



**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

*“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”*

*Proverbs 22:6*

**Our Mission Statement is:**

**‘Follow me, I will make you fishers of men’**

At Saint John Fisher we grow as one grateful family, in knowledge, friendship, faith and love.

**Our virtues;**

Love, love of learning, gratitude and holiness

**Rationale**

Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Nottingham is required to teach, develop and resource Religious Education with the same commitment as any other core subject;

*‘The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.’*

Religious Education Curriculum directory for Catholic Schools (CES 2012)

**Our approach**

An effective approach to Religious Education in St. John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy should:

- Recognise that we are acting as an instrument of the Catholic Church helping children to understand, deepen and appreciate our Catholic beliefs and practices.
- Involve a three-way partnership between home, school and parish to support each child’s unique journey of faith.
- Help each child to understand about the significance and dignity of life which is reflected throughout the curriculum.
- Explore our specific Catholic faith and beliefs as one of the Christian traditions, to encounter other world religions and encourage children to understand, respect and be tolerant of other beliefs.
- Be child centred and accessible to all children, taking account of their family backgrounds.
- Take Christ as our model and ensuring, as He did, that in practice our daily lives reflect the Gospel values for our pupils.
- Involve adults living and sharing their faith experiences with the children.

## **Curriculum Aims**

- To ensure Religious Education has a high status in school in line with other core subjects and that it contains the same academic demands and challenges.
- To demonstrate continuity and progression throughout both key stages by providing appropriate knowledge and planning to develop each pupil's understanding and skills.
- Religious Education is to be relevant to the child's interests and experiences.
- To provide opportunities for the children to reflect on, express and evaluate their religious and spiritual experiences.
- To give understanding of our own and other cultures in our multicultural society.
- To set aside a time for worship to develop one's spirituality.

## **The RE Programme: Come and See**

Religious Education is at the centre of all we do here at St John Fisher. It can be seen throughout our school, not just in our RE lessons, but through our behaviour towards one another, Prayer and Liturgy, our links with our local parish and our Catholic Life and Mission.

RE is a core subject and, in line with the Bishops' Conference recommendations, 10% of teaching time is allocated to RE.

The 'Come and See' programme is developed through three themes based on the documents of the Second Vatican Council, which are gradually explored each time at greater depths. They are Church, Sacrament and Christian living.

The themes occur in each season time and each theme gradually builds on the understanding of the previous theme.

### **Advent term:**

- Our church – family
- Baptism and Confirmation – Belonging
- Advent and Christmas - loving

### **Lent term:**

- Local church – community
- Eucharist – relating
- Lent and Easter - giving

### **Pentecost term:**

- Pentecost - serving,
- Reconciliation - inter-relating
- Universal Church - world.

All topics are rooted in the children's own experiences in life and our teachers then extend the learning further through reflection and purposeful activities. We look at scripture passages that match the topic being covered and unpick the meaning and talk about how we can use this Scripture to enhance our lives and help us to be better Christians.

This is delivered through a process recognised in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

## SEARCH-EXPLORE

This is the introduction to the topic where the children's life experience is explored, the questions it raises are wondered at, shared, investigated and their significance reflected upon. [This is often sent home as a homework task.](#)

## REVELATION-REVEAL

This is the heart of the programme where knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith is revealed through the Word, in Scripture, Tradition, doctrine, prayers, rites and Christian living.

## RESPONSE-RESPOND

This is where the learning is assimilated, celebrated and responded to in daily life.

Each term parents receive an information sheet that details what the pupils will cover as well as some suggested activities that can be done at home to support pupils.

## **Planning**

We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in two phases; long-term and short-term. The long-term planning maps the RE topics studied in each term by each year group. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group, using the Come and See primary map. Class teachers write short-term topic plans using the template provided in addition to planning guidance from the RE Advisor at Nottingham Diocese Education Service. Planning must outline specific learning objectives and expected outcomes linked to the 'driver words' suitable for each year group (*Nottingham Diocese Education Service End of Year Expectations Document, 2019*). Planning is tailored to the specific needs of the children so that the learning is accessible and engaging.

## OTHER FAITHS

During the academic year, two other faiths are also taught; during the autumn term we learn about Judaism and during the summer term we discover more about another world religion such as: Islam, Sikhism or Hinduism.

## **Delivery**

In order to aid delivery of the Come and See programme, the following measures have been undertaken by the school to manage and develop the programme.

