

ST JUDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



THE MISSION OF OUR SCHOOL IS:

We live, love and learn together, joyfully in Jesus' name.

RE lead: Maria Cleaver

Parish Priests: Fr John Peyton

Fr Toby Duckworth

RE Governor: Fr Toby Duckworth

Date of last CSI inspection: January 2023

Key areas to develop as recommended by CSI, January 2023:

- *Develop the pupils' understanding of Catholic Social Teaching to enable them to articulate how it impacts on their daily lives.*
- *Further strengthen the strategic leadership of religious education to drive improvements in the subject, with an explicit focus on achieving consistency in providing feedback to pupils that enables them to understand how to improve.*
- *Develop teacher and pupil ownership of delivering and evaluating Prayer and Liturgy.*

St Jude's School aims to be a living, loving and sacramental community which is inspired by the life of Christ and the teachings of the Church, rooted in Gospel Values and Catholic Virtues.

At the heart of the Church is her mission to teach. Christ's own words to his disciples are addressed to his Church today: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.' (Matthew 28:18-20) At St. Jude's, we have an integral role in fulfilling this command given to us by Jesus Christ.

The importance of sustaining and promoting our Catholic faith is central to our school's mission for the children in our care.

We aim to make prayer, worship and liturgy real educational experiences, and contribute successfully to the development of faith of each individual child.

Our school will offer a high standard of Catholic education where children can grow in understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values in all subject areas.

In delivering the curriculum we recognise the uniqueness of each child and respect the value, dignity and individuality of each one, celebrating diversity and learning the values of mutual respect, individual liberty and tolerance.

Within our school great emphasis is given to Religious Education. Prayer and Liturgy, the celebration of the Mass and preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharist and Confirmation are given great importance. Every effort is made to live by and promote the teaching of Our Lord and his Church concerning faith and moral living.

We attach great importance to good relationships within the school community and recognise that the strong partnership, which exists between school, home and parish, must be nurtured if we are to grow and develop as a living and worshipping community and truly provide a Christ centred environment for the children in our care.

OUR AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

To guide our pupils to grow in knowledge, understanding and love of God through Prayer, Liturgy, Sacraments and Scripture.

- To place at the heart of the curriculum, the essential truths of our faith and along with these, the understanding of their significance in terms of celebrating and living the Christian life.
- To help children to know, understand and reflect on the spiritual and religious dimensions of life as expressed in the Catholic faith tradition and are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- We seek to develop within our school a respect for the dignity of each human being and provide children with the opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate the diverse nature of our society.
- We strive to make our Mission and General Aims of the school a lived experience for our school community.

HOW WE MEET OUR AIMS

We work together to meet these aims through:

- Teaching RE lessons Diocesan scheme of work, 'Learning & Growing as People of God.'
- Nurturing pupils' faith when it is present and to facilitate its emergence when it is not.
- Sacramental education.
- Encouraging pupils to be part of the parish community.
- Teaching pupils how to pray.
- Weekly Prayer and Liturgy services.
- The patronage of St Jude.
- Developing a culture of vocation.
- Promoting an awareness of other cultures and religions, developing respect and consideration for others so that all pupils are prepared to live in a multi cultural and multi faith society.
- Promoting Gospel Values Education as a valid values system; this is the root system for British Values.
- Catholic virtues.
- Catholic Social Teaching.
- Personal witness daily.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN OUR SCHOOL

Religious Education in our school is an integral part of our ethos, aims and relationships, as Christian values permeate all aspects of the curriculum and all relationships.

RE is a core subject and is allocated 10% of Curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference. The 10% relates to 'curriculum time', which is the time allocated for the taught curriculum of Religious Education. It does not include time committed to activities such as assemblies, hymn practice, PSHE, RSHE, preparation and attendance at Mass etc.

All nursery classes are expected to make provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their pupils. As our Nursery class is an integral part of this Catholic school, we believe the children in our school must be given opportunities to 'Experience what it is to be part of a Catholic Community.'

(Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools)

Our primary aims for Religious Education lessons are to help our children to become religious and literate in their faith.

There are numerous cross-curricular activities that deepen the children's understanding that stem from Religious Education lessons, such as drama, writing, art and music. Thus our children have a diversity of experience that support their development and understanding of their Catholic faith.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEME OF WORK

Our current long term overviews and detailed medium and short term plans for Religious Education are based on the Archdiocese of Birmingham curriculum strategy for Religious Education 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'. It provides the core of spiritual and doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church as proclaimed in the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church.'

Teaching and learning methods are appropriate to the child's age and level of maturity.

