

# **St. George's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy**



## **School Mission Statement**

We are learning and growing together as God's family. We will always do our best to love and respect each other as we prepare for the future.

# **Religious Education Policy and Handbook**

# St George's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

## Our Vision Statement



Our vision is to provide care, spiritual guidance and first class primary education for our children; an experience which will equip them for their future.

We believe that self-esteem is developed through achievement and development of talents. We strive to ensure that children are successful and ready for the next step in their education and life journey.

We are a school family at St George's; pupils and staff are kind and caring and we wish all families to feel welcome and supported.

We are committed to sustaining a happy school community within this rapidly changing world. We anticipate that that our children will look back with fondness on their time at school, and will be able to recognise that being a pupil at St George's Catholic Primary School played an important part in their lives.



## **Religious Education & Staff Handbook**

**At St George's we will live out our Mission Statement,**

- **Through the way we teach and learn**
- **Through our relationships and respect for one another, the children, parents and wider community**
- **Through our approach to behaviour and discipline which is based on Gospel values of forgiveness and restorative justice**
- **Through making prayer and worship an integral part of our daily life**
- **Through concern for justice and peace in our world and for those less fortunate than ourselves**
- **Through following the key message of Pope Francis to help those in need and care for our common home**

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# **POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

## **School Mission Statement**

**We are learning and growing together as God’s family. We will always do our best to love and respect each other as we prepare for our future.**

### **Rationale of Religious Education:**

- We believe Religious Education to be ‘the core of the core curriculum.’
- We believe Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the Church.
- We are aware that evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school for pupils, 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 rigor as other curriculum subjects.
- We understand Religious Education to be the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ.

‘At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in religious education. Therefore, religious education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school..... All pupils have the right to receive an overall education which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope which is within them. Religious Education is, then, the core subject in a Catholic school.’ (Statement on Religious Education in Catholic Schools – Bishops’ Conference 2000)

“In an atmosphere of faith, religious education is the engine room of the missionary dynamic of the Catholic school as a whole. It is for this reason that religious education, although distinct from catechesis, can be received as catechesis by those students for whom the study of “the Catholic religion” is a study of the faith that makes them who they are” (RED pg 13)

### **The Aims of Religious Education**

- to develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences
- to promote knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life and to assimilate and apply this knowledge and understanding to their lives
- to promote knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose
- to promote the skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice
- to have respect for other people’s views and to celebrate the diversity in society

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

### Curriculum skills/attitudes

Religious Education involves pupils not only in the attainment of knowledge and understanding, but also in the acquisition and deployment of skills. The acquisition of skills is essential to increase knowledge and understanding.

The following skills are addressed:

- Investigation
- Interpretation
- Communication
- Critical
- Affective and social
- Evaluation
- Analytical
- Reflective

Through programmes of study, and the skills developed, we intend to help pupils to develop and grow in the gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, right judgement, courage, reverence, awe and wonder.

### Curriculum time allocation:

In line with Bishops' Conference recommendations, 10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This does **not** include Collective Worship. Children must never be permitted to leave the classroom for any reason (e.g Interventions) during Religious Education lessons. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to the timetable in each class.

## CURRICULUM PLANNING

### Programme of Study:

To fulfil the above aims and to address the 4 areas of study outlined in the Curriculum Directory – Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ – we use 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme, supplemented with additional resources. From September 2024, the Religious Education Directory (RED) for Reception, Year 1, Year 2, and Year 5 is being implemented. This ensures that our curriculum stays relevant and reflects the latest guidance in Religious Education.

We believe that Religious Education is central to all learning that it permeates the entire curriculum and is not always kept to specific times. In planning the work we endeavour to ensure the aims as previously stated, are achieved.

Our Religious Education curriculum comprises elements of 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' Programme supplemented by Building The Kingdom (Educarem) and is further enhanced by the implementation of the RED content in specific year groups. We ensure that topics build on prior learning and offer opportunities for children to develop their reflection and thinking skills, and knowledge in each unit.

The long-term plan maps out the Religious Education topics for each term across all phases. This plan, developed by the Religious Education leader in collaboration with teaching colleagues, incorporates both the established programme and the new RED elements for Reception, Year 1, Year 2, and Year 5. In some cases, we teach Religious Education topics alongside other subjects, providing a cross-curricular approach to learning.

Short-term planning remains the responsibility of the class teacher.

## Process

We teach Religious Education through the process of the “knowledge lens content” – Hear, Believe, Celebrate and Live. We use the age- phased expected outcomes as outlined in the Religious Education Directory. At the end of each unit of study pupils will be able to understand, discern (think critically and creatively) and respond to their learning.

## Methodology

A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used from across the curriculum adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of pupils. Religious Education is the central focus of all our education and so involves a wide range of teaching methods and active learning opportunities.

Classroom organisation should include an area for quiet reflection and a central focus for classroom worship.

Religious Education enriches work in all areas of the curriculum and will include the coverage of wider issues such as justice, poverty, war, living in a diverse society, crime, the environment and Catholic social teaching. We follow “Rooted In Love” – Westminster Caritas in Action programme.

