

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Malmesbury

Religious Education Policy



“Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, loving and serving together”

Aims and Intents

- As a Catholic school, our aim is to provide a caring community in which each child has the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith. We believe that the relationship with God should be developed through prayer and worship which are celebrated in classrooms, in the whole school and the within the wider community.
- All the staff, governors and children work hard to promote our mission statement by living as Jesus taught us, so that we can work, learn, play and grow together, by “walking in the footsteps of Jesus living and serving together”. In partnership with home and parish, we strive to accompany our pupils as they travel on their faith journey. Children will live their faith, always aware of the presence and love of Christ, guiding them through life.
- Catholic schools play a vital role in providing support in our community and an environment which is caring yet challenging, where children are able to witness and learn about how Gospel values may be lived in today's world. Here at St Joseph's we recognise the fundamental importance of good religious education in the life of each child and the central role the school plays in this.
- Through the Holy Spirit we strive to provide opportunities for a balanced education through which our belief is integrated, so that children may develop to their full potential academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally, creatively and socially. We aim to educate children in the teachings and practices of the Church and provide them with opportunities to explore, discover and build on their own Christian faith in a community which is safe and supportive. We believe that it is important to encourage every child to develop a living faith that involves a relationship with God that is real and personal. Religious Education therefore not only involves teaching and learning in a lesson but is also something that is integrated into every aspect of our school life, shaping our curriculum and the way we interact with one another.

- Fundamental to the religious life of the school is the example Jesus gave us in his loving relationships with others. At St Joseph's, all members of our school community will endeavour to treat each person, child and adult alike, with respect, and encourage the development of happy and harmonious relationships.

The Curriculum

- Our curriculum is designed to be creative, inspiring and challenging, to provide opportunities for the children to develop as independent, resilient, confident and successful learners.
- They will have high aspirations and will know how to make a positive contribution to their community and in the wider society. Religious Education is a core subject which is taught for 10% of time, throughout the week.
- At St Joseph's, we follow the 'God Matters' scheme of work which meets the diocesan standards for primary Religious Education. We also use the Clifton Diocese planning and resources for each topic, which are in the process of being adapted by the Samuel Partnership into lesson by lesson planning. This will include teaching, at a level appropriate to the child's age and understanding, about:
 - the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels.
 - the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.
 - major events, people, stories and themes of the Bible.
 - the lives and examples of important saints and notable people from church history.
 - important spiritual and theological concepts.
 - prayer and worship, the Mass and the Sacraments.
 - significant feasts and seasons in the liturgical year.
 - personal morality in the light of the teaching of Christ and the Church.
- Our lessons provide opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection.
- The children are taught about God's love and their Christian responsibility.
- There is a high focus on developing children's moral, spiritual, social and cultural understanding.
- 'God Matters' gives us the language of religious experience through activities, stories, symbols, rituals and celebration. It promotes core Gospel values which underpin all aspects of school life.
- The children will be able to make links with their own experiences and it will enable them to explain their beliefs and values and ask questions of the Catholic traditions.

- We celebrate equality and diversity, supporting the children’s social and cultural development, recognising every individual as special and unique in the image and likeness of God.
- The children will be taught to be respectful and understanding of people and traditions from other faiths, cultures and backgrounds.
- The curriculum for religious education will be in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and rooted in Scripture. The use of scripture must be a priority, encouraging children to know key stories and people in FS and KS1 and developing greater understanding through a reflective process and encouraging empathy in KS2. FS and KS1 will focus on Biblical stories and the teaching of basic prayers and doctrine. In KS2 there will be teaching about Jesus as a Jew and the background and traditions that he would have lived by.
- The religious education curriculum will be stimulating and challenging, with high expectations made of the child. A cross curricular approach is encouraged with use being made of ICT, discussion, drama, creative writing, artwork, music, dance, etc. RE should be an integral part of all that we do.
- Assessment of RE takes place 3 times a year in line with the school’s assessment procedures. Teachers will assess children regularly according to specific learning outcomes relating to knowledge, understanding and skills throughout the school to highlight progression and continuity. The children are assessed for each unit of work and these are recorded on a tracking sheet which is sent to the RE Coordinator at the end of Autumn, Spring, and Summer terms. The diocesan guidelines on Age Related expectations document will be used to guide the assessment procedure.
- As a school we believe in the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum and aim to promote knowledge and understanding of other religions and religious practices. Judaism, Islam and Hinduism are all covered as part of the RE curriculum.
- Here at St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School we support CAFOD, Mission Together and other local, national and international charities. We use the CAFOD resources provided for Harvest Fast Days which is part of the Mission Together resources for Lent. As a community we respond to global needs as and when they arise (e.g. refugee crises, natural disasters).

