



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

St. George & St. Martin's Catholic Academy

Mission Statement

GROWING, LEARNING AND LOVING; UNITED IN  
PLAY, PRAYER AND PEACE.

# Rationale

- We believe parents are the first and best educators of their children.
- We believe in fostering strong parish and home school links to enable staff, children, parents and parish to work together to support the community in which we live, work and worship.
- We believe Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the church.
- We believe Religious Education to be 'the core of the curriculum'.
- We are aware that evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school and we are clear that the specific contribution Religious Education makes to the Catholic Life of the school is primarily educational and will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects.
- We understand Religious Education to be the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ. Religious Education is, then, the core subject at St. George & St. Martin's, it is a rigorous academic discipline and as such is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other core subject. The outcome of Catholic Religious Education 'is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their age and capacity to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

## Introduction & Values

St. George & St. Martin's is a Catholic school as part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate, in the trusteeship of the Diocese of Birmingham. The school bases its teaching on the Gospel message of God's immeasurable love for us, and invites the children to respond by loving God and by loving their neighbour as themselves. The children are encouraged to take Jesus as their model in seeking to live out their calling with compassion and love. We achieve this by teaching the children to know and love God and the Gospel teachings. This permeates all aspects of the curriculum and the daily life of the school. This teaching is celebrated in worship and liturgies, rites and rituals of the Catholic Church. Parents are encouraged to uphold and reinforce the fundamentals of the Catholic faith taught in the school.

At St. George & St. Martin's Catholic Academy, we believe in providing a curriculum that widens the experiences of our children leading them to have high aspirations. We aim to develop our children to compete in an ever-changing global society. Therefore, we equip our children with the necessary skills not only to cope with such a society but also to be able to excel alongside their peers. We create an environment that is safe, nurturing and loving in order to provide the best conditions for our children to achieve. The uniqueness of every child is embraced and we instil in them the belief that they are made in the true image and likeness of God. We recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and so we strive to work in partnership with them to enable the children to reach their full God given potential.

### Our Mission

Growing, Learning, Loving; United in Play, Prayer and Peace.

We grow in understanding and faith to be the best we can be.

We learn about a world outside of our school.

We love one another as Jesus taught us through the Gospels.

We are united in all that we do.

We play together, caring for each other.

We pray that we can become closer to God.

We want peace in our school, community and world.

## Leadership of Religious Education

Religious Education is the responsibility of the Religious Education (RE) subject leader and the Principal. The Subject Lead and Principal are supported by the Prayer & Liturgy Lead (Mrs Ladeira). Their role is to monitor and assess the RE curriculum throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression. They also ensure that the aims and learning outcomes in the Curriculum Directory are identified and fulfilled. A school governor (Mrs Hollins) has specific responsibility for RE and liaises closely with the staff of the school to fulfil their monitoring duties.

## Legal Right

Parents have the legal right to withdraw children from all or part of the religious education and collective worship provided. If parents take up this option, they should make their own arrangements for the child during this period.

## Curriculum Content

RE is a core subject in our school, alongside English, Maths and Science, and therefore we devote a minimum of 10% of our curriculum time to its delivery. We adhere to the Curriculum Directory guidelines and learning outcomes. This provides a cohesive approach and opportunities for whole school assemblies and liturgies as well as displays which are relevant to every child. The core of our curriculum is based on the Learning and Growing as the People of God scheme of work. These themes are developed with greater depth and breadth each year as the child progresses through the school, and form the core of learning in RE.

Relationships, and Health Education lessons (RHE) also support the Churches teaching on treating each other and ourselves with respect whilst recognising and celebrating differences between us (Ten Ten Scheme).

## Planning, Assessment & Recording

Teachers follow the Learning and Growing as the People of God scheme and plan units of work with due regard for the Standards for Primary Religious Education, ATs 1,2 and 3 and ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to record their learning and show that they are working at the expected standard for their age and / or ability. Teachers provide evidence of a piece of work that reflect the expected standards for each unit and these samples will be verified by or matched against samples of work moderated at both staff and collegiate RE Meetings. Assessment of Religious Education at our school is designed to assist our children's learning and to enable them to strive for a feeling of confidence and success in their understanding of the Catholic faith. Progress is monitored through discussion, questioning, posing problems and giving pupils opportunities to present their knowledge to others in a variety of ways including '*Developing Thinking Skills*' activities. Attainment records are completed at the end of each assessed unit (as decided by the Diocese) to show children's levels of understanding and the Senior Leadership Team monitor pupils' attainment and progress. In Nursery, the teacher conducts a Nursery Baseline Assessment on pupils entering and leaving the class, this is then forwarded to the RE Subject Leader for analysis.

