

Ss John Fisher Thomas More Catholic Primary School



RE Handbook 2024/25

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Policy owners	Headteacher RE Co-ordinator
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Mission Statement

This policy has been developed within the spirit and context of our Mission Statement.

**'Journeying together with
Jesus Christ, we Learn to
Love and Love to Learn.'**

Introduction

Religious education is central to all our teaching and staff ensure that all children can achieve. RE is a vital part of our children's education and the formation of each child in their knowledge of themselves, their gifts and their relationship with God. We want our children to know that they are made in the image and likeness of God; and to understand that we all have different talents from God, which we can share with others.

We hope to set extremely high expectations and aspirations across the whole curriculum, as RE permeates the whole curriculum. We aim for our children to be happy, hard-working and aspirational. To understand what they need to do to achieve and have the belief that with hard work they will do well. Reconciliation plays a central role in our school, the children understand they may do wrong but they know that their teachers love them and will forgive and support them just as Jesus does. We strive to create a safe learning environment where children blossom and develop spiritually, morally and academically.

The progress of every child is immensely important to us all, and we hope that our work as a school family will enable our children to develop to their fullest potential. We create and establish an environment in which all pupils feel safe, secure and confident. We develop excellent relationships with parents and work in partnership with them throughout the academic year.

Relationships

We aim to foster an atmosphere of co-operation and tolerance in which everyone's aspirations and achievements are appreciated.

To achieve this aim, we will:

- welcome visitors with a smile
- encourage the children to follow the Golden Rules; Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe.
- encourage the whole school community to treat each other with dignity as they would wish others to treat themselves
- create an environment in which there is enjoyment, approval, praise and encouragement
- develop a school in which the adults inspire by example, demonstrate commitment and display a sense of humour
- provide a range of extra curricular activities which broaden children's experience, foster cooperation and develop close working relationships
- create an environment which encourages joint responsibility
- encourage respect for other people through positive reinforcement

Community

We aim to foster a meaningful partnership between children, school, parents, parish and the wider community.

To achieve this aim we will:

- recognise that parents are their children's primary educators, foster a spirit of partnership and co-operation and develop parental involvement at all levels
- be consultative and value parental opinions and perspectives when developing school policies
- have parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms and Open Days throughout the year
- organise Curriculum Workshops for parents
- encourage parents to take an active part in the spiritual life of the school
- share school events and liturgies through Twitter and Class Dojo

- encourage parents to be involved in home-based activities such as preparation for Masses and support their children in preparation for the Sacraments
- keep parents informed of activities and developments in the school
- promote charitable activities in school and parish
- welcome the clergy, parents and parishioners to school celebrations
- develop links with outside agencies and local industry
- take part in enrichment activities that show our Faith in Action.

Aims for the Teaching of Religious Education

- To ensure that Catholic Education plays a central and vital part in our school.
- Provide opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with God.
- Enable the spiritual development of each child
- To help pupils to develop moral qualities of self-discipline, perseverance, determination, patience, fair play and consideration for others.
- To help pupils become familiar with traditional forms of prayer.
- To provide a good experience of liturgy
- To make pupils aware of other cultures and beliefs represented in our school, environment and community.
- To provide opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with God.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Spiritual development across the curriculum is concerned with the individual's growth in faith through his or her deepening knowledge of creation and revelation.

Moral development across the curriculum is about how individuals – pupils and teachers – increasingly live that faith within the community, in school, home, parish and the wider world.

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development in our school seeks to support every individual on their spiritual quest and search of God. Our aims for spiritual development in our school are for all to:

- acquire insight into their personal existence,
- make sense of their life experiences,
- develop the human capacity to go beyond the physical, tangible reality,
- develop a sense of wonder, awe, reverence, imagination,
- develop a sense of the presence of God in their lives,
- contribute towards the creation of a Christ – centred community based on Gospel values.

Spiritual development is a process of growth. God comes to meet us through people, places and events, and it is the individual's response to these encounters with God that shape and determine our spiritual nature.

An important part of this development is becoming aware of and reflecting on experiences, and interpreting them in a way that allows self- knowledge, personal views and insights to grow, and applying past experiences to life. This whole area of community and the fostering of good relationships are vital for understanding spirituality in a Catholic school.

We are all made in God's image and likeness; therefore every meeting with someone is an encounter with God and an opportunity for spiritual growth. It is this recognising and responding to God that is a key element in spiritual development.

