



St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Religious Education Policy

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Our Mission Statement and Guiding Rationale

“Be like Jesus. Be your best. Be Safe. Be Caring.”

St Elizabeth's is a caring, Catholic school community, where we celebrate that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. Here, individuals are helped to achieve their full potential, through experiences and opportunities that nurture the whole person. These experiences include Religious Education, which allows the pupils to personally respond to the message of Christ – to be like Him. Religious Education is at the core of the curriculum and is distinct in nature; pupils not only acquire knowledge but their lives and actions are shaped by the curriculum. At St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we support children to enable them to reach their full **potential**, thereby empowering them to be caring individuals, capable of critical independent thought.

In lessons, children are taught a systematic presentation (the basics and principles) of the Catholic Faith. Teaching is realistic, has achievable aims and relates to the children's lives, both inside and outside of school. As teachers, we are aware of the diversity of backgrounds, family relationships and faith experiences of our pupils and are sensitive in the way we approach discussions based on these themes.

The intent and outcome of Religious Education is: “Religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.” (Religious Education Curriculum Directory 1996)

Aims and Objectives

- To foster a love of God through knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith from scripture and doctrine.
- To encourage the development of a personal relationship with God.
- To help our children be aware of and respect other faiths.
- To encourage children to study, investigate and reflect.
- To develop thinking and listening skills.
- To develop respect for truth and for the views of others.

Home/School/Parish Partnership

- We believe that the school alone cannot undertake a child's religious education. Religious Education begins at home usually at Baptism; the parents are the child's first teachers and support the child with his/her first religious experiences. The school works in partnership with parents and parish to enrich the lives of our children.
- We send home an RE newsletter each term to inform parents about the forthcoming RE topics and through our monthly school newsletters and half termly class newsletters we notify parents of Masses and Liturgies, both in the school and the parish.
- Our school regularly supports parish events and fund raising.
- We regularly invite our Parish Priest (Fr Michael Kirkham) to celebrate Mass in school. Pupils have a role in preparing and leading Mass for the community. Throughout each year, Key Stage Two children have opportunities to prepare readings, hymns, the homily, bidding prayers and the offertory procession. Mass usually takes place in school.

RE Curriculum/Programme

Come and See

We follow the 'Come and See' programme, as adopted by the Diocese, using the whole school, one-year cycle of topics. 'Come and See' is an invitation to exploration and a promise of life for everyone. In response to the question; 'Where do you live?' which was asked by the disciples, Jesus invited them to; 'Come and See' (John 1:39. The disciples went with Jesus 'and spent the rest of the day with him'. The invitation to Come and See is open to all and is apparent, even if the question has not been spoken. Three topics are studied each term, with each topic lasting approximately four weeks. RE lessons constitute a minimum of 10% of curriculum time in all classes.

Other Faiths

- For two weeks of each school year, pupils study other faiths. The whole school focus is on one particular faith for one week during each of the longer terms (Advent Term and Pentecost Term).
- All children study Judaism at their own level; early years pupils may study stories from the Old Testament during the Other Faiths weeks. In addition, pupils will learn about a variety of festivals from other faiths.
- We endeavour for Year Three pupils to visit a Synagogue during the Advent Term
- Where and when opportunities arise, people from other faiths are invited into school to talk to children.

Teaching and Learning in RE

- A range of teaching strategies and learning methodologies are employed depending on the needs and abilities of the children and the nature of the activities being undertaken.
- Teaching and learning supports the needs of all pupils through the '5-a-day Principle', which aims to ensure high-quality teaching for all pupils, including SEND, through explicit instruction, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, effective scaffolding, flexible grouping and the use of technology.
- Some work may differentiate in terms of activity or outcome according to the needs and abilities of the pupils. Approaches include whole class teaching, group activities and individual work. Children have opportunities to work individually as well as co-operatively and collaboratively, developing their own knowledge and expertise, as well as sharing their experiences with others.
- All work involves thought-provoking reflection and discussion, encouraging the children to develop their moral and spiritual consciences.
- Teachers are encouraged to make cross - curricular links when planning RE, incorporating creative opportunities and extended writing where appropriate.