The aim of the scheme is:

- To help children to become aware of and reflect on their experiences of living in the world with others. (Life in Christ)
- To help them respond to God's love in their lives. (Life In Christ)
- To reveal to children some aspects of God's plan for our salvation. (Revelation)
- To help them to listen to and respond to God. (Celebration)
- To help them to see God's offer of salvation in the sacraments and respond to it. (Celebration)
- To show that every human person is made in the image of God and is called to reflect God's people; (Church)
- To help the children be aware that the Church is world-wide and multi-cultural; that love and service of God and others are universal human values and signs of God's Spirit in the world. (Church)

By following 'The Strategy':

- continuity and progression (which are intrinsic elements of the programme) are ensured.
- pupils' understanding of the Catholic faith and traditions grow commensurately with other subjects.

The Religious Education long term overview is planned by the RE Subject Leader. Medium term planning for each year group, is collaboratively planned within each planning phase and with the support of the RE Subject Leader. Short term weekly planning is the responsibility of the Class teacher. A range of resources are available to support the delivery of Religious Education in the classroom.

In addition to Diocesan Curriculum Strategy, pupils:

- complete research into the life of their class Saint.
- research the life of St. Jude as part of a whole school focus on the celebration of his feast day on 28th October.
- All classes follow the 'Ten Ten' scheme 'Life to the Full' as part of the school's delivery of Relationships and Sex Education.
- Celebrate and learn the traditions of the Catholic Church through, for example, Benediction and the May Procession.
- Experience the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile by focussing on two paired virtues each half term in line with the Diocesan plan.
- Live their daily lives here at school aware of Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching.

LEARNING ABOUT WORLD RELIGIONS

In the summer term, and in assemblies throughout the year, we learn about other world religions. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), pupils explore the Catholic Church of St. Jude. The children in Year One learn more about another Christian place of worship (for e.g. All Saints, Kings Heath, Church of England) to appreciate our shared baptismal identity, and compare the church to our own (St. Jude's).

Early Years pupils and Key Stage One children also focus on learning about the celebration of festivals and major celebrations in different faiths.

In Key Stage Two each year group focuses on learning about the key characteristics of a different world faith.

Class	
EYFS	Signs and symbols/festivals Divali / Candlemas / Eid-ul-Fitr
Year 1	Another place of Christian worship to appreciate our shared baptismal identity, and compare the church to our own.
Year 2	Buddhism
Year 3	Hinduism
Year 4	Judaism
Year 5	Sikhism
Year 6	Islam

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education teaching is delivered through a variety of teaching methods.

We aim to provide a balance between:

- Exposition by the teacher
- Class discussion
- Group discussion
- Individual research
- Personal reflection

For religious education teaching to be effective teachers need to:

- Have a secure knowledge and understanding of the faith, of religious education and of the programme in use
- Set high expectations so as to challenge pupils and deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding
- Plan effectively, with lessons having clear religious learning objectives which are shared with the pupils, and meeting the learning needs of all pupils
- Incorporate prayer into the lesson in a meaningful way
- Use teaching methods and strategies which match learning objectives and the needs of all pupils
- Manage pupils well and achieve high standards of behaviour
- Use time and resources, including Computing, efficiently and effectively
- Assess pupils' work thoroughly and constructively and use assessments to inform teaching and show pupils how to improve their work
- Set homework to extend or reinforce the work done in lessons
- Use resources to have a positive impact upon the quality of pupils' learning and the standards, which they achieve

When teaching is effective pupils will;

- Show interest in their work;
- Sustain concentration;
- Think and learn for themselves;
- Work at a good pace;
- Understand what they are doing;

- Develop ideas;
- Acquire knowledge.

We consider differentiation in RE to be important in planning; extension activities for the higher attaining pupils are necessary and pupils with special needs are supported when appropriate.

Excellence in Religious Education is celebrated in display, performance and the dramatisation of spiritual events and stories. Each month a 'Whole School Gospel Value' will focus on a key theme which is then linked to weekly 'Disciple Targets'. Certificates for these will be awarded during our monthly Celebration Meeting.

GENERAL SKILLS TO BE TAUGHT

The acquisition of skills is essential in Religious Education as a means of increasing knowledge and understanding of our Catholic faith. The development of a skill depends on attitudes and self-respect and respect for others. The skills required in our Religious Education curriculum are:

- Investigation
- Interpretation
- Reflection
- Empathy
- Evaluation
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Application
- Expression
- Communication
- Social
- Language

These skills are developed in the EYFS and throughout both Key Stages and are evident in medium term planning.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

At St. Jude's we believe that it is important for children in our Catholic school to take a full and active part in sacramental preparation.

