



St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Mission Statement

Our mission is to serve the children of St. Vincent's as we grow together: building and deepening a community of faith and learning safe in the love of Christ. By walking in the footsteps of Jesus every child, irrespective of culture, belief or race, will be treated as the unique person they are and, through respect and nurturing, will gain a love of learning and reach their individual potential.

Inspired by Our Lord's teaching and Catholic tradition we will provide a challenging and enriching curriculum for our children. Knowledge, raised aspiration, respect and value of self and others will equip them to move with growing confidence onto the next stage of life.

Rationale:

"Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject above many, but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life."

(Bishop's Conference England and Wales, 1988).

We believe that Religious Education seeks to encourage children to come to an understanding and appreciation of the religious dimensions of the questions about life dignity and purpose.

"The Catholic vision of education promotes the dignity and freedom of every person as created in the image and likeness of God. This vision inspires and encourages the beliefs and values, which are lived out in the daily life of the Catholic school. Within this vision, religious education is very much a journey of formation involving every member of the school community, together with the pupil's family and parish community. It is in this context that the three elements of religious education, catechesis and evangelisation co-exist, providing mutual support and reinforcement."

For all children, religious education is a proper subject in its own right in the School's curriculum. It is a rigorous academic discipline, and as such it is to be taught, developed, and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject. For those already engaged on the journey of faith religious education will be catechesis and for some children religious education will be evangelisation, the first opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel."

(Curriculum Directory p10)

Curriculum religious education in catholic Schools aims to promote:

- Knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life;
- Knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose;
- The skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practise

The objectives of curriculum religious education in Catholic schools are:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ, of the church, and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold;
- To develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and of the vital relationship between faith and life, life and faith;
- To encourage study, investigation and reflection by the pupils;
- To develop appropriate skills: for example, the ability to listen; think critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically; to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively; to make informal judgements;
- To foster appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth; respect for the views of others; awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural, multi faith society.

The outcome of religious education is religiously literate young people who have knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Religious Education in the Classroom

Since the total curriculum in our school is based on the values of the Gospel and because we see all education as revealing the mystery of God, we recognise two aspects of religious education in the school:

- Implicit, or unstructured religious education – those opportunities which arise in the course of the school day to lead pupils through curriculum content or through relationships to a religious understanding of their implications. It is the policy of this school to use such opportunities as they arise.
- Explicit, or curriculum religious education - those timetabled or planned periods of time given to an explicit consideration of religious education in the classroom. It is the policy of this school to give 10% of the timetable to curriculum religious education.

Programmes of Study

To fulfil our aims and objectives we use the Come and See programme in order to adhere to the Curriculum Directory, as prescribed by the Diocese. We have adopted and will continue to use the planning sheets provided by the North Eastern Diocese as part of the Come and See programme. We also use resources and materials from the Come and See website and scripture through music with John Burland.

Teaching Process

Assessment, Recording and Reporting Religious Education

A full assessment programme is coordinated in school and will follow the direct of travel recommended by the Diocese. The 2018 Standards for RE are used from EYFs to Year 6.

Rationale

We recognise that assessment, recording and reporting are a natural part of teaching and are integral to the learning process. They are continuous processes requiring close partnership between teachers and pupils, and the involvement of others as appropriate. They are the responsibility of all teachers.

We believe that assessment is at the heart of good teaching and does not require highly complex procedures. We further believe that the unnecessary recording of assessments can stifle the creativity of the teacher and thereby hamper the learning process.

We therefore acknowledge that our approach to the assessment, recording and reporting of religious education will be based on the guidelines and timetable suggested by Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan Religious Education advisory service. Assessment will be the responsibility of all teaching staff and monitored by the co-ordinator and head teacher. All assessment will recognise the innate dignity and worth of each individual.

Guidelines

Good assessment strategies will be rooted in effective planning.

All planning will take account of the concepts, attitudes, skills and knowledge highlighted in the 'Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools' and inline with the new arrangements for assessing AT1, AT2 and AT3 strands of study as part of the Age Related Standards in Religious Education.

- Teachers' long, medium and where appropriate short term planning will be a collaborative process, which assists continuity and progression.
- All teachers will use the agreed planning document.