### **Long Term Planning**

At the beginning of each year, the subject leader compiles the long-term plan for the academic year. If a year group changes the order of any unit, this is edited on the long-term plan. This plan needs to be reviewed annually.

### **Medium Planning**

Medium and short-term planning is taken directly from the archdiocese Scheme of Work, which comprises of a book for each year group. The books for each year group contain material for each of the units. The particular skills that will be involved, as well as the vocabulary to be used in the unit are also explained. Teachers use the suggested activities as well as their own ideas and strategies.

### **Short Term Plans**

Class teachers plan the lessons for each week, these give more detail about what is taught and identifies teaching strategies. The teacher caters for different ability groups and learning styles as well as providing time for children to work in their peer groups, this is also included on the short-term plan. Detailed flipcharts may also be used as a form of short-term planning whereby they include the questions and AT standards evidenced during the lesson.

## Marking & Feedback

In line with the school's marking policy, marking of children's religious work should always be positive and supportive to encourage the child in his/her faith journey. Marking will focus upon religious content and comments, feedback and next steps given will look to enhance religious skills, knowledge and understanding, rather than Literacy skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, inaccurate spelling of important religious key words will be corrected within the children's books. The two main intentions of feedback are that the children know what they have done well and secondly

## Teaching Staff

All teachers at St. George & St. Martin's are either Catholics or 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. The diocese provides information on courses and teachers are asked to feedback to the RE Leader. Our diocesan advisor is invited to contribute to our staff professional development and they help and advice sought about policy and practice.

## Home Links

The school recognises it cannot teach our children without the cooperation of the parents. The parents/guardians are the first educators and they are in partnership with the teachers who have the professional skills to help parents in teaching Catholic faith. We endeavour to do this in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. During the year, parents and friends are invited to join us at many masses and celebrations. Throughout the year, parents play a part in our family, commitment and Sacramental masses. At the end of the year, we hold a leavers' mass to say farewell to those children leaving us and to thank them for their contribution and commitment to the life of our school. Parents are always invited and welcomed to all our school and class celebrations which include school masses and assemblies. Each week, a child is chosen in each class to take the Prayer Bag home and share a worship with their family.

## Parish Links & Parish Priest

We recognise that the school stands in the midst of the local community. At parish level, the whole school attends mass at least once every two weeks. We give regular support to CAFOD through our parish representative (Mr P Mayland) enabling our children to become aware of the needs of the wider world.

Father Adrian, our Parish Priest, has responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community. The parish priest promotes the spiritual life of the school. He leads the celebration of liturgies and whole school and class Masses. In addition, the parish priest visits the school on a regular basis to discuss the development of RE and parish links. We develop further links with the parish through prayer partner links. The school has good links to a local day care centre for the elderly and shares aspects of our school life with them, for example by classes visiting on a regular basis and the members being invited to concerts.

## Student Leadership

A group of pupil volunteers work with the RE Lead and Headteacher to support with the Catholic Life of the school. They play an active part in preparing the prayer space for assembly. Student leadership allows the children more ownership and understanding of this central aspect of their faith. They are selected after completing an application form and being interviewed by our Headteacher. They receive their leadership badge as part of a whole school assembly. There are many student leadership opportunities that provide the children to develop and live out their faith e.g. Minnie Vinnies, Bible Club, Eco Club, Catholic Life Leaders and Rosary Club.

## Spiritual & Moral Development

The religious character of our school is seen as giving shape to every aspect of school life, especially the spiritual and moral development of our children. Spiritual development is understood as the development of all those aspects which enable us to appreciate goodness, beauty and truth. Through our teaching, we enable children to reflect on their experiences of life. Through their awareness and understanding of themselves, they recognise God's action in their lives. In addition, pupils are taught about the importance of the mission of the Church. Helping children to make their moral decisions is a crucial part of the formation of a moral conscience. We aim to help children to have an understanding of the Gospel of Jesus and through self-awareness enable them to come to good moral judgements and make a positive difference in our world.