BAPTISM

The vast majority of our pupils of Roman Catholic families have been baptised before being admitted to the school. Pupils preparing for First Holy Communion role-play a Baptismal Ceremony to help them understand the significance of belonging to God through Baptism.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

The school works with the parish to help prepare children for this Sacrament. Parents are invited to meet with the priest, headteacher and the Year 3 teacher and are given the outline of the preparation programme which includes attending Catechist sessions on Saturdays. They are invited to work with the school and parish in preparing their child, particularly ensuring that the pupils build up their relationship with Jesus by regular family prayer and attendance at weekly Mass. Other meetings are held throughout the year.

RECONCILIATION

This Sacrament is celebrated before First Holy Communion. We invite parents and family to participate in the Sacrament if they are able or at least to approach the priest for a blessing.

Pupils are helped to be aware of God's love and a sense of belonging to Him and His family through Baptism. They are aware of sometimes making wrong choices; learning right from wrong and examination of conscience.

- They learn about saying sorry – Act of Contrition/Sorry Prayer
- They come to know God's forgiveness – Absolution
- They know of the need to make resolution – Penance
- And are encouraged to do better in future – Purpose of Amendment
- Confidentiality and the seal of the confession are stressed.

Opportunity for the Celebration of Reconciliation is offered to each Key Stage Two class during Advent and Lent.

CONFIRMATION

Pupils in Year Six, who are baptised and have made their First Holy Communion, are invited to prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Parents are actively encouraged to support the candidates by attending Catechist sessions on Saturdays. During the Rite of Election in mass, the candidates submit their formal letters of request for the Sacrament. Links between Baptism and Confirmation are made. Emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their relevance to the practical situations of life are also made. The pupils are helped to become witnesses of the Gospel and active members of the Church.

The primary aim of our school, therefore, is to foster and nourish the personal relationship of every individual with God.

To do this successfully we need to;

- Foster a habit of prayer and spiritual awareness within the school.
- Encourage a sense of God's presence that will permeate the life of the school.
- Encourage active involvement in the sacramental life of the Church as appropriate for individuals.
- Foster links with Home and Parish so that pupils receive consistent encouragement in their spiritual development from the significant adults in their lives.
- Develop all possible experiences that will touch and enrich the human spirit.

An appreciative and sensitive handling of good literature, poetry, art and music, should lead pupils beyond the concrete and practical to an awareness of things of the spirit. Anything that nurtures the child's natural sense of awe and wonder is to be welcomed. This awareness should then be directed towards the One who has created all and enables Humankind to participate in His work of creation.

In helping to promote the pupils' innate sense of their relationship with God, their sense of wonder and awe, we will start and finish each day with prayer.

The children in Year 6 have the opportunity to go on a retreat day and residential visit to Alton Castle, the Diocesan Youth Retreat Centre. This gives the children an opportunity to develop their relationship with God and each other in a different environment.

The Catholic Curriculum

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

We join the pupils on the spiritual quest we all have, to recognise God in all the circumstances of our lives and to help them respond to that invitation/meeting. By encouraging their belief in God, as revealed in Jesus and that He is the author of life, beauty, goodness, and truth, we support and help the pupils promote a proper care of self and one another. Care and respect for the created world is also encouraged.

PRAYER

We encourage our children to take part and experience many different forms of prayer.

- All classrooms have prayer areas that include liturgical images, artefacts, school, and class prayers.
- All assemblies and prayer services have a religious prayer focus.

The children are provided with a variety of prayer experiences and are encouraged to pray thoughtfully and with respect. All year groups participate in weekly class Liturgies. Some are staff led with an element of pupil participation. Others are completely child centred where pupils plan, deliver and evaluate the liturgies. Older pupils also prepare liturgies for younger pupils in the school.

- Children are encouraged to develop their individual prayer life through daily participation in morning prayers, grace before and after meals and prayer at the end of the day. They also have opportunities to participate and lead prayers. Pupils are encouraged to know they can pray at any time or in any place.
- There is a time in acts of worship where the children can talk to Jesus in their own words. The teacher encourages prayers that are relevant e.g. thanksgiving prayers, concerns for others, prayers for guidance and protection. Staff are sensitive to the feelings of pupils. It is also possible to offer up a prayer to Jesus to listen to the prayers in our hearts that have not been spoken.
- Our Chaplaincy Team and children of differing phase groups plan and lead prayer sessions for their peers. We encourage as many pupils as possible to be involved in this.
- Staff and Governors pray together before every meeting. A variety of staff plan and lead prayer.

