



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School



RE Policy

Reviewed November 2022

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Mission Statement

'With Jesus, we love, grow and succeed'

Introduction

This document reflects the values and philosophy in relation to the teaching and learning of Religious Education at St Patrick's School. It gives a framework within which all staff and children work and gives guidance on teaching, learning, planning and assessment. The policy is intended to be read in conjunction with the Curriculum Mapping Document for R.E., the Diocesan Scheme of Work, 'A curriculum strategy for Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools of the Archdiocese of Birmingham' Learning and Growing as the people of God.

This policy document, having been presented to and agreed upon by the whole staff, Parish Priest and governing body, is distributed to all individual members of the teaching and non-teaching staff and school governors. Extra copies of the document are available from the Principal.

Subject aims and objectives

St Patrick's have adopted- 'With Jesus, we love, grow and succeed' as our school mission statement and the children understand what this means -this is the heart of our school life.

The Religious Education provided in a Catholic School cannot be confined to teaching/learning specifically devoted to Religious Education. The school seeks to ensure that the message and spirit of the Gospel permeates ALL aspects of school life, that it informs the approach to and treatment of the whole curriculum and that it is reflected and communicated in the love and care with which both Staff and Pupils are treated and treat each other.

Nevertheless, specific Religious Education is of central importance. "It leads children into an exploration of the different aspects of religion and thoughtful reflection upon religious belief." (Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, 1996).

Our curriculum aims are:

1. To provide at least 10% of teaching time to be set aside for the Religious Education of all pupils as required by the Bishops Conference.
2. To provide opportunities for daily collective worship.
3. To provide a caring, inspiring and creative environment.
4. To plan creative and stimulating lessons based on the Birmingham Diocese Curriculum directory which is inclusive for all.
5. To impart religious knowledge and understanding of:
 - a. Beliefs, teachings and sources.
 - b. Celebration and ritual.
 - c. Social and moral practices and way of life.
6. Teach children to learn from religion by reflection on meaning by:
 - a. Engagement with own and others beliefs and values.
 - b. Engagement with questions of meaning and purpose.
7. Develop the spiritual life of the pupil by
 - a. Providing a Sacramental programme which is inclusive and in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church.



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- b. Teaching and providing opportunities for Holy Mass and other Christian celebrations.
- c. Providing times for prayer and teaching different mediums of prayer.
8. To help children grow in faith by providing opportunities through celebration, prayer, learning and reflection.
9. To bring about the realisation of who we are, who we ought to be and the actions we ought to perform. (Moral Education).
10. To lead children to respect themselves and all others because we are all made in the image and likeness of God and know that everyone is redeemed through Christ Jesus.
11. To ensure the living out of the Gospel values which are linked in with the Commandments of Christ and his Church.
12. To teach children that their ministry in life is one mirrored by Christ – King Priest and Prophet.
 - a. King – they have been given a special role in life to use and develop their talents to use for the Glory of God and his people.
 - b. Priest – to live Holy and prayerful lives according to God's Law.
 - c. Prophet – to be witnesses to the Gospel and proclaim it to all.

Organisation

The Scheme adopted by St Patrick's School is the Diocesan curriculum strategy and has been adapted from the People of God. The Scheme provides progression throughout the School within the key areas of Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. It also allows opportunities for monitoring and assessment. The Scheme is intended to link in with other curricular areas; it should be resourced by using Bibles, Missals, Veritas, ICT, Children of the Promise, Sacramental Programmes, multicultural resources and other resources appropriate to the Programme of Study.

