

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Malmesbury

## Religious Education Policy



*"Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, loving and serving together"*

### Rationale

This policy recognises that the school is made up of children who are Catholic, from other Christian and religious denominations as well as those with no stated faith.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a Christian Catholic foundation and as such along with meeting the specific needs of this foundation, works to develop its charism through a set of shared values that are sympathetic to those of all and no faith.

### Aims

Our shared values are reflected within the aims of this policy in the following ways:

#### Love and kindness

- All staff, governors and children work hard to promote our mission to live as Jesus taught us, so that we can work, learn, play and grow together.  
We do this by "Walking in the footsteps of Jesus loving and serving together".

#### Peace

- We believe that a relationship with God or a divine being should be developed through reflection, prayer and worship. This is enabled in classrooms, the whole school and the within the wider community.
- We believe that children need to have times of silence and stillness so they can hear and challenge inner thoughts, so they can hear the divine speaking to them and so that they have opportunities to act positively

#### Resilience

- In partnership with home and parish, we strive to accompany our pupils as they travel on a journey to understand themselves and their own beliefs.
- We recognise that this journey is not always easy and that there will always be times where what we believe is challenged. We strive to work with children, through our RE curriculum to strengthen their knowledge of themselves and the divine.

**Aspiration**

- 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. We recognise the fundamental importance of good religious education in the life of each child and the central role the school plays in providing this.
- Children will live their faith, always aware of the presence and love of Christ, guiding them through life.

**Curiosity**

- 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 the Christian faith and the belief of those from other religions and of no faith. We encourage children to explore, question and collaborate to deepen their understanding of themselves, their faith and their direction in life.

**Respect**

- Fundamental to the religious life of the school is the example Jesus gave us in his loving relationships with others.
- 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.

**Serving and giving**

- Our virtues are central to our work as a school and are evolving as a “Golden thread” that permeates through all that we do. These virtues are built around the key message of Jesus, that we should show love and kindness to others in our words and actions.

**Guiding Principles**

- Religious Education is a core subject and is taught for 10% of the time tabled teaching week. Religious education is a statutory entitlement and is provided for each child within the teaching week.
- Through the “Learning from” element of every lesson, children are challenged to develop high aspirations and be guided through discussion and reflection to know how they can make a positive contribution to their class, school, community and wider society.
- 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.
- As part of our wider curriculum 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).

## **The Religious Education Curriculum**

Our RE curriculum is designed to be:

- Creative
- Inspiring
- Challenging

So that children have opportunities to develop as independent, resilient, confident and successful learners.

To support us in the delivery of RE we follow the Catholic Education Service, Religious Education Directory "To know you more clearly" programme of study so that this meets the diocesan standards for primary Religious Education. We use the Clifton Diocese planning and resources for each topic theme.

We integrate elements of Catholic Social Teaching into our own progression of content and deeply root our school virtue themes into this yearly progression.

Our lessons provide opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection. 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 through "Hearing", "Believing", "Celebrating" and "Living" through the knowledge and experiences they gain from our curriculum, understanding the bible and Christian teaching.

This learning includes teaching, at an age and stage appropriate level, 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 progressive journey through the curriculum gives children the language of religious experience through activities, stories, symbols, rituals and celebration.

It promotes:

- Core Gospel values which underpin all aspects of school life and our own charism and virtues.
- Self-reflection through making links with personal experiences and through this explore and explain their own beliefs and values.

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. Through this, children are encouraged to also be respectful of and understand the people and traditions linked to other faiths, cultures and backgrounds.

Where applicable a cross curricular approach is encouraged with use being made of ICT, discussion, drama, creative writing, artwork, music, dance, so that RE is an integral part of all we do.

## **Assessment**

The formal assessment of RE takes place 3 times a year in line with the school's assessment procedures.

Teachers assess children regularly according to specific learning outcomes relating to knowledge, understanding and skills throughout the school to highlight progression and continuity.

Pupils are seen as equal partners in self-assessment and use age and stage specific learning ladders to self and peer-assess.

Children self-assess at the end of each lesson and teachers summative assess at the end of each unit of work. These are recorded on a tracking sheet which is accessible by all staff in the school assessment and tracking folder

Assessment is supported by routine moderation activities that are undertaken by staff on a termly basis.