We also work hard to include families in the prayer life of our school. We do this by:

- Encouraging parents and families to attend assemblies, liturgies and other acts of collective worship.
- Holding regular liturgies and assemblies for parents to attend and join in with.
- Encouraging family attendance at special masses.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

We teach morality in light of our Catholic beliefs. Morality flows from the faith as a response to God's gracious work of creation. Religious education is, therefore, an essential foundation for moral education in the school.

Pupils learn about Catholic morality both by being taught what the Church teaches and by the attitude and actions of their teachers. Teachers in Catholic Schools regard their work as a vocation. They present the love and wisdom of God to their pupils by the way that they live as well as by what they say. They seek their task and privilege as that of passing on the living Christ to their pupils.

We can help pupils to develop morally through the love and message of Jesus. This message is summed up in the word "love" and is at the heart of the Gospel. Love is not an empty concept but rather it is a challenging way of life.

Jesus shows us the way to love through the commandments, the beatitudes, the Cardinal virtues of courage, self-control, wisdom and justice and the Theological virtues of faith, hope and love and responsibility.

Although separate to Catholic teaching, we are also mindful of British Values and how these also develop morality:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

Morality is not presented simply as a set of rules or arbitrary commands, but as a call to personal growth in the light of our nature as images of God. By being responsible and by choosing rightly we believe that each person grows onto the kind of person he/she is intended to be, through his/her own free acts. We make ourselves into certain kinds of persons through what we choose. We believe that the good choices we make gradually transform us into people fit for heaven.

The school plays an important part in moral development. We try to deal consistently with situations. Encouragement and praise is positive reinforcement when good and moral actions are evident in the pupils.

An atmosphere of love, respect for others, sympathy and forgiveness contribute to the children's self-confidence and self-acceptance and develops their capacity to relate to others and God.

School discipline and rules, and the way in which they are enforced, aims to be in keeping with the Catholic understanding that one should hate the sin and love the sinner.

Throughout the school pupils are helped to develop the moral qualities of self-discipline, perseverance, determination, patience, fair play and consideration for others. We emphasise the importance of truth and trustworthiness.

As the pupils get older they are given increasing opportunities for independent learning in situations where they have to be trusted. This enables them to discover the consequences of their choices for themselves and others and to realise that they are responsible for their own actions.

Catholic School Pupil Profile

Along with the majority of other schools in the Diocese, we follow the Catholic School Pupil Profile which is rooted in Jesuit values. There are eight pairs of virtues, the Gospel virtues, of which some are able to help children become better at learning and others to help them lead better, happier and more fulfilled lives. Each half term, we focus on one set of virtues and what they mean in our lives. The sets of virtues are:

- Curious and Active
- Intentional and Prophetic
- Grateful and Generous
- Attentive and Discerning
- Compassionate and Loving
- Faith-filled and Hopeful
- Eloquent and Truthful

- Learned and Wise

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils are encouraged to examine their responsibilities and influences not only on the school community but also in their families, the parish community and the local and wider community. They are encouraged to use their skills, talents and gifts, whatever they are, for the good of others.

VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vocational development enables our pupils to have a profound understanding of what it means to have a vocation and to be able to joyfully offer their gifts in the service of others. It is vital that we provide the pupils with models of service and commitment; to learn from people of the past and people of the present who provide examples of lives inspired by and committed to following in Jesus' footsteps.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Cultural diversity is welcomed and positively fostered in our school. Teachers show that they value the special talents and achievements of pupils from ethnic minorities and ensure that their expectations of these pupils are the same for other pupils in their care. This is based on the example of Jesus who took active measures to break down, or transcend, the religious and cultural barriers so deeply entrenched between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Cultural development is not just to be developed within RE teaching as it involves the whole curriculum as well as the "hidden curriculum", staff and governor attitudes and the ethos of the school.

During this summer term, the whole school community takes part in a range of workshops, visits to places of worship and celebrations to learn more about our own faith and other religions.

The school is continuing to expand its wide range of resources for RE including examples of art and a range of artefacts from different parts of the world and different periods in history.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHING (CST)

We feel that it is important to consider the needs of our local community, and local charities are always welcome in the school to talk to the children about their work and to involve them in fundraising activities. At Harvest Time we collect food for local people in need. We have fund raising events throughout the year to support the work of the Father Hudson Society, CAFOD and other charities, some of which visit our school to speak to the children about their work. At Christmas time the children are involved in the Birmingham Irish Association Christmas Toy Appeal. Moreover, in our teaching, learning and other faith-related activities within school, CST is threaded throughout.