General Principles

- Religious education is a right and will be provided for each child within the school.
- We see the Relationship and Sex Education Policy, and therefore teaching, as an integral part of the religious dimension of school life and we ask that parents who

may wish to withdraw their child from the programme, discuss their intention, in the first instance, with the Headteacher or the delegated senior leader. However, parents are entitled to withdraw their child from the sex education component of the curriculum, except that taught within National Curriculum Science. Parents must inform the school in writing in advance if they intend to withdraw their child so that alternative and appropriate supervision can be made.

- The religious education provided will be at a level appropriate to the age and the spiritual and intellectual development of the child.
- Religious education is intended to deepen the child's knowledge and understanding, and to develop concepts, attitudes and values which will help each child to form a personal relationship with God through faith, while recognising that ultimately faith cannot be imposed upon any child.
- Those teaching religious education will be aware of and sensitive to the fact that children come from a variety of faith environments, some from practising Catholic families, others from non-practising families, and others from families of other Christian, non-Christian beliefs or no religious belief. Children will be taught to respect others whose beliefs are different from their own and to develop their own knowledge and understanding of those faiths.
- Each class must have a regular RE display of children's work within the reflection areas.
- All class-led assemblies must have a religious, scriptural basis to them and will be used to further develop RE themes.
- All classes will have a focused area in the classroom for reflection and prayer relating to the unit of work and the liturgical calendar.

Prayer Life at St Joseph's

- We aim to encourage each child to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer. The school aims to make prayer, worship and liturgy, real educational and personal experiences, and to contribute successfully to the development of the spiritual and prayer life of each individual in the school community. Active participation is encouraged.
- Children will be given opportunities to pray, and to develop their understanding of prayer, in a number of ways:
 - by participating in daily prayer, reflection and meditation within the classroom, often in response to the current Gospel readings;
 - by participating in hymn practice as a form of prayer and worship;

- by participating in prayer as a whole school together at assemblies;
- by being taught the words of commonly used prayers, and exploring their meanings;
- by studying the words of psalms and exemplary prayers;
- by writing and saying their own prayers, and sharing these with their class and at times with the whole school;
- by participating in whole school and class Masses and other liturgical celebrations;
- by teaching and discussion of the nature of prayer, and providing personal experiences of prayer;
- through reconciliation services;
- through use of personal reflection and contemplation.

The Role of the RE Co-ordinator

- To ensure that the policy and scheme are implemented correctly and reviewed regularly;
- To maintain effective links with teachers, parents, governors, clergy, partnership schools and the Diocese;
- To continue to liaise with the Samuel Partnership schools regarding curriculum and assessment developments and diocesan wide themes;
- To ensure new staff have a clear awareness of the expectations of teaching and working in a Catholic school;
- To keep the staff up to date and informed of developments regarding RE and ensure consistency in planning, assessing and marking;
- To prepare, promote and monitor the effective teaching and assessment of RE;
- To share data analysis with teachers and support with pupil progress at Target Setting and Pupil Progress Meetings;
- To support the teachers to be able to maintain and build up resources to support the God Matters;
- To support the teachers to be able to build up resources to enhance the teaching of other faiths;
- To ensure that each year group teaches other faiths to promote knowledge, awareness and understanding;
- Administer the RE budget wisely and effectively so FS, KS1 and KS2 are catered for;

