

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Mission Statement

"You are precious in my eyes"-Isaiah 43

- *Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School is committed to the widest and fullest education of all pupils in partnership between home, school, parish and community.*
- *Our school aims to create a happy, ordered environment where all members feel secure, valued and respect each other.*
- *Our school aims to be a positive force within the Catholic church inspired by the life of Christ in the Gospels.*

Intent

At Our Lady Star of the Sea we see education as a way of becoming more human as we grow to love ourselves, love each other and love Jesus Christ. We understand that Jesus challenges us to be 'perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect', by the strength of our faith, hope, love and compassion. Therefore, we aspire to see ourselves and each other as 'precious in His eyes'.

Objectives

- To explore the religious answers to some of the basic questions of human life, dignity and reasons for existence, within the context of the Catholic Church.
- To fulfil our Mission Statement by creating and nurturing a school community where the children know they are valued, where they feel confident and secure, giving them the confidence to search and question, helping them to deepen their own faith commitment and to respect that of others.
- To support and challenge children as they explore and develop the 16 virtues of our school profile.
- To lead children to a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition and the ways in which it seeks to express the significance of human life.
- To lead children to a knowledge, respect and understanding of other religious traditions.
- To help pupils recognise and appreciate the spiritual and religious dimensions of life, fostering feelings of wonder, delight, joy and mystery and a sense of ritual.
- To foster a whole school environment where prayer life is encouraged to grow and where children develop their own prayer life.

'The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills - appropriate to their age and capacity –to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life (Religious Education Curriculum Directory).

Implementation

The Place of RE within whole school plans

Religious Education is taught as a discrete subject but the above aims and objectives permeate all teaching and learning in all areas of school life.

Equal Opportunities

Religious Education is taught to all pupils at our school regardless of their personal faith commitment, their parent's commitment, their faith tradition, their gender, race or ability.

Parents have a right of withdrawal during prayer and liturgy, but should have regard to the Mission Statement when applying for a place at Our Lady Star of the Sea.

Curriculum Design

At the centre of our whole school curriculum is Christ and we plan our RE curriculum with varied opportunities for children to become learned and wise. Lessons engage, provoke and inspire as teaching guides, supports and challenges children to become the best versions of themselves. We are guided by our 16 virtues which challenge us all to be better Disciples of Christ.

We use the Bishop's Conference Directory topics: Revelation, The Church, Celebration and Life in Christ as a basis for all our planning, which are also outlined in the Diocesan RE wheels which every teacher incorporates in to their plans. The Directory provides 'valuable guidance for the RE curriculum to ensure that our teaching and learning truly reflects the vision and breadth of the teaching of the Church'. This revised Directory was published so that religious educators can continue to meet the needs of the pupils of today.

Although 'The Way the Truth and the Life' programme provides part of the basis of teaching religion, many additional resources are used to give the children the best possible opportunities to deepen their understanding and challenge them in lessons which are engaging and make them think deeply through effective questioning. Teachers use CAFOD, Come and See, Caritas in Action and many other resources to ensure a rich and varied RE curriculum. (Some of the themes in RHE and RE naturally sit side by side and teachers are able to incorporate these within RE, RHE, SCIENCE or discretely).

Other world faiths and important Liturgical celebrations are interwoven throughout the year as children are encouraged to question and reflect on their own lives and the religious lives of others. Class teachers plan for each topic ensuring that all children have the opportunity to master key skills and to think deeply and to question (see Learning and Teaching Policy).

Over the past two years 2018/20 we have trialled and adopted the New Standards Framework, which is explained later on in this document. To ensure the children can be assessed accurately teachers ensure that these expectations are integrated into the whole planning process. This will inform the teaching and ensure that expected standards are aspired to. The critical question to address at the planning stage is 'what must I do, in this theme, to enable children to achieve the standard I know they can achieve?'

At the beginning of each term, topics are introduced and discussed with staff to ensure key learning points are identified. This also enables staff to discuss and debate key points, reaching answers and pondering together. This provides a clear overview of how skills and thinking are layered as children travel through school. All staff are supported by the learning community, which we have established through working collaboratively.