The model we base our CST is that developed by CAFOD. CST is rooted in Scripture, formed by the wisdom of Church leaders, and influenced by grassroots movements. It is our moral compass, guiding us on how to live out our faith in the world. Our faith calls us to love God and to love our neighbours in every situation, especially our sisters and brothers living in poverty. Following in the footsteps of Christ, we hope to make present in our unjust and broken world, the justice, love, and peace of God. Modern Catholic social teaching is said to have originated in 1891 with the encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*. Since then, a wealth of teaching continues to give new life to the Scriptures and shape the Church's response to our modern world.

From these Catholic social teaching documents and encyclicals are derived seven core principles as follows:

1. Dignity of the Human Person
2. Family and Community
3. Solidarity and the Common Good
4. Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
5. Rights and Responsibilities
6. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
7. Stewardship of God's Creation

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The fair and equal treatment of all individuals irrelevant of race, creed, disability or gender, are integral to the Gospels' Revelations and the Church's message and is central to our school mission statement.

All children are given equal access to the Religious Education curriculum, promoting their understanding to their full potential. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed to try to meet all children's different needs e.g. whole class, group, pair and individual work, also investigative, closed and open-ended activities.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

At St Jude's School we aim to look at way of further developing the theological and professional expertise of all our teachers. Our school belongs to the Birmingham Primary Catholic Partnership, which organises a variety of Religious Education inset for primary teachers. Where appropriate, joint staff meetings are held with our link 'Tolkien' primary school.

GOVERNING BODY

RE is always a key part of the School Development Plan, and is reported upon termly as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors. In addition, the RE Subject Leader reports back to the Governing Body once a year. Governors are also invited to join with other members of the whole school community in the celebration of a Commitment Mass at the beginning of the academic year and attend INSET Days relating to the Catholic Life of the School. One member of the governing body has the role of RE Link Governor and meets regularly with the Head Teacher and RE Subject Leader. The RE Link Governor is involved in the monitoring of pupils' work and lesson observations. The RE Link Governor also takes part in Class liturgies and works with class teachers to offer support in delivering some elements of the 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' which are linked to groups within our parish community.

LINKS WITH PARENTS

Celebrations and events related to the Catholic Life of our school are shared in school newsletters and published on the school website. Parents and families are regularly invited to join the school community in celebrations, mass and fundraising activities. Parents of children in Sacramental year groups are also invited to Sacramental Preparation and Commitment Masses as part of the Sacramental Preparation Programme. Parents and families also support the school in being able to offer an extensive range of educational visits to various places of worship.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The assessment of individual pupils in RE is the responsibility of the class teacher. Teachers report to parents via consultations in the Autumn and Spring Terms and by a written report at the end of the school year. School follows the RE Department's guidance with regard to assessment against national standards.

Because of the large number of topics contained within the strategy, it is not possible to assess each child on each unit. Therefore a programme of assessments has been devised focussing on one of the 4 strands on a rolling programme over 4 years. As a result, comparisons across the whole school can be made; progression by year groups can be monitored. Assessment sheets have been provided for each year group and have been taken from the RE website.

The monitoring of assessment is the responsibility of the RE Subject Leader and the Headteacher who also:

- Support colleagues in their teaching by keeping them informed about current developments in RE and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject
- Purchase and organise resources
- Uses regular subject leader time to review evidence of children's work and to observe RE lessons across the school
- Set whole school themed targets for each academic year;
- Give Governors an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in RE and indicates any areas for improvement;
- Work with the parish priest and other parish schools to organise whole school/parish masses and celebrations as well as sacramental programme.

Teachers use a range of methods to inform them of children's understanding and to inform weekly planning. These methods include discussion, questions, marking and observation.

Marking pupils work in an encouraging way but also to extend learning is an important part of our school procedures.

MONITORING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Religious Education leader and Headteacher will be responsible for:

- reviewing samples of pupils' work across the age and ability range.
- monitoring and evaluating medium and short term planning
- observing lessons and undertaking Learning Walks
- conducting pupil interviews
- monitoring prayer areas and display using the diocesan proforma
- analysing outcomes from end of unit class assessment sheets, including significant groups and levels of attainment work samples
- analysing outcomes of Reception baseline assessment
- monitoring Catholic Life provision and completing a school portfolio

All outcomes from the monitoring are discussed and targets set in order to raise standards.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The RE Subject Leader and Headteacher will monitor the implementation of the policy. All staff will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy in helping to improve standards of teaching and learning. This evaluation will inform the process for reviewing this policy.

Head Teacher SignatureDate

Reviewed by the Governing Body: 3rd April 2025

Signed: Chair of Governors