- All planning will identify assessment strategies for each topic, which will be integrated into our teaching.
- Marking pupil's work will be approached positively and constructively so that affirms and celebrates success and encourages future learning.
- Recording will recognise the distinct nature of religious education.
- Records will provide evidence of what pupils have done and can achieve.
- Children will complete pupil evaluations at the end of each topic.

The process of recording will enable us to provide evidence of the quality of teaching and learning for ourselves as teachers and governors and for parents and inspectors

Reporting in Religious Education will provide feedback to pupils on their achievement and progress. It will be a means of information for parents, which contribute to our partnership with them.

Prayer & Worship

Our school is proud to be part of the Roman Catholic Community in the Parish of Our Lady and St. Vincent. Our school has a distinctive character because everything we do is based on the values of the Gospels. The purpose of our community is to recognise the worth and dignity of all and to fully develop the talents of each person.

We recognise that each individual here is on a personal journey of faith. Participation in worship and opportunities for prayer are essential for spiritual development and for deepening our relationship with God.

We believe that prayer and worship in our school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with Him. We therefore seek to ensure that collective worship is a learning experience as well as a spiritual encounter to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

We frame these values within the 5Ws:

Welcome: How we welcome people into our school community.

Welfare: How we care for the well-being of our school community.

Witness: How we reflect the teachings of the Bible through the way in which we live our lives.

Word: How we use the Word of God as the template for life and learning.

Worship: How we confidently and enthusiastically proclaim and explore our faith.

Our Aim:

To contribute to pupils' faith and spiritual development so they can:

- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration whilst becoming more aware of the 'big questions' of life.
- Understand the importance of prayer and worship in daily living and how it helps us to grow in our relationships with God and with others.
- Experience prayer and worship to give them a real sense of being valued members of their Catholic community.
- Recognise a sense of the sacred and holy.
- Distinguish between the different opportunities for prayer and worship and to celebrate together the feasts and seasons of the Christian calendar, with particular emphasis on Advent, Christmas, Lent Easter and Pentecost.
- Have opportunities for worship, and to use prayer and worship as a form of celebration.
- Ensure familiarity with prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.
- Develop reverence and respect through the experience of liturgy, scripture and prayer.
- Develop an understanding of the use of scripture used by the worshipping community especially the importance of the Gospel.
- Appreciate the distinctive nature of the importance of the celebration of the Mass as central to the life of the Catholic community.
- Experience prayer and worship to give them a real sense of being valued members of their Catholic community.
- Build upon the home/school/parish link by including members of the home and parish families in our collective worship whenever possible.
- To gain awareness and understanding of the wider Christian family beyond the school/parish community.

We will achieve this by:

Reflecting on moral and social issues.

Becoming more aware of and respecting the nature and needs of others.

Developing inclusive attitudes of tolerance and acceptance of difference.

Celebrating work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum.

Contributing to the school community, and the wider community.

Developing and reflecting on the values of the school.

Celebrating our links with other schools locally and across the World.

Celebrating and giving thanks for God's world

Listening to stories from other faiths and learn about their significance.

Developing awareness of how other faiths worship.

Teaching and Learning:

Worship contributes to the general development of pupils. Opportunities will be provided for pupils to develop leadership skills, performance skills, singing ability, speaking in groups and in front of others, and to participate in group preparation and presentation. Keeping worship simple promotes dignity and respect, can enhance the celebration and enables all present to engage and feel involved.

Prayer

Children have a natural aptitude for prayer. They are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world around them. The whole of creation is new to them and their days are full of endless exploration and discovery.

In the early years, the main task of the teacher is to recognise this for what it is – the beginnings of prayer – and to create and maintain an environment where this is fostered and developed: rooms full of colour, sounds, shapes, natural objects, flowers, plants, sand and water.

Adults who themselves respond in joy and thanks, sorrow and love, to the world around them, to each other and to the children, create a focal point for prayer during each topic.