## Sacramental Preparation

Through our R.E. scheme, knowledge of all the sacraments is established, with special emphasis upon Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation. Years 5 & 6 also learn about the Sacrament of the Sick and Holy Orders. The children are prepared in school for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion from Year 3. A thorough sacramental programme is led by our staff, including the RE Lead and Principal. Like the Sacrament of Communion, the preparation for Reconciliation starts at the beginning of the child's school life. It begins with the child's first experiences; teachers and helpers work towards a loving, caring and forgiving atmosphere in school. The Sacrament of First Holy Communion usually takes place in May and the Sacrament of Confirmation usually takes place in June.

# Prayer

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 tables which contain various religious artefacts. This area changes with the liturgical year and on a half termly basis to reflect the virtues for that half term. Whole school prayers are prayed in each class four times a day alongside the traditional prayers of the Church for that year group. Children take part in whole school assemblies where children and staff join together to pray. Children are encouraged to pray their own prayers. All of the children take part in and plan Prayer & Liturgy in their classes each week.

Each term the RE Subject Leader compiles a whole school Prayer & Liturgy Programme; this encompasses the breadth of shared collective worship within the school and includes: weekly whole school assemblies (Monday and Friday), key stage assemblies (linked to Catholic Pupils Profile – Values and Virtues) and hymn practice throughout the term. The Prayer & Liturgy Programme also includes ‘Prayer of the Month’ which focuses the school on learning and revising traditional prayers throughout the year.

See also Prayer & Liturgy Policy and Traditional Prayer Policy.

During the seasons of Advent and Lent, a specific Liturgy programme is devised where the school come together in worship more regularly. A programme of masses is also planned with the Parish Priest consisting of whole school, key stage masses and class masses. All year groups are encouraged to participate in singing, prayers, readings, psalms, bidding prayers and the Offertory Procession. Masses are planned for Holy Days of Obligation and the school celebrates the feasts days of St. George (23rd April) and St. Martin (11th November).

# Other Faiths

St. George & St. Martin’s is a Catholic school and therefore by the very religion that causes its existence, it must be a school that encourages tolerance, respect and care for all people, regardless of colour, race or creed. Whilst Religious Education at St. George & St. Martin’s is specifically of the Roman Catholic tradition, we welcome input from other faiths and denominations. We appreciate how the beliefs and values of other faith communities can enrich our own spiritual existence. We teach and learn about the other major faiths as part of our other faiths programme.

## Environment

It is our intention that the environment of our school reflects our mission statement and that we are providing a caring, well-ordered and stimulating environment that reflects our Christian beliefs. Work is displayed in a variety of ways throughout the school. Each classroom has an RE area with a display board and prayer table, where our mission tagline is displayed. The display board will reflect the colour theme of the liturgical year. There are various Religious Education displays throughout the school that demonstrate the extent to which the Gospel message is valued. Bibles, candles, artefacts and pictures are all used to enhance and present our Catholic faith.

## Special Needs & Inclusion

At St. George & St. Martin's Catholic Academy, we teach RE to all children of all abilities. Through our RE teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting learning opportunities and responding to each child's different needs.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning RE and work hard to meet the needs of those children with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language to ensure all pupils make good progress.

(See Equality Policy)

The RE curriculum, as with other areas of the curriculum, is differentiated to meet the needs of our children through our planning. As with other subjects, we use a 'scaffolding up' approach as opposed to 'differentiating down'. This approach is used to remove the ceiling from learning enabling all children to reach their potential in any given lesson. 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.
- children grow spiritually and develop a strong sense of the value of God's world.

## Special Needs & Inclusion

- Provide leadership and direction for Religious Education in the school, including Sacramental preparation and Prayer & Liturgy.
- Liaise with the Parish Priest, and other key parishioners regarding Masses, services, Sacraments, and other significant events within the church calendar, where the school are involved.
- Plan a Prayer & Liturgy Programme for assemblies, masses, hymn practice and liturgies on a termly basis.
- Support, guide and motivate those teaching RE.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning through lesson observations, book and planning trawls and pupil voice interviews.
- Secure high standards of teaching and learning.
- Identify priorities and targets for RE and contribute to the school development plan.
- Plan opportunities for INSET and moderation meetings (assessment).

Policy Reviewed by: J. Bridgewater, D Farmer

Date: 11/1/24

Signed: *D. Farmer*

Headteacher

Date: 11/1/24

Signed: *J. Bridgewater*

RE Lead

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