Teaching and learning objectives of the Scheme are:

- to help children become more aware of and to reflect on their experience of living in the world with others (Experiential)
- to reveal to the children some aspect of God's plan for our salvation (Doctrinal)
- to help them respond to God's love in their lives (Moral)
- to help them listen to and respond to God (Prayer)

Prayer in the school

In order to highlight the importance of religious Education and the Catholic ethos of the school, displays of a religious nature are evident in each classroom throughout the year. Similarly such displays are evident in corridors, the school hall and the school entrance. Every classroom in the school should promote a prayer environment. This is achieved by each class having a prayer focus. It is required that this focus is dressed in the liturgical colours of the year as a visual sign to the children to show the change and the mood of the liturgical calendar. This prayer focus should have a bible which shows the previous Sunday's Gospel readings; or the reading associated with a feast day; or a reading which is relevant to that scheme of work. Teachers are encouraged to be creative when creating an interactive display on this focus. Objects, images, candles which reflect the liturgical year and feasts. Each room in the school has a crucifix which reminds us all of the sacrifice of Christ for all of humanity; it reminds us that Christ is the foundation stone of Catholic education and that Christ is at the centre of everything we do.



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Collective worship

Each school is required by law to provide daily worship in the classroom. Teacher and pupils pray at each of these periods of the day:

- The beginning of the school day (asking prayer)
- Before lunchtime (Thanksgiving prayer)
- After lunchtime (Thanksgiving prayer)
- Home time (Asking, thanksgiving and or praising prayer)

Garden of Prayer and Remembrance

In the school grounds we have provided a place for private and communal prayer which is known to the children as the prayer garden. It offers a place of silent reflection away from the playground where children and staff are encouraged to silently reflect or say a prayer.

The garden serves as a memorial to all past pupils, staff, governors, parishioners who have departed this life. We thank them for the role they played in our school and we pray for them and all of the faithful departed.

Collective worship at a whole school level

In addition to the daily requirement of collective worship in our classrooms we provide collective worship at a whole school level and for the different educational groups in the school. We do this each week on a:

- Monday – Mission Assembly led by the Principal or a senior member of staff
- Tuesday – Hymn practise lead by the Vice Principal
- Friday – is our class celebration assembly led by a class in the school where all members of the school community are invited to take part.

Each of these gatherings are always based on or linked to a Catholic Christian theme. When we plan for these occasions we keep the following points in mind:

- Structure – Gather, Listen, Respond and Go (based on the Holy Mass model)
- Is the language being used suitable for the age group?
- Are the symbols being used relevant and meaningful?
- Can everyone identify and join in with what is happening?
- Can this celebration be related to the lives of the children?
- Is it meaningful?

Providing opportunities for Holy Mass to be celebrated

We acknowledge and revere the most Holy Sacrament of the celebration of the Eucharist. We believe it is central to our roles as being members of the Body of Christ and the redeeming life graces and blessings it provides. We firmly believe in the importance of celebrating Mass by:

- Encouraging all our school members to go to Mass on a weekly basis.
- Providing opportunities for School, parish and home Masses throughout the academic year.



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- Celebrating Holy Mass on Feast Days and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Having Mass celebrated in school or on the grounds of the school.
- Celebrating Masses as part of the Sacramental Programme.
- Celebrating Mass at the key times of the school year – blessing of the school year and a leavers Mass for year 6.
- By teaching the structure of the Mass to the children.
- By basing all our assemblies, meetings and gatherings on the four part model of the Mass.

Church's Liturgical Year and Traditional Devotions

Using the ancient tradition of the Liturgical year as a framework, we draw on the wealth of the church to teach our children who God is and what they are. We follow the development through the curriculum directory, introducing children to the lives of saints, to the changes of season and the mood and colour expressing these changes. Children are given the associated language, signs and symbols. This involves progression, some repetition and deepening of understanding.

A soundly based devotion to Our Lady as Mother of Jesus and our Mother is encouraged. A simple form of the Rosary is introduced in October at key stage 1 and developed in key stage 2. Marian prayers and songs are nurtured in May having a procession and celebration for the Crowning of Mary's statue.

The feast of the St Patrick is celebrated and devotion encouraged. St Patrick's Day has developed into a time of celebration and thanksgiving with Holy Mass at the centre of these celebrations.