- With the Headteacher to prepare School Masses at the end of each term and on special Feast days;
- To prepare, with the assistance of staff, Reconciliation Advent/Lent services; introduce themes from CAFOD for Fast Days and encourage classes to participate in forms of giving for local, national and international good causes, including the Church's official children's charity, Mission Together;
- To organise rotas for class Masses and class and Key Stage Collective Worships and help in the planning of themes;

The Role of the Class Teacher

- To prepare lesson plans in line with the scheme and policy;
- To assess the work and progress of the pupils based on the teaching of scripture and Doctrine and the children's personal response to that;
- To share assessment data with the RE Co-ordinator and Headteacher three times a year;
- To respond to actions generated during Pupil Progress Meetings;
- To ensure that the children are aware of the levels of attainment in RE;
- To report to parents on progress of pupils within a written report and at parents' evenings;
- To provide a clearly defined, liturgically relevant and interactive area in the classroom to support the spiritual development of the children;
- To provide opportunities for collective worship in the classroom when whole school/key stage collective worships are not scheduled, which will provide opportunities for deepening a spiritual relationship with God and themselves through daily Christian meditation or reflection;
- To prepare with the class Masses and a whole school Gospel assembly a year.

The Role of the Link Governor

- To act as critical friend and support for RE Co-ordinator.
- Supporting or leading familiarity of the catholic education of staff.
- Specifically assess and oversee progress of 'deeper knowledge' programme in RE.

Parish Links with the School

The school aims to create an effective and supportive interaction between home, parish, school and the wider community. The school will foster this partnership by:

- Encouraging links with the weekly Gospel by sending home the Wednesday Word each week and through the holidays;
- Celebrating Whole School Mass led by each class once a term;
- Supporting the Family Mass on a Sunday once a term, with children reading and taking part in the choir.
- Celebrating Holy Days in the parish church with the parish community as a whole school;
- Encouraging parents and children to become involved in sacramental preparation programmes, which are carried out in the parish and liaising with Y3/4 teachers, catechists and the Parish Priest;
- Encouraging parents and parishioners to attend school during Harvest Festival;
- Supporting children to become involved in the life of the parish through music, altar serving, reading and the offertory;
- Maintaining a good relationship with the local parish priests and deacons;
- Inviting the parish priest and deacons into school, to lead Gospel assembly once a term;
- Inviting the parish priest and deacons into school, to lead Staff Meetings once a term, exploring elements of the Liturgical year and to deepen staff's knowledge and understanding.
- Inviting the parish priest and deacons into school, to share Bible stories with each

Key stage once a term.

- Sharing the RE units of work and ways to help at home through regular newsletters.
- Parish links with the local St Aldhelm's Church/School Youth Group, which meets once a half term on Friday evenings in the school hall.
- The school choir visits the Malmesbury community at Christmas and Easter, singing to the elderly at residential homes and lunch clubs.

Equal Opportunities

- All planning should account for the age and ability of the pupils so that all children have full access to RE. Differentiated materials and help will be provided for children with Special Educational Needs and those for whom English is an Additional Language.
- A range of stimulating teaching methods should be used, for example role play or art, to engage the range of learners.
- All children should have an equal opportunity to read, serve or take part in Masses, Assemblies and Reflections where appropriate.

Health and Safety

All current Health and Safety guidelines are followed during RE lessons. Exceptional care and vigilance are taken when lighting candles during any time of Reflection, Assembly or Mass.

Related Policies and Documents

- Collective Worship Policy
- Spirituality Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Equality Policy

- Behaviour and Self Esteem Policy
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review

Responsible committee for monitoring & evaluation:	Mission and Vision Committee
Policy reviewed by:	Mission and Vision Committee
Policy review & approval date:	June 2020
Next review date:	September 2024