The diocesan guidelines on Age Related expectations document will be used to guide the assessment procedure.

## **Relationships and Sex Education**

We view Relationship and Sex Education as an integral part of religious education. A separate policy exists that provides further detail relating to this part of the RE Curriculum.

As a general principle and in line with this RE Policy, our provision is specifically in tune with the Catholic faith and we ask parents who may wish to withdraw their child from the programme, to discuss their intention, in the first instance, with the Headteacher or the delegated senior leader. Parents are asked to note that although they are entitled to withdraw their child from the sex education component of the curriculum, this does not extend and include the specific programme of study relating to reproduction contained in the Science National Curriculum.

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.

## **Prayer Life**

Prayer is an integral element to our daily routines and through this we aim to encourage each child to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer.

Prayer, worship and liturgy are seen as educational and personal experiences, and are intended to contribute to the development of the spiritual life of each child.  
individual in the school community.

To this end active participation is encouraged and children are given opportunities to pray, and to develop their understanding of prayer, in a number of ways. This is by:

- Participating in daily prayer, reflection and meditation within the classroom, often in response to the current Gospel readings;
- Participating in hymn practice as a form of prayer and worship;
- Participating in prayer as a whole school together at assemblies;
- Being taught the words of commonly used prayers, and exploring their meanings;
- Studying the words of psalms and exemplary prayers;
- Writing and saying their own prayers, and sharing these with their class and at times with the whole school;
- Participating in whole school and class Masses and other liturgical celebrations;
- Teaching and discussion of the nature of prayer, and providing personal experiences of prayer;
- Through reconciliation services;
- Through use of personal reflection, meditation and contemplation.

### **The Role of the RE Subject Leader and Headteacher**

The RE Subject leader is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy and scheme are implemented correctly and reviewed regularly.
- Maintaining effective links with teachers, parents, governors, clergy, partnership schools and the Diocese.
- Continuing to liaise with the partnership schools regarding curriculum and assessment developments and diocesan wide themes.
- Ensuring new staff have a clear awareness of the expectations of teaching and working in a Catholic school.
- Keeping staff up to date and informed of developments regarding RE and ensure consistency in planning, assessing and marking.
- Preparing, promoting and monitoring the effective teaching and assessment of RE.
- Sharing data analysis with teachers and support with pupil progress at Target Setting and Pupil Progress Meetings.
- Supporting teachers to maintain and build resources to support the RE Curriculum.
- Supporting teachers to build stock of resources that enhance the teaching of other faiths.
- Ensuring that each year group teaches other faiths to promote knowledge, awareness and understanding.
- Administering the RE budget wisely and effectively so FS, KS1 and KS2 are catered for;
- Working alongside the headteacher and Music Subject Leaders to prepare School Masses at the end of each term and on special Feast days.
- Preparing 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;
- Organising rotas for class Masses and class and Key Stage Collective Worship and help in the planning of themes.

### **The Role of the Class Teacher**

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Preparing lesson plans in line with the scheme and policy

- Assessing the work and progress of the pupils based on the teaching of scripture and Doctrine and the children's personal response to that.
- Sharing assessment data with the RE Co-ordinator and Headteacher three times a year.
- Responding to actions generated during Pupil Progress Meetings.
- Ensuring that the children are aware of the levels of attainment in RE.
- Reporting to parents on progress of pupils within a written report and at parents' evening.
- Providing a clearly defined, liturgically relevant and interactive area in the classroom to support the spiritual development of the children.
- Providing 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.
- Preparing with their class, Masses and a whole school Gospel worships.

#### The Role of the Link Governor

The RE Link Governor is responsible for:

- Acting 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 and community 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.
- Where possible celebrating Whole School Mass once a term.
- Celebrating term time 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 and other special celebrations.
- 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.
- Supporting other community events across the academic year.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

- All provision aims to account for the age and ability of the pupils so that all children have full access to the RE curriculum.

- Differentiated materials and help are 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.

#### **Related Policies and Documents**

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

#### **Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review**

<b>Responsible committee for monitoring &amp; evaluation:</b>	Mission and Vision Committee
<b>Policy reviewed by:</b>	Mission and Vision Committee
<b>Policy review &amp; approval date:</b>	June 2020
<b>Next review date:</b>	September 2024