Prayers for the dead in November and Stations of the Cross in Lent become part of our prayer programme. Children are introduced to prayer in the form of a litany, also in November.

Advent and the Christmas season is observed and celebrated through the diocesan curriculum programme of study and through a variety of collective worship gatherings such as a reconciliation service for key stage 2 and blessing of the school Christmas tree. After the Christmas Holidays the season is continued up to its official ending with an Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on or close to the feast of the Epiphany.

Holy Week preparations take place in school involving children and parents preparing the liturgy for a Passover celebration which takes place in the school hall. Lent parent prayer times and a reconciliation service also play a part in this solemn season.

The greatest season of the Catholic Christian calendar, Easter, is celebrated with a traditional egg hunt and other Easter activities. These activities are lined to the Easter Message of New Life.

Helping others

We aim to bring about an awareness of the needs of others. This is an on-going process and those less fortunate than us are remembered in daily prayer.

During the autumn season children and the community are encouraged to bring in food for those less fortunate during the Harvest Festival celebrations.



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During the seasons of Lent and Advent we attempt to raise funds for various charities at home and overseas, e.g. Raffles, non-uniform days, cake sales, toy collections which are often planned by the school council and chaplaincy team.

Children are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in our community. It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture generous giving of self, an appreciation and respect for one's own property and that of others.

Parental Involvement

We believe that if our religious programme is to be effective, we must at each stage seek to involve parents and give them the confidence to play their part in the formation of their children. The school supports and develops the primary task of parents as the first teachers of their children in the ways of Faith. We aim to involve parents by:

1. Inviting them to open prayer times during Advent and Lent
2. Inviting them to the Friday celebration assembly each week
3. Inviting them to celebrate Holy Mass and Reconciliation services at different times during the school year
4. They are invited to parent meetings when Religious Education is discussed e.g. as their children enter school in Reception, at Curriculum Open Evenings and later as they begin their immediate preparation for the Sacraments
5. Inviting them to special celebrations e.g. Christmas Play, Passover, Leavers Mass, Easter and Christmas celebrations
6. They are encouraged to bring their children to the Holy Mass on Sunday mornings
7. They are encouraged to support the Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and faith folders
8. Providing interactive information evenings on the Sacramental Programme and Family Life Education.
9. Involving them in preparations for changes in liturgical seasons, e.g. making advent wreaths, preparing Passover meal ingredients, display work for Sacrament celebrations
10. Inviting them to share their views through curriculum evenings, pupil progress meetings, Sacrament meetings, family life education meetings and through questionnaires.

Multi-Faith/Multi-Cultural Aspects

Religious Education should introduce children to the background and beliefs of people of other faiths so that prejudice and misunderstanding can be overcome from an early age – we endeavour to seize each opportunity as it arises to ensure tolerance, respect and understanding between all the cultures and religions represented not just in the school or its immediate environment but in the world as a whole. We promote this through the fact that we are all created in the likeness of God and through the teachings of Christ.

At present, elements of other faiths can be seen in our curriculum plans. For example, Diwali is taught in Reception and aspects of Judaism are found in our Sacramental programme when we have our Passover feast with year 3 children and parents. Other elements are found throughout the school as in year 5 and 6 in the unit of God's Holy People and in year 4 in the unit Abraham as we talk about him as being revered by the three major faiths – Christianity, Islam and Judaism.



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We encourage all children of different faiths, cultures and no faith to take part in the religious life of St Patrick's School. It is part of our mission to show the light and love of Christ to all. We currently run faith focus weeks at different points in the school year where each year group studies a different faith.

Educational and Residential Visits

Educational visits are encouraged and enrich the religious education curriculum. Visits take place quite regularly to the parish church, to other Catholic churches in Coventry, and to Alton Castle (year 5).

Educational visits to other places of worship are encouraged e.g. partaking in the Christian unity Christingle celebration at the CofE Coventry Cathedral.