1. Spiritual experience through prayer.
  - Set prayers - These are used in school life in the classroom, assemblies and services. Grace before and after meals to be said in the classrooms.
  - Free prayers – i.e. expressing what one feels without set format of words, becoming completely open ended. This can be fostered by composing prayers for Mass, class assemblies, meditations, [personal prayer](#) or sharing innermost thoughts in circle time or class religion work.
  - Regular Mass in school (class/whole school) - This is based on the children's liturgy which can be easily understood. The readings are prepared and read by the children as is the penitential rite and bidding prayers. The offertory is taken by the children.
  - All children participate in the Mass responses and singing of the hymns. Those children wishing to receive the Eucharist are encouraged to do so in a reverent manner [or they can receive God's blessing of not receiving communion.](#)
  - Services – Advent and Lent Penitential services, Stations of the Cross and May Assembly

- Meditation, [Lectio Divina](#) and [personal prayer](#) are included into normal class routines
  - Religious artefacts are available.
  - Adoration – [children have the opportunity to share together in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.](#)
2. Knowledge and experience of Catholic beliefs and way of life.
- Teachers as role models - The way in which we deal with each other is a concrete example of Christ's love at work.
  - Specific explanations of feasts and liturgical services.
  - Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and the Eucharist is undertaken in year 4. It is necessary to provide opportunities throughout the religious programme to support the instruction given in the parish.
3. Christian and Catholic attitude to life.
- Development of a moral code based on respect for God and each other.
  - Behaviour policy which is based on preferring to promote and emphasise positive behaviour and so fostering each child's self esteem.
  - Participation in festivals, services and Masses.
  - Parents and staff having closer ties through the use of [Class Dojo](#) to express concerns and share joys which are not necessarily academically based. Building up links with parents is encouraged through our open-door policy; pre-school parents' meeting; induction days; school parents' evenings; parental helpers in school; parents sharing end of topic celebrations; school links with PTA; invitations to parents to class assemblies, [prayer and liturgy](#) and school functions.
  - Use of merit certificates to celebrate achievements with everyone. This is intended to cover personal, social, emotional as well as academic achievement. This achievement is directly related to the individual child.
  - Planning of the RE programme ensures that all children have equal access to the curriculum and lessons are presented in a variety of ways to make provision for the More Able as well as those with Special Educational Needs.
  - ~~Assemblies based on religious themes – Usually these will be linked to the topic being studied in RE and if possible related to topics being studied in the wider curriculum, in order to extend every child's knowledge and deeper appreciation and experience.~~
  - Working for others beyond our immediate circle through working to help charities, eg. CAFOD, Water Aid, Help the Homeless, natural disasters etc,

### **Supporting Non-Catholic Teachers**

Whatever teacher's own faith, background or views - they are invited and encouraged to the school's whole ethos. By virtue of the fact the teacher was appointed, they are deemed to be someone who can enrich the faith life of the school and the community. We expect all our teachers to do everything with full engagement, knowing that they have a significant contribution to make in every aspect of the school's life - including its faith life. We will support them in every way possible to do so.

It is important that all teachers feel confident teaching curriculum RE, [Prayer and Liturgy](#) and understand the Catholic ethos [and Mission](#) of our school. The school will provide induction sessions with the RE subject Lead and previous year group teacher (if available before starting date), looking at the planning, assessment and implementation of the 'Come and See' Programme, planning and evaluation of [Prayer and Liturgy](#) in class and how to ensure the Catholic ethos, [Mission Statement and school virtues](#) run throughout, and is central to, daily activities in school.

The RE subject lead will also run regular INSET sessions in school on planning and expectations for curriculum RE, work in books, assessment and moderation of work.

In addition to this, teachers will have access to several diocesan and CMAT lead RE courses.

The Diocese of Nottingham Courses include:

- New to Catholic Schools
- New to 'Come and See'
- Planning for their year group
- Assessment and Moderation in RE
- Collective Worship planning and evaluating
- RSHE
- ECT induction programme

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

Assessment takes place informally at the end of each RE topic and refers to what should be assessed through self-assessment and teacher assessment using the 'I can Statements'. One formal assessment per term assesses the Attainment Targets in RE in line with the guidance from the diocese. Each child's progress is recorded in their RE book. Progress Records and a written report is sent to parents in the Summer Term.

Pupil Progress meetings are held termly with the Head Teacher. Children may be identified and targeted thereafter to ensure at least expected progress is made in RE. Summative assessment are recorded and monitored using Target Tracker. This data may also be accessed by St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT). Children deemed to be making less-than-expected progress will be monitored more closely.

A baseline assessment is carried out at the beginning of Reception to help find out what basic Catholic knowledge, vocabulary and experiences children have on entry to the school. Throughout Reception, the teacher, and the school 'add value' (teach the children basic Catholic knowledge, vocabulary and offer a Catholic context to give some experience of Catholic life). The baseline is then carried out at the end of Reception to demonstrate the gains in knowledge and understanding (value-added).

### **Monitoring**

The teaching and learning in RE is monitored by the RE subject lead through lesson observation, work sampling and scrutiny of planning. Written records of these are kept by the RE subject lead and shared with the Headteacher and class teachers **and governors**. The RE governor meets with the co-ordinator to be kept up to date with progress in the subject and termly updates are shared with the governors.

**Name:** Mrs Ruth Moloney **Role:** RE Subject Leader/Deputy Head Teacher

**Signature:** *R Moloney* Date: 23.01.23

**Head Teacher:** Mr Anthony Gallagher **Signature:** *A Gallagher*

**Date:** 23.01.23

**Date of next review:** January 2026