We also recognise that the school can make a valuable contribution to the spiritual lives of families, the parish, the wider church and the local community.

In school, we:

- provide opportunities for prayer and reflection
- provide opportunities for experiential techniques such as listening, being still and quiet, perceiving the senses, being aware of the recent moment, imaginary journeys, guided imagery, attention to an object, exploring stories and parables etc.
- develop an "inner peace"
develop a sense of God in their lives
- deepen knowledge and understanding of our Catholic faith and that of other major faiths of the world
- develop positive relationships in the school community
- develop a positive self- image and self-esteem in pupils
- develop the ability to transcend the mundane and be aware of the unseen dimension to life
- develop a spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness enhanced by the use of skilful and
- sensitive questioning by the teacher
- develop creativity by expressing innermost thoughts, imagination and feelings through art, appropriate music, literature and crafts
- develop feelings and emotions (emotional intelligence) by being moved by beauty and kindness, hurt by injustice or aggression, a growing awareness of when it is important to control emotions and feelings and how to use such feelings as a source for growth.

Moral Development

Moral development has at its foundation, values. Values are the principles that inform judgements as to what is morally good or bad. Attitudes to other people and their actions are the key part in our decisions to how we respect these others and their actions. Values both inform and influence behaviour and therefore are fundamentally important both to school life and wider society.

It is important that as a school we have clear expectations of morals and values. Each child should:

- be knowledgeable about standards of right and wrong
- be encouraged to develop skills of moral reasoning
- be willing to conduct themselves in a responsible manner
- be prepared to take responsibility for their own actions.

Our values are not limited to knowledge of right or wrong or the ability to make moral judgments, but seek to affect behaviour. The learning of how to make responsible decisions is of paramount importance. Also that respect for life, property and the environment is of extreme importance for a stable society.

In school, we aim to:

- provide an ordered environment that fosters constructive relationships between young people and adults.
- be explicit and coherent about values, planning the best way to communicate these values in our school
- consciously convey values
- develop skills that enable young people to make wise decisions and develop acceptable values, attitudes and behaviours

Our Religious Education Curriculum

Each class should follow the Diocesan approved scheme 'The Way, the Truth and the Life.' (year 5&6) or 'The Vines and the Branches' (EYFS - Year 4). As far as possible the schemes match the abilities, attainments, interests and experiences of our children and support them in their knowledge, faith development and theological understanding

in a structured way. Best practice will include using additional engaging resources and activities which follow the learning objectives.

- Religious Education is a core subject in our school
- Religious Education is planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other core curriculum subjects
- In line with Bishops' Conference recommendations, 10% of curriculum time at St John Fisher & St Thomas More is allocated to Religious Education. This does not include Collective Worship
- 'The Way the Truth and the Life' & 'The Vines and Branches' programmes of study are used as recommended by the Diocese
- The outcome of Religious Education is for children to be religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge and understanding to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life
- We aim to provide a curriculum that is engaging, rewarding, challenging and enjoyable for all pupils
- Resources are reviewed and updated yearly. An audit of resources including Bibles, text books and artefacts helps to establish what is needed to support the curriculum.

Religious Education - Scheme of Work

See link below for sequential documents, teaching outlines and scheme overviews.

<https://fishermoreprimary.net/section-1/>

The time allocated for religious education is:

Key stage 1 – 2.25 hours per week

Key Stage 2 – 2.5 hours per week

Class Level Planning

Staff complete the agreed proforma with reference to the scheme Teacher's Books, the scheme website, the web site of the diocese and of other dioceses with helpful websites, for example:

- www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org,
- www.tere.org,

Pupil activities should be planned with regard to the Driver Words in the Attainment Targets. It is expected that children will record an activity in their RE journal at least once a week.

Planning is stored electronically in the shared area and reviewed by the Coordinator termly.

Learning and Teaching Styles

Children will be taught in a variety of styles suited to their age and ability. Each pupil will be considered as an individual and given appropriate work which enables them to fulfil their potential. It is also recognised that those pupils with learning difficulties require tasks that are adapted to meet their ability, giving them achievable goals and enabling the teacher to monitor progress.

