff

Teachers are sympathetic to the teaching of the Catholic faith which permeates all aspects of our school life. Through example, commitment and teaching, the children are encouraged to develop a loving and trusting relationship with God, an experience which it is hoped will influence their attitudes to life and their relationship with other people. All teaching staff have the responsibility of teaching Religious Education to the children in their class.

All staff are encouraged to regularly attend relevant courses. Our CPD co-ordinator provides information on courses and teachers give feedback to staff at staff meetings.

Parish Priest

The parish priest, who is also a governor of the school, has responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community. The parish priest promotes the spiritual life of the 'school church'. He leads the celebration of liturgies and whole school and class masses. In addition, the parish priest visits the school on a weekly basis to discuss the topics being studied with each class in their R.E. lessons.

Resources

Resources, books, posters and pictures are stored in the resources area in the loft. The school library also has a variety of religious books

Musical instruments are in the cupboards in our specialist music room.

The mass box and altar cloths are stored in the Year 3/6 corridor cupboard.
A class set of Bibles in each KS2 class.
Class prayer table clothes for representing the Liturgical are kept in each class

Health & Safety

The school's Health and Safety Policy applies to all aspects of R.E. teaching. Staff should note that when using candles it is important that children must never be left alone with lit candles or allowed to light them or blow them out unsupervised. Incense and scented candles add greatly to a quiet meditative environment, but it must be remembered that children with asthma may find this uncomfortable.

Religious Education in Personal/Social Development

Our RSHE policy aims to develop each child's positive self-image. It integrates with the RE programme and promotes self-respect, respect and consideration for others. Sex education is dealt with separately and sensitively. Sex Education in our Relationship and Sex Education Policy, is concerned with the recognition and understanding of their physical changes and development. We focus on the importance of loving and caring relationships and fostering positive attitudes towards other people, the world around us and God.

Collective Worship

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups).

The act of worship is distinct from R.E. lessons. It forms an integral part of school life and is central to the Catholic tradition. In this voluntary aided Catholic School, responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing body after consultation with the Headteacher.

Those responsible will ensure that acts of worship are in accordance with the school's instrument of governance and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

As a Catholic school we hope that parents will be fully supportive of our approach to collective worship as part of living out our mission statement. However, we recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship and in such circumstances appropriate supervision arrangements will be made.

Collective worship is celebrated in a variety of ways including: whole school worship; class worship; worship through hymns; class mass or liturgy; whole school masses during the year, including holy days of obligation during term time.

Collective worship in our school community provides opportunities to:

deepen our relationship with God; grow in spiritual, moral and liturgical understanding; grow in understanding of our living faith tradition; develop a sense of wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ; reflect upon our own individual faith journeys; develop the skills of prayer.

The Role of Religious Education subject leader

- Ensure policy and Come & See Scheme for RE are in use and appropriate for each year group.
- Prepare the Whole School Masses
- Support staff in preparing class masses and liturgies

- Ensure there are sufficient resources for classroom and other RE tables around the school.
- Collect pieces of work to keep the portfolio up to date.

Such policy and schemes of work must:

- Emphasize the importance of pupils being able to apply the skills, processes and concepts learnt.
- Be sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of pupils.
- Continue to review methods of assessment and recording pupil's achievements in RE.
- Undertake the necessary reading and Inset appropriate to the RE Subject Leader.
- Prepare and lead staff meetings on RE, advice, assist and support staff where appropriate.
- Order, in consultation with the Headteacher and staff, appropriate resources for RE
- Take responsibility for resources in the RE and list contents and monitor use of equipment and material.
- Monitor the Curriculum of RE. This includes Teachers' plans, Resources, Lessons and Samples of Pupil' work according to the School Monitoring Programme
- Liaise with the Diocese of Brentwood RE Advisor, Headteacher and the Parish priest on matters relating to Religious Education

Signed by: _____

The chair of governors

Date: _____

Signed by: _____

Head Teacher

Date: _____