Less experienced staff are offered further support within their key stage and by the subject leader. There is an on-going professional dialogue which supports questioning and reflection.

A mini cluster has been set up to monitor planning and assessment (see assessment section), namely: St. Peter's, Our Lady of the Assumption, St. Joseph's, The Willows and Holy Family. Teachers in every year group have the opportunity to share and evaluate plans with teachers in the same year group in these other local schools, on a regular basis. This supports a consistent approach across schools and enables good practice to be shared.

Mass

Growing to love and understand the Mass is an essential part of our teaching. Over the past two years we have nurtured children's understanding and have explored the mass as a 'call and response' beautiful conversation. Each new term commences with a shared Mass which helps us to place our learning and formation into God's hands. During Lent and Advent, there are early morning weekly Masses in school where the children, their families and parishioners are all welcome. Over the past year these have been followed by Adoration in the school chapel which has enabled all children to spend time in God's presence. Children in both key stages attend Mass on holy days and other times of the year in addition to visits to church as part of the curriculum. Year 6 children are chosen for the readings and the Responsorial Psalm. They often write parts of the latter themselves.

Sacramental Programmes

Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and Holy Communion is undertaken by members of staff and supported by catechists from Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic church. During this time parental sessions are delivered to provide parents with the opportunity to question and reflect on their own faith journey. These are always well-attended.

Time Allocation

The time allocation for Religious Education in the school is 10% of the total curriculum time (approximately 2.5 hours per week in KS2 and 2.2 hours per week in Foundation and KS1)

Presentation of Work

Work is presented in a variety of ways across the school, both written and oral. In written pieces, children have to present work as they would in English and other subjects and there is the expectation that it will be neat, clear and well organised. Throughout topics, children are encouraged to actively listen and interact with others to discuss issues and form opinions. This shared learning enables children to express their own ideas, listen to those of others and grow in their understanding. Drama is used effectively to walk in the footsteps of others, developing a greater sense of empathy and an understanding of how they and others feel.

Work is also depicted through RHE, art, writing, ICT and other areas of the curriculum. The choice of presentation is dependent upon the learning taking place. All activities are planned through deep consideration of how the learning objective can be best achieved and how mastery can be embedded.

Assessment

Since September 2018, our staff has been involved in the New Standards Framework pilot. Although this retains the same AT1 Knowledge and Understanding (learning about the topics studied) and AT2 (learning from topics studied), the strands within them have been combined.

In addition, there is an extra skill which is only introduced in Year 3. This is entitled 'Analysis and Evaluation'. In Lower KS2, children are expected to use a given source to support a point of view, express a point of view when constructing arguments and express a preference when making judgements. In Upper KS2, children are expected to use sources to support a point of view, express a point of view and give reasons for it when constructing arguments and actually arrive at their own judgements. An extra expectation in this key stage is to recognise diversity by recognising difference and comparing and contrasting different points of view.

Also, the framework shows the end of phase expected standards: end of EYFS (Reception), end of KS1 (Year 2) and end of KS2 (Year 6) rather than end of year. However, at the end of the year and phase, teachers should make a judgement against these standards. The framework focuses on key Religious Education skills. Levels are not used, but in line with other core subjects Teacher Assessments are made using the following criteria:

3	PKS	Pre Key Stage - working on a phase below chronological age
4	Dev	Beginning to achieve some of Phase targets
5	Dev	Beginning to achieve some of Phase targets
6	WW	Working Within Phase targets - moving to secure
9	S	All targets achieved
12	GD	Working at Greater Depth

EYFS has a particularly important contribution to make to Religious Education through many of the Early Learning Goals. The Standards use these ELGs to ensure they are part of the Early Years Curriculum and not separate from it. A baseline assessment takes place in the first two weeks of children starting school and this is compared to an end of key stage assessment which takes place in June. In this stage a floor book is used alongside individual books to reflect the constant dialogue taking place.