Teaching and learning takes place through:

- 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' scheme (Years 5&6)
- The Vines and The Branches Scheme (EYFS - Year 4)
- Relevant supplementary materials and our own ideas
- Groups or class activities

- Shared worship, prayers, assemblies, Mass, Penitential Services, hymn singing, Stations of the Cross, Celebrations of Sacraments
- The curriculum (RE comes into Science, Language, History, Games, Geography, and vice versa)
- Our Parish Priest and other local clergy, whose presence and example has a great influence on our lives
- Encouraging the children to be aware of others less fortunate and to do something positive to help e.g. charity fundraising
- Encouraging the children to take part in groups which enhance the lives of people outside school, e.g. reading at Mass, singing at Care Homes, serving on the altar, taking up the gifts at Mass
- Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion, which link home, school and parish. For those from committed families, it will deepen and enrich their understanding and living of their faith.

Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

Assessment establishes what the pupils know and can do. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith. In our school it involves:

Informal professional assessment

- General observation of children engaged in classroom activities and tasks and classroom displays
- Review: end of task, activity, lesson and topic e.g. discussion and questioning
- Marking of more formal work

Formal assessment

Topics are planned with activities designed to allow children to show achievement of the Diocesan Attainment Targets – paying close attention to the DRIVER WORDS found in the RED.

- Data is collected termly and analysed by the SLT and RE Coordinator. Teachers use evidence from classroom work, discussions and exercise books to decide on a level for each child. This is entered into our school tracking system.
- The RE coordinator keeps a record of assessed work and records of pupils' progress
- The school portfolios of pupils' work contains samples of work from each teacher for each assessed topic covering a range of abilities.
- Staff meetings are used throughout the year to moderate RE assessments to ensure a streamlined approach to the levelling of RE work and a school portfolio of assessed samples of work is available
- Monitoring of teaching and learning at St John Fisher & St Thomas More is regularly reviewed in a number of ways. We take part in regular book and planning scrutiny, learning works, drop-ins and lesson observations. Feedback is given to teachers and areas for support are identified and shared with class teachers
- Progress and achievement in RE is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.
- Summative information about each child is provided by the teacher at the end of the year using the agreed templates.

Environment and Display

From the moment you enter St John Fisher & St Thomas More, the school environment says loudly and clearly that we are a Catholic school. There is a special prayer focus area outside the main hall, which reflects the liturgical year and provides a stimulus for reflection.

Each classroom has a class Prayer and Worship focus in a prominent place of the classroom and a display dedicated to current learning in RE. As you move around the school, there are a number of displays showing the children's

work. Religious artefacts, such as the stained glass windows of our Patron Saints are also on display. Displays are updated regularly in keeping with the Liturgical year.

Each house team is named after a Saint, and Y6 children, when deciding on House Captains at the start of the year, will learn about their particular saint.

Guidelines for the teaching of traditional prayer

Our INSET days, especially at the beginning of the year, will always begin with a Celebration of the Word relevant to New Beginnings. Staff meetings and briefings always begin with Worship, led by different members of the staff team.

Traditional prayers are introduced to the children in addition to the requirements of the scheme. All classes have a Prayer Book, which outlines the prayers used throughout the school.

Although prayers may be allocated to a particular year group this does not mean that it cannot be said with other year groups. Indeed we aim to continually revisit prayers introduced earlier. We do try to get the children to learn prayers off by heart, but also teach and pray them through:

- ✓ Explanation of the language
- ✓ Reflection
- ✓ Repetition to encourage familiarity

At Key Stage 1 much of the teaching of the prayers is through class and the Key Stage Assemblies. The following prayers are taught in this way:

- ✓ Sign of the cross
- ✓ Morning and evening prayers
- ✓ Prayers before and after meals
- ✓ Responses at Mass
- ✓ Greeting the Gospel
- ✓ Prayerful reflection on the day
- ✓ Our Father
- ✓ Hail Mary

At Key Stage 2 much of the learning of new prayers will take place in RE lessons and then used in class based collective worship. At Key Stage assemblies prayers that are appropriate to a particular season will be used, e.g. Stations of the Cross, Pentecost.

Resources

Every teacher has access to a digital CotW File with guidance, information and copies of proformas to be used. Each class has access to objects and fabrics suitable for all seasons of the liturgical year. Each class has a set of resources to support child led worship - our prayer leaders from UKS2 take lead with this. Other RE resources are stored in the storage cupboards at the back of the dining hall. Each class has access to the New Edition of the RED and P&L directories and digital access to the Teacher books and textbooks from the Vines and Branches scheme of work.