Assessment and Record Keeping

- It is impossible to assess the level of a child's personal faith and it should not be attempted. However, we are able to assess a child's knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes that have been taught in RE. These can be demonstrated through discussion with the child, through written work and through general day-to-day work such as role plays and drama.
- A formal assessment task – produced by the Diocese – is given to each of the pupils once a term and the work is placed into the children's RE books. The outcomes of these assessments inform teacher assessment.
- The teachers also record teacher assessment for each pupil every term, considering the whole child's performance in RE, and these results are placed onto our whole school assessment system (Insight).
- Every September a baseline assessment is carried out by the Reception class teacher to find out what religious knowledge, what religious vocabulary and what religious experience the children already have upon entering school in the Foundation Stage.
- Marking and feedback is undertaken largely in accordance with school assessment and feedback policy. However, it is essential that all the Key Words for each topic be corrected so that children can learn and use these words effectively. Because of the nature of the distinct nature of Religious Education, it is also appropriate that marking and feedback is distinct. Pupils are encouraged to respond to Head, Heart and Cloud symbols, which provide opportunities for further thought.
- Written comments are: affirming, encouraging, thought provoking and challenging. Above all, they should be sensitive to the children's needs and be made in relation to the learning intention of the lesson (and Year Group Expectations). The school uses a 'live feedback' policy and use of green and pink highlighter to indicate performance to pupils.

- The 'I Can' statements have been developed by the school and are used by each class teacher with the children in every topic studied. The statements are introduced to the children at the beginning of each RE topic and the children self-assess against these statements throughout. At the end of each topic the children are asked to identify what they did well and reflect upon their progress in AT1, AT2 and AT3.
- Comments relating to RE are made for each pupil in their parents' evening reports and annual reports. The reports comment on progress, whilst also providing children with a target for which to focus on in future learning.

Monitoring

- In order to monitor RE teaching and learning, the RE Subject Leader and/or Headteacher observe RE teaching at least once a year, across the whole school. Any common points for improvements are shared at the first available staff meeting and individual feedback on observations is given to teachers.
- The RE Subject Leader, class teachers and Headteacher carry out a work scrutiny and pupil conferencing activity at least once a year and report their findings at the first available staff meeting.
- The RE Subject Leader, class teachers and Headteacher carry out a planning scrutiny at least once a year and report their findings at the first available staff meeting.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Our Mission Statement:

"Be like Jesus. Be your best. Be safe. Be caring."

- A central message of the Catholic faith is: 'God loves each and every one of us equally'. This is regardless of cultural background, faith, gender or academic ability. It is therefore vital that we recognise and cater for the individual needs of children, acknowledging that all children have different gifts and talents and that these must be celebrated.
- Learning tasks should be matched to the abilities of the children to enable them to achieve success, helping them to develop to their full potential and to develop a positive self-image.
- We aim to ensure that resources do not reinforce any kind of stereotypes and that they do reflect our Mission Statement.
- It is important that the children are provided with images, which reflect the multi-cultural society in which we live; enhancing their awareness and knowledge of other faiths and cultures, whilst respecting the rights of the individual at all times. This is essential in preparing children to take their place in a multi-cultural society.

Display and Prayer Focus

- Classroom RE displays relate to a recent topic of study to stimulate further work or to celebrate the work that has been undertaken.

- Each class has a prayer area to stimulate and facilitate reflection and prayer, linked with the topic and the liturgical season.
- Other displays around the school celebrate RE work in each Year or Key Stage group.
- Hall displays promote each of our seven Franciscan Values: Joy, Forgiveness, Faith, Respect, Service, Peace and Stewardship.

Resources

- Each class has the relevant Come and See folder.
- Bibles are stored in each classroom; other RE and Other Faiths books are also available from the library and the Key Stage Two corridor.