Organisation of Prayer and Worship at our School

Prayers are said by each class at the start and at the end of the day and before lunch. Prayer Journals are used to record the children's personal prayers. We have the following collective prayers in school:

Mon – Whole school 'Statement to Live By' collective worship

Tues – Whole school Collective Worship with hymns

Wed – Rec & Key Stage 1 Collective Worship

Thurs – Key Stage 2 Collective Worship

Friday – Whole school Celebration Assembly
Or Whole School Prayer Liturgy

Mass is celebrated by the whole school at least twice per term. School joins members of the parish to worship together. We also visit church regularly for other services such as Stations of the Cross and Reconciliation.

Teachers plan non-Eucharistic liturgies as part of their RE curriculum, usually at the end of each RE curriculum unit.

Each class has a designated area for prayer and worship which is updated regularly. Each class also has a display board which features curriculum RE.

Year 6 pupils guide younger children through the Stations of the Cross in the Prayer Garden during Lent and prayer groups focusing on The Rosary run in May.

An area in our main entrance is designated for prayer and worship and other areas throughout the school are similarly designated. These include prayer stations and our outdoor Sacred Space, The Prayer Garden.

We encourage home-school prayer links where ever possible. Specifically, we have Lenten and Advent Prayer Bags which go home with each child in the class in turn to be shared at home.

The format for Collective Worship will include:

Gathering – How we come together, the setting, the environment and the atmosphere (quiet music, a visual focus for prayer and reflection such as icons, art and lighter candles.)

Proclaiming – Every act of worship will be centred on at least one text from the Bible. The Word of God will be proclaimed from the Bible or Lectionary.

Responding – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. This may vary (music, singing, drama, poetry, reflection or silence).

Going Forth – Children and adults will take something away from the experience of worship and be encouraged to apply it in their daily lives.

Forms and Styles of Prayer

Children are introduced to a variety of forms and styles of prayer:

Praying the psalms: 'I thank you for the wonder of my being' (Psalm 139)

Traditional prayers: Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary

Repetitive prayer (Mantra): 'Jesus, I Love you', or similar phrase repeated several times, slowly perhaps with background music, Taize style.

Litany/Bidding Prayers: Prayers with repeated response e.g. Pray for us/ Thanks be to God.

Meditation: Scripture reflection with use of imagination and imagery.

Bodily Prayer: Raising hands in praise, dancing, genuflecting

Prayer of the heart: Experience stillness and silence in a place of calm to listen to God and focus on creation, 'Be still and know that I am God.'

Contemplation: Looking at trees, a sunset, large picture on Interactive whiteboard, icon, and display of work from topic.

Gestures: Sign of the cross, sign of peace.

Hymns: Traditional and modern hymns in keeping with liturgical cycle Hymn practise takes place weekly and hymns are explained to the children

Prayer services and liturgies: Formal prayer using holy water, candles, etc. When in school the children have the annual Ash Wednesday service and Key Stage 2 Penitential Services are also held in Lent.

Celebrations: Children attend Mass each half term on appropriate Holy days and feast days. The masses are held in the school hall or in church. There is also a celebration of achievement every Friday during our Celebration Assembly.

Visual Resources for prayer: There are pictures available on the internet. Staff also create a visual focal point for prayer in their classrooms.

Prayer of silence / meditation: Use of visual/focal points (candle, artefact or picture) and the use of background music are an important part of creating an environment for prayer.

Spontaneous Prayer: This is encouraged during collective worship and circle prayer. Children are encouraged to use their own words to express their thoughts and feelings and the session finishes with offering these prayers and thoughts to God.

Prayer through gesture or action: The children are encouraged to make the sign of the cross carefully. We make the usual sign of the cross in collective worship and at Mass. Actions to prayers are sometimes used when praying through singing and words (For example The clapping Gloria is used occasionally in Mass).

Petition: Prayers of intercession (Bidding prayers) bringing the prayers of the community before God. Praying for people, and world/local/Parish events.

Singing: Praying through music and words of the hymns – praying through understanding the meaning and reason for the hymn.

Prayers for each Age Group

All of which are relevant to the age and experience of the children. The children pray each day, either within collective classroom settings or in collective group acts of worship held in the hall.

EYFS Morning Prayer, dinnertime prayer, evening prayer.