Other Faiths

We are sensitive and respectful to other beliefs and traditions. Children learn about the other main religions whilst comparing them to Christianity. By the end of Branch 6 learning the children have gained a better understanding and appreciation for other faiths. We are a diverse community and value other faiths, taking time to talk to the children about the many different festivals and celebrations that take place during the year.

Marking

Marking of pupils' work is approached positively and constructively so that it affirms and celebrates success and encourages future learning. Class teachers should refer to the driver words in marking and ask questions to further develop the children's thinking skills in RE. We try to make our marking RE specific and encourage children to respond to comments or questions we may ask them.

Management of the subject

The Co-ordinator has responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education. An action plan is produced yearly.

Sacramental Preparation

The children may choose to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and their First Holy Communion in Year 3, although children from other KS2 classes are welcome to join the programme.

The children and their parents follow a 10-week programme organised by school, which aims to help the parents help their child whilst deepening their own spirituality. There is a meeting for parents of children preparing for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation, led by school staff, prior to the commencement of the teaching programme. The published scheme 'God's Greatest Gift' is used to support the children.

Calendar

The RE Co-ordinator regularly liaises with our local parish in regards to matters involving RE, Sacramental Preparation and the Spiritual/religious life of the school.

All KS2 classes have the chance to lead and participate in Masses during Advent and Lent, and whole school Masses are celebrated at key moments in the liturgical calendar.

Children who are involved in the Sacramental Programme receive the First Holy Communion at one of the Sunday Masses in May.

Class assemblies take place during the year and these are often linked to aspects of the curriculum being studied in school. Parents are invited to these occasions. It is expected that there is an RE focus to these assemblies.

Advent and Holy Week are key events in the school calendar and are celebrated with all children. During Advent, KS2 children attend Mass and the weekly assemblies focus on the candles of the Advent wreath (Hope, love, Joy and Peace)

During Holy Week the children are involved in different services to retell the Easter story.

1. Palm Sunday – procession from the amphitheatre into the hall
2. Reconciliation Service
3. The Last Supper – both Mass celebrated by Fr Nick and 'The Last Supper' led by the Mini Vinnies/GIFT team
4. Stations of the Cross (separate KS1/KS2)

Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that:

- A policy and a scheme of work are devised and implemented throughout the school

- The effectiveness of the teaching of RE is monitored and evaluated
- Resources are provided to meet the aims and objectives of RE
- Opportunities are created for worship, prayer, celebration and reflection
- Extra-curricular activities within the context of RE are encouraged
- Effective communication takes place about RE policy and practice with parents, governors and other agencies and individuals
- All staff involved in the teaching of RE have opportunities for relevant professional development
- The school in its curriculum, pastoral care, communication systems and management offers an education based upon the Catholic vision of humanity
- That appropriate assessment, recording and reporting procedures that monitor and track standards of attainment and achievement are in place.

The RE Co-ordinator will:

- Promote RE as a subject worthy of study and the Catholic faith as central to the curriculum and life of the school
- Involve all staff in the development of a school policy for RE and a comprehensive scheme of work to include collective worship
- Monitor the teaching of RE with reference to its effectiveness
- Make available to staff resources appropriate to the needs of all pupils for effective teaching of RE through appropriate INSET become familiar with a wide range of resources and teaching strategies for RE and share this knowledge with staff
- Coordinate the organisation and preparation of liturgy within school and liaise with all those involved
- Be prepared to report regularly on the above to the Head, and Deputy Head as appropriate
- Ensure that assessment, recording and reporting procedures are implemented and are in line with relevant guidance

The class teacher will:

- Be an active partner in the development of the RE policy and scheme of work
- Implement the policy and scheme of work within the class and within the whole school context
- Keep relevant and accurate records of planning through agreed medium and short term planning and evidence of taught plans through samples of pupils' work
- Take advantage of opportunities created for professional development in RE
- Carry out assessment and record keeping activities as agreed in the school policy and report to parents on progress in RE at parent evenings and via end of year reports.

The RE Governor will:

- Review the RE policy and scheme of work
- Monitor the implementation of the policy and scheme of work, the planning, the portfolio of levelled work, and the assessment records with the RE coordinator in school.