Our teaching and learning styles in Religious Education enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding. We use their life experiences to develop their religious thinking to “Relate” them to Christian understanding. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

The children:

- Learn about:  
The Scriptures  
The tradition and teaching of the Church  
Prayers, psalms, hymns and other expressions of Christian Faith  
The lives of outstanding Christians and those from other faiths.
- Explore the above in creative and practical ways through drama, writing, poetry, song, Art, dance, music personal research and investigation and service of others.

## STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

We teach religious education to all children in the school from Nursery to Year 6.

Ages 2 -7

For these children, significant people in their lives are central. The “person” is the message. The focus for religious education is on:

- *Naming* without explaining – religious people, actions, feelings, objects
- *Imitating* the words, actions, feelings of significant adults
- *Belonging* by joining in

Ages 7 – 11

For these children, the Traditional becomes central. Story, told in a variety of ways, carries the message.

The focus for religious education is on:

- *Behaviour* of religious people, what they say, feel, do

- *Research* collecting facts, exploring questions, discovering answers, memorising
- *Joining in* and belonging in a more conscious way/social justice

#### SEND/EAL

We recognise that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities and needs and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability or experiences of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- Setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty
- Grouping the children by ability and setting different tasks for each ability group.
- Providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child.
- Using Classroom Assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

As with all other areas of the curriculum, the purpose of differentiation in Religious Education is:

- To enable children to access the curriculum and succeed
- To challenge children beyond their comfort zone of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- To enable children to recognise their achievements and celebrate these

#### **Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting**

- Assessment of standards is carried out according to Diocesan guidelines using the criteria in the Levels of Attainment booklet agreed by Bishops' Conference.
- Each teacher keeps a record of assessed work and pupils' progress in books and on the school tracker (Sonar)
- Monitoring of teaching and learning, work scrutiny, termly assessment of topic, lesson observations and modelling by R.E. Leader, Diocesan support.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.

Certificates are awarded weekly across all stages during Friday Assembly to celebrate achievement, behaviour and thoughtfulness. Marking is done regularly and positively to direct the child in their understanding and faith journey and to set achievable targets.

The headteacher rewards two children per week for respect for others, living out our mission statement

#### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is carried out in line with the whole school homework policy.

#### **RESOURCES**

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education units. We keep resources for religious education in a central store (the middle cupboard outside the staffroom). There is a set of bibles for each year group and a collection of religious artefacts, which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. Each teacher has resources with cloths for the liturgical year.



## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Staff CPD is important part of our Religious Education development and the Religious Education leader attends termly deanery meetings as well as RCDO courses to keep the staff informed of the latest discussions and initiatives.

Courses relating to spiritual development are made available to staff. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher attend the relevant conferences which enable them to discuss issues with other senior managers and with the advisers, to increase their own awareness of important issues and deepen their spiritual development as a leader in a Catholic school.

The Religious Education Adviser is invited to take part in training days and to visit the school regularly. She is available to advise all staff when appropriate, observing the teaching of Religious Education and sample pupils' work.

Visitors are invited to join the staff in meditation and prayer.

Religious Education has parity with other curriculum areas on the annual inset agenda.

All staff meetings begin with a prayer – the Religious Education leader provides a prayer rota for meetings.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Religious Education leader regularly reviews resources.

The Religious Education leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in Religious Education. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of Religious Education, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The Religious Education leader presents the headteacher and Governors with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further development. There is allocated NCT for carrying out the vital task of scrutinising the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

## **THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

### **The School in the Wider Community**

The school is an integral part of the parish community of St George's, and the relationship is seen as one of mutual support. Links are strengthened as follows;

- The parish priest and assistant priest support the pastoral and spiritual needs of the school.
- The parish priest and assistant priest liaises termly with senior staff at our parish meeting.
- They support the teaching of Religious Education at the request of teachers.
- They support the school community in times of celebration and need.
- The school community joins the Parish for Mass (KS2 classes)
- Children are encouraged to become members of the Parish choir.
- Children take part in the Sunday children's liturgy
- Several members of staff are Special Ministers of the Eucharist. The school supports the Parish in the preparation for Holy Communion and Reconciliation
- Children of post-First Holy Communion age are altar servers at school and at church
- The Parish Catechist coordinator liaises closely with the school
- Many parents, teachers and Governors play practical and active roles in the life of the parishes.
- Parishioners visit school to pray the rosary with the children in October and May

## **PARENTS**

We believe that the parents are the first educators and we can only do our job most effectively with their help and support. We endeavour to do this in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. During the year:

- Parents are encouraged to join us for Masses, Celebrations, Assemblies and Prayer.
- The PSA organise various fund-raising events
- Each year there are Parent Evenings, reports, termly Religious Education information leaflet, half-termly newsletters, Curriculum Coverage information to keep parents informed.
- We celebrate St George's Feast Day by having a Mass with an after-school event for children and parents
- Parents fully support our concerts, plays, sports days, school trips etc. All school events have a high parent attendance

## **OTHER FAITHS**

Two other faiths are taught from Year 1 to Year 6 . Two weeks teaching and learning time per year is given to other faiths. The teaching of other faiths will focus on the key teachings of one faith at a time. It will start from the religion`s own understanding of itself and an understanding of what it is to be a member of a particular faith community.

The other faiths are taught discretely. This means that each faith is treated with integrity and not by comparison or by isolated festivals. The teaching will be of the key concepts of that religion.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by *Staff and Governors and* updated every 2 years.

Date: September 2024

Review Date: September 2026