Key Stage 1 Morning Prayer, dinnertime prayer, evening prayer, Hail Mary, Our Father, School Prayer

Key Stage 2 Morning Prayer, dinnertime prayer, evening prayer, Hail Mary, Eternal Rest, Our Father, School Prayer, Act of Contrition and Hail Holy Queen. These prayers are at the end of this policy in Appendix 1.

Prayer Focuses

Each class has a prayer focus which is changed to reflect the present liturgical colour and RE Topic. The class prayer area is the focal point for silent, spoken and written prayers.

Staff are encouraged to keep the prayer tables attractive and tidy and emphasis is on quality and appropriateness of the artefacts and pictures. Quality rather than quantity is emphasised as often the simplest picture or artefact can convey a powerful message.

Special Times of the Year

Advent: The appropriate purple colour is used and teachers are encouraged to display an Advent Wreath, crib and Advent calendar. The final collective worship of the year celebrates Jesus' birth with the lighting of the Christmas candle.

Lent: The appropriate purple colour is used. The palm cross is also displayed. During Lent the children also visit church to look at and reflect on The Stations Of The Cross.

Holy Week – Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: This is marked by reflection on the Stations of the Cross.

Easter Sunday: Colour for Easter Sunday is white.

Ascension Thursday: The prayer focus for this is a Picture Bible opened at the appropriate place, a candle and crucifix. White is used.

Pentecost: Remembering the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, celebrations of the Holy Spirit are marked with a red coloured cloth.

Corpus Christi – The Body of Christ: This remembers the gift of Jesus through the Eucharist and how Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist.

All Saints and All Souls / Remembrance Day: During November a display remembers those who have gone before us to heaven. Poppies are displayed on a white prayer table with a candle. During November we focus on Prayer for the Deceased 'May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen'

Honouring Our Lady: October – The Month of the Rosary; May – Month of Mary

October and May are celebrated as the months of the Rosary. Lunch-time Rosary in the Prayer Garden is scheduled.

Sacramental Programme

In school we use the Sacramental celebrations of Reconciliation and First Communion as a focus for worship. Prayer and assemblies are used to pray for the children who are involved in the programme. It is also a reminder to other children about the importance and relevance of the Sacraments.

Children and parents attend meetings in the Parish Rooms and at church as part of the Sacramental Programme. They also complete work in class as part of their preparation. Catechists work with the children at the after-school sessions and offer their prayers and support.

Staff Prayer

“One of the distinctive features of the Catholic school is that it proclaims itself as a faith community ... as part of their life as a faith community, Catholic schools are committed to communal prayer. There is an expectation that all teachers will play an active part in this.”

All meetings in school begin with a prayer or reflection providing an opportunity to be still and quiet at the end of the day.

Staff follow the timetable and programme set for collective worship and school assemblies organised at the beginning of each term.

Parental Involvement

Parents are invited to attend class assemblies and collective worship. They attend Masses with the children as well as the other liturgies celebrated in the school. Parents also attend the Christmas, Easter and end of year collective worship events.

They are encouraged to pray and worship at home with their children, for example with our Class Lenten and Advent Prayer Bags.

Our weekly newsletter which goes home with all pupils shares the themes for coming collective worship and all faith-life events.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by governors every three years, or earlier if required.

SCHOOL PRAYERS:

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Lord, bless our school so that by working together and playing together
We may learn to serve you and love one another. Amen

MORNING PRAYER:

O my God, we love you. You're with me night and day. I want to love you always in all
I do and all I say. I'll try to please you Father. Bless me through the day. Amen

GRACE BEFORE MEALS:

Bless us Oh God as we sit together. Bless the food we eat today. Bless the hands that
make the food. Bless us, Oh God. Amen.

EVENING PRAYERS:

God our Father we come to say thank you for your love today. Thank you for my family
and all the friends you give to me. Guard me in the dark of night and in the morning
send your light. Amen.

ACT OF CONTRITION:

Oh my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and by the help of your
grace, I will try not to sin again.

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN:

Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy; hail our life, our sweetness and our hope! To you do
we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and
weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy
towards us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Oh Clement, oh loving, oh sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, oh holy Mother of God. That
we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in July 2023 or at an earlier date if deemed necessary.