



St Mary's Mission Statement

Our school community seeks to build on Gospel values to:

- Nurture and respect the talents and abilities that God has given to each unique individual.
- Enable everyone to aspire to and realise their potential through perseverance, resilience and integrity
- To grow in love and to be loved, unconditionally.

Purpose of policy;

- To establish an entitlement for all
- To establish expectations for teachers of this subject
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school.
- To state the school's approach to this subject.

Rationale of Religious Education

'Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject among many but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life' [Bishop's Conference of England and Wales 1998]. We also recognise that our children come from diverse backgrounds with differing ability and that our teaching of Religious Education will reflect this. [cf. Curriculum Directory P9].

We also study other world Faiths in short blocks of time to support the beliefs of wider communities. The religious Education taught in our school follows the 'God Matters' programme as recommended by the Diocese.

Aims:

- To present engaging content, which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith and life;
- To foster skills which enable pupils to reflect upon religious belief and practice;
- To reflect on how to relate faith to life;
- To respect the traditions and beliefs of other faiths.

Objectives.

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ, of the Church and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold;
- To develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and of the vital relationship between faith and life, life and faith;
- To encourage study, investigation and reflection by the pupils;
- To develop appropriate skills e.g.: the ability to listen, to think critically, ethically, and theologically, to engage them spiritually; to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively; to make informed judgements; read, write, listen, discuss.
- To foster appropriate attitudes e.g.: respect for truth, respect for the views of others, awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural, multi faith society and some beliefs and values other's hold.
- To foster social skills of cooperation, collaboration and communication both verbal and non-verbal.

Expectations:

'The outcome of religious Education is religiously Literate young people who have knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity –to think, critically, ethically and theologically, respond to the spiritual, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life'.

[Based on Curriculum Directory P 9.].

Entitlement and curriculum provision:

Since the total curriculum in our school is based on the values of the Gospel and because we see all education as revealing the mystery of God, we recognise two aspects of Religious Education in the school.

A) Implicit or unstructured – those opportunities which arise in the course of the school day to lead pupils through curriculum content or through relationships to a religious understanding of their implications. It is the policy of this school to use such opportunities as they arise.

B) Explicit, or Curriculum Education. Those timetabled or planned periods to give an explicit consideration of Religious Education in the classroom.

We use the 'God Matters' Programme from the Diocese of Plymouth which provides planning as a framework from which to operate. In line with the expectations of the Bishops of England and Wales Conference we allocate 10% of the timetable for this purpose.

Teaching and Learning

An outline of the programme and reflections on the themes to be studied is sent out each term to parents. This helps to inform, involve and receive support for families together.

Assessment and Recording

Pupils are assessed according to interim outcome statements based on the interim document '*Age Related Standards (3-19) in Religious Education*' approved for use in Catholic Schools by The Department of Catholic Education and Formation of The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The *Standards* document presents expectations to be achieved by a number of age phases. At St Mary's, our pupils will be assessed in the following phases: 3-5, 5-7, 7-9 and 9-11 years.

Assessment takes place through teacher assessment, based on a combination of observations, pupils' engagement in class discussions and tasks completed. There are three criteria in which assessment takes place: AT1 (Learning about), AT2 (Engage and Respond) and AT3 (Analysis and Evaluation). Annual reports for pupils of school age are carried out each year and shared with parents/ carers.

Continuity and progression:

The diocesan scheme of work, which is rooted in the RE Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, builds a cycle of progression over the themes each term and across each year group in school from Year R to Year 6. As St Mary's is a small school with mixed age classes, the teacher will select units from two-year groups on a rolling programme according to the understanding of the pupils and also ensuring that work is not repeated by members of the class. Teachers need to be aware of the previous objectives met to ensure progression of these.

Resources:

Quality learning resources are kept in three key areas.

- Books to support preparation for Assemblies, Liturgies, Prayers, Information, Scripture, Spiritual reading, Other Faiths etc.
- There are a wide variety of artefacts, candles and coloured cloths.
- Poster unit [in the Art stock room] holds various pictures and posters to further support delivery.
- Class teachers have their own copy of the God Matters programme and login details for the online version of the resource.
- Writers' Group materials are stored electronically and available for many units and year groups.
- Each classroom has access to age appropriate Bibles which are used for prayer and research purposes.
- There are also books of a religious nature in the school library.
- Topic books can be ordered from the Schools Library Service to support work in a particular topic area.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

Religious Education has very strong links with Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. The God Matters programme delivers some of these objectives as RE underpins all aspects of school life. Pupils have opportunities to explore their own feelings and beliefs and those of others. They are given opportunity to discuss and debate and empathise with others. They are encouraged to question and explore the responses of all and those of other faiths. Some of these themes are identified and given additional curriculum time as themed weeks in the summer term. In addition, whole school assemblies focus on key festivals and holy days of other religions during the school year.

Personal, Social and Health Education.

There are links with PSHE when religious education explores self-awareness, inner feelings, emotions and personal relationships. The different uses of teaching and learning styles contribute to this area of learning. Group and paired work, discussion and debate, and circle time provide opportunities for collaboration and respect. The school uses the Christopher Winter scheme of work across the school to cover these objectives.

Leadership and Management:

Staff development and training opportunities:

- The subject leader will attend Diocesan RE co-ordinators training.
- The Head teacher attends the training held by the Diocese on an annual basis.
- All members of teaching staff attend the Diocesan RE INSET day.
- The subject Leader supports training through INSET and staff meetings.
- Subject co-ordinator may arrange other school-based training.
- The subject co-ordinator will disseminate information from courses and provide information and advice to execute development in this area.
- Each term time is given to discuss and reflect on the next RE topic, including an opportunity to reflect on personal understanding and faith. Question and answer sessions focussed on particular areas of faith are also arranged at least once a year, led by a parish priest.

Leadership and Management roles:

The subject co-ordinator has the responsibility to take a lead in developing religious education further across the school within the school improvement plan monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and the use of resources. Teachers and educational support staff can expect informal support from the subject leader, and support arising from the school improvement plan. Support can also be expected from issues identified in performance management and induction programmes.

Monitor and Evaluation:

- Planning to be given in weekly.
- Annual visit from the diocese to monitor RE and support staff.
- Co-ordinator to liaise with the School Chaplain on development of the subject.
- Prayer focus and displays monitored by co-ordinator on termly basis.
- Annual reports to parents monitored.

Review Date:

This policy is revised annually.