SEN provision

Lessons and activities from the scheme are planned and differentiated sufficiently to allow all children to work at their own ability level and achieve to their full potential, including extending the most able.

Sacramental preparation

Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation is an important and integral part of the Religious Education Scheme. It is important that the whole faith community (children, parents, teachers, priest and parishioners) is involved in this preparation.

The following guidelines are in accordance with those set in the Diocesan policy framework "Communicating Christ".

- First celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation should precede First Holy Communion and should be kept distinct from subsequent preparation for First Holy Communion.
- Preparation should be a continuing process in keeping with the age and moral development of the child.
- The child's privacy should always be respected.

Preparation for all the Sacraments is built into the People of God scheme. Timings of the units have been adapted on the school curriculum mapping document for R.E. to take into account the scheduling of the sacraments in the school/parish/liturgical year.

Reconciliation and Eucharist

Catechesis on the Sacrament of the Reconciliation and Eucharist is not confined to the immediate preparation before receiving the sacrament for the first time and instruction should be ongoing throughout the child's school life.

It is important that parents are given the opportunity to be involved in the preparation for the reception of the sacraments, through work at home with the children and through a systematic series of meetings and celebrations, which will include preparatory meetings, led by teachers and Parish Priest.



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Parish links will also be fostered by encouraging children to attend mass weekly.

Confirmation

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation and the link between Baptism and Confirmation should be made clear. The importance of communal/parish celebration should be observed, with the candidates for Confirmation being presented at an enrolment Mass in the Parish.

Family life education

The R.E. Scheme allows many opportunities for the discussion and appreciation of self, of growth, of love, of marriage and of family life. A growing awareness of the facts of physical changes and human reproduction is also covered in the Science scheme. We now follow the ten:ten 'Life to the full' programme (see separate SRE policy).

Cross-curricular links

Religious Education is seen as having links to work in most curriculum areas and additionally provides opportunities for teaching the following cross-curricular themes: Citizenship; careers education; and for teaching the following cross-curricular developments: ethnic diversity; equal opportunities; personal and social education.

Literacy links

The R.E. Scheme provides many opportunities for Literacy Links. Relevant texts can be studied as part of the Literacy Hour or as a discrete R.E. exercise; each unit of work has a vocabulary list; it provides the opportunity for writing, including extended writing, using a range of styles, genres and audience; there are many opportunities for speaking and listening, drama and roleplay. In particular Religious Education "provides the stimulus for pupils to use their language skills to reflect on and make sense of their own experience as human beings, and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development." (QCA: Religious Education and the use of language, 1998)

Numeracy links

Within R.E., opportunities for maths exist such as conservation of number, number related to chronology and AT1 and other possibilities. Such links should be exploited when the opportunity arises.

ICT

R.E. provides the opportunities for a variety of ICT activities e.g. use of ICT to produce and present work, the use of audio-visual equipment and the internet to research work. Every possible use should be made of ICT to enhance the teaching and learning of Religious Education.

Planning and assessment

We have an agreed planning, assessment and recording policy. All planning is monitored and after lesson observation teachers are given targets for further development. We have an assessment cycle in RE. Every term teachers assess the children's work against the RE attainment targets and the end of unit assessment foci from the diocesan curriculum strategies. One book is kept for evidence and filed in the RE assessment folder.



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Reporting

Teachers are required to report to parents in the end of year school reports.

Resources

Religious Education requires the use of the following types of resources: Bibles, reference and story books, prayer books, Missals, pictures, hymn music and religious artefacts. Resources are largely distributed to individual classes to facilitate use. However, some resources are stored centrally. The R.E. Co-ordinator reviews the use of these resources. Staff should submit to the co-ordinator lists of any additional resources they require and these will be purchased as the subject budget allows, the amount allocated reflecting the degree of priority given to the subject in the current SDP and high priority is given to RE.