Tracking Progress

Children's progress is tracked carefully throughout the year as teachers make termly judgements within each attainment target. A colour coded tracking system (see above) shows very clearly which attainment targets have been covered and how they are progressing within each attainment target. As each of the standards demonstrate the end of phase expected standard, it will be increasingly important that year groups in each phase work together to ensure curriculum coverage enables children to demonstrate progressive skills. The emphasis then in Years 1, 3 and 5 is to consider whether the child is on track to reach the end of phase standards or on track to be working at greater depth within the expected standard.

Marking and Feedback

Teachers are constantly providing feedback as part of their teaching and this can take the form of oral and written advice, depending on the learning task and age of the child. As children become more independent quality marking supports growth and in line with English teachers will highlight in pink aspects which reflect understanding in line with expectations or at greater depth. Areas for growth are highlighted in green and aspects which the teacher would like the child to improve are marked in yellow. Children are provided with time to respond to feedback. In Reception and Year One feedback often takes place orally as the teacher supports children to explain their responses more fully.

Moderation

Moderation is a crucial part of teacher assessment. A child is judged on the work in their RE books, records of pupils' responses in class, discussion, staff records based on observations, artwork/artefacts created by pupils, evaluation of dance/drama/movement, photographs, filming, and assessment tasks or activities. This has made teachers reflect carefully on how evidence is collected to illustrate the stage a child is working at. Each term teachers work together to moderate work and agree working levels for identified children. During these sessions good practice is shared and teachers work within stages to ensure that objectives are being taught progressively to enable children to build knowledge and understanding over two years.

At Our Lady's we moderate on a regular basis in house and over the last three years with RE leaders from St Peter's Lytham and Our Lady of the Assumption Blackpool. Since being part of the pilot scheme we also have a mini cluster with the schools mentioned in the 'Planning and Teaching' section. Teachers work in year groups termly to scrutinise planning, share ideas for assessment and use children's RE books to moderate all the evidence linked with a child. This allows teachers to benchmark their judgements, while helping to ensure that standards are consistent and outcomes are reliable.

There is always a yearly moderation conference in June at Whoop Hall for RE leaders in Catholic schools in the Lancaster Diocese. This is an opportunity for schools to share and compare assessments.

Reporting

A verbal report is given to parents at Parents' Evening in the autumn and spring terms.

Religious Education is the heart of the whole curriculum and is formally reported on the annual written report sent to parents during the Summer Term. On this report, teachers comment on both strands covered (knowledge and understanding and reflection on meaning).

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In line with our Learning and Teaching policy we recognise that all children have needs and we continuously strive to ensure that we challenge all children to reach their true potential. Teachers know their children and strive to move their learning on. Children who are on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register will be working in line with their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Information Communication Technology (ICT) within the RE curriculum

ICT is a valuable tool used by teachers to enhance learning. All classrooms have CTouch Screens with internet access enabling teachers to use visual stimuli and display research materials. Various programs and the internet, including our school website are used by the children to investigate topics and develop understanding. These platforms are developed with children to ensure they can continue with work at home to support deeper learning in class.

Communication of Information

Within the LEARN section of the school website the school's curriculum for RE is explained. Here parents can access the policy and key learning objectives which will be covered during their child's journey through school. Within class pages Curriculum Overviews provide parents with a detailed summary of learning objectives for the year. In addition, weekly website blogs inform parents of weekly learning which has taken place. The Wednesday Word is used to support further home/school links. During 2019/20 we developed the RE area of the website to provide a clear overview of teaching and learning.

Impact

At Our Lady Star of the Sea we view Religious Education as an integral part of learning and formation. An indicator of success will be the amount of pleasure and knowledge gained by the children from the study of RE and a deepening of their personal knowledge, understanding and response to Christ through their service of others. This will support children to love themselves, love each other and love Jesus Christ so that they are ready when they reach the end of Year 6 to commence the next stage of their life journey.

Evaluation and Review

This policy was written in consultation with staff and has been approved by governors during autumn 2020. It is available for parents to read on the school website in the LEARN area. As a school we always welcome feedback and if changes are required before the next review date, consultation will take place.

It is the intention to review and evaluate this document every two years in line with the whole school policy and the school development plan. (Autumn 2022)