

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School



Love, Grow, Believe, Achieve!

Religious Education Policy

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Love, Grow, Believe, Achieve!



Together in Jesus' footsteps, we learn, love
and grow to be the best that we can be!

Our school is a place where:



We are growing to **be like Jesus**.



Well-being is at our heart.



We are learning to be **independent thinkers**.



Everyone is **included**.



We celebrate our **diversity**.



We **give** in service of others.

For the years 2024 – 25, St. Mary’s will begin to use the new Religious Education Directory (RED) ‘To Know You More Clearly’ in all year groups. Year 6 pupils will be using the Year 5 RED for this academic year only and from 2025-26 will use the Year 6 RED as directed.

A ‘school is not enclosed within boundaries and schedules; it goes beyond them, it offers an educational program for the whole of life.’ (Pope Francis, March 23)

Catholic education strives to offer students every opportunity to develop their talents to the full through their academic work, spiritual worship and extracurricular activities. Within Catholic schools, each individual is seen as made in God’s image and loved by Him. (CES)

Rationale of Religious Education

- Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the Church. ‘At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education.’¹
- Religious Education is ‘the core of the core curriculum.’ ‘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.’¹
- Religious Education is the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ and is a rigorous academic subject in its own right. Religious Education is regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines.² As such it is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.
“Excellence in religious education, then, will be characterised by a clarity of succinct religious learning objectives and of key content, by appropriate methodologies, rigour, richness of resources, achievement of identified outcomes and accurate methods of assessment. Classroom RE will be a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material.”³
- Whilst evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school for some pupils, 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 rigour as other curriculum subjects.
- The outcome of Classroom Religious Education as stated in the Religious Education Directory 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”.⁴

¹ *Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 4*

² *Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.3*

³ *Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 7*

⁴ *Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.6*

The Aims of Religious Education

The Aims of Religious Education as stated in the RED, 2023 are:

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;
2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

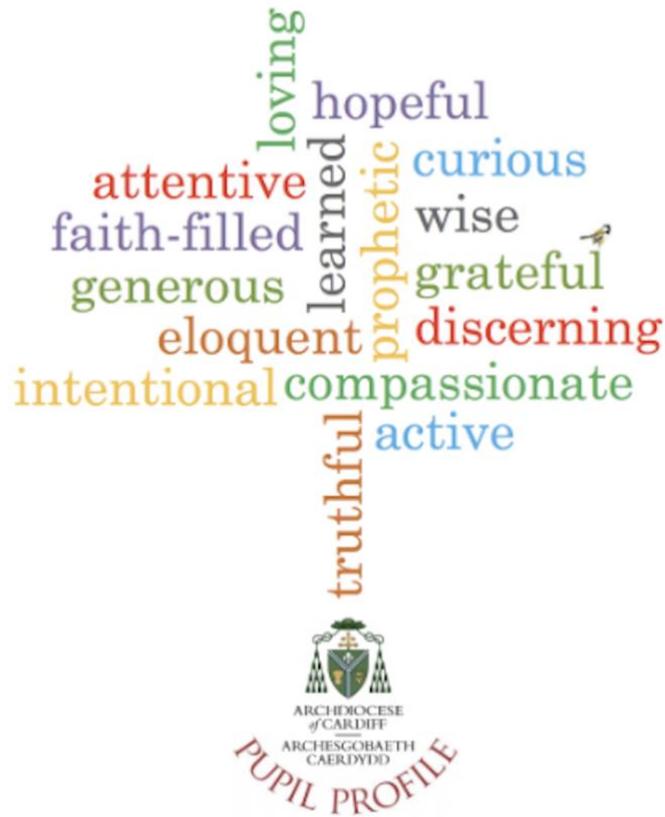
Objectives

Our objectives are:

- To communicate the Christian message in a manner appropriate to the age and life experience of the children, and to 'live' our Mission Statement;
- To provide opportunities for experiencing prayer, to pray spontaneously, to teach the formal prayers of the church and to encourage children to pray liturgically, preparing them for the celebration of Mass;
- To encourage home, school and parish links through involvement in the Mass, feasts, festivals and assemblies;
- To introduce the children to the Liturgical Year;
- To develop pupils' ability to form relationships and be part of a living and loving community;
- To promote and encourage among pupils active, committed participation of the life of the church and community
- To follow the Religious Education Directory (RED) 'To Know You More Clearly';
- To focus on the needs of the individual learner when delivering the RE curriculum
- To develop cross-phase links through visits and the transfer of information with our feeder high school, Mary Immaculate.

Virtues and Values

As a Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Cardiff, we have embraced the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile, which teaches the children a set of eight pairs of virtues to be internalised and cultivated - enabling them to grow in wholeness as fully rounded individuals in the image of God.



At St Mary's, the children are growing to be:

- Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and generous with their gifts, now and in the future.
- Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and discerning about the choices they make and the effects of those choices.
- Compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and loving by their just actions and forgiving words.
- Faith-filled in their beliefs and hopeful for the future.
- Eloquent and truthful in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.
- Learned, finding God in all things; and wise in the ways they use their learning for the common good.
- Curious about everything; and active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.
- Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and prophetic in the example they set to others.

Religious Education - Curriculum Time Allocation

10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This does not include Prayer and Liturgy.

Teaching and Learning

Catholicity is not only evident in our religious lessons and in prayer and liturgy, but permeates the whole curriculum. Religious Education is fundamental to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils. In this respect our Religious Education enables our children to:

- develop a sense of awe and wonder towards God's creation;
- develop a moral awareness as they reflect on the human condition and their own and others' lives in the light of the Christian message, and
- appreciate the dignity of human existence within the immediate school, parish and local community and in the wider world.

Programme of Study

To fulfil the above aims and to address the areas of study outlined in the Religious Education Directory, 2023 – 'To know you more clearly' - St Mary's has been working with the Cardiff and the Vale Catholic schools to create planning and guidance for the new RED.

The programme of study has 4 structural elements:

Knowledge lenses - set out the object of study for pupils; they indicate what should be known by the end of each age-phase.

Ways of knowing - set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey.

Expected outcomes - are a synthesis of the content outlined in the knowledge lenses and the skills described in the ways of knowing.

Curriculum branches - are the way this programme of study presents its model curriculum. The model curriculum presents the expected outcomes in six curriculum branches that correspond to the six half-terms of a school year. These branches are:

1. Creation & covenant
2. Prophecy & promise
3. Galilee to Jerusalem
4. Desert to garden
5. The ends of the Earth
6. Dialogue & encounter

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.

Inclusion and Equality

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme. The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

Right of withdrawal from RE

Parents have the right of withdrawal from RE for their children.

Other Faiths

Through branch 6: Dialogue and encounter, pupils learn how Christians work together with people of different religious convictions and all people of goodwill towards the common good, respecting the dignity of all humanity. They will also encounter other pathways of belief drawing on the teaching of the Church about intercultural dialogue.

'Dialogue' and is an exemplification of the Church's teaching on the relationship between Catholicism and other Christian traditions, between Catholicism and Judaism, between Catholicism and other religions, and between Catholicism and non-religious or atheistic worldviews. It is called 'dialogue' because it focuses on the importance of dialogue as the only authentic way of living faithfully in a pluralistic world.

In 'Encounter' pupils engage in a discrete study of other faiths, religions, and worldviews, modelled on the concentric circles of *Ecclesiam Suam*. As they progress through school, pupils will study:

- Other Christian denominations
- Judaism
- Islam
- Dharmic religions and pathways
- Other religions and worldviews, including non-religious worldviews.

Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

This takes place through:

- Observation of children engaged in general tasks and activities and their contributions made to classroom lessons and display.
- Reviewing end of tasks, activities, lessons, topics;
- Teacher feedback - verbal and written comments in children's books;
- In - house moderation of children's books to ensure consistency of teacher assessment. This takes place during INSET sessions;
- Monitoring of children's books with feedback, including individual next steps and generic targets for all teachers shared at INSET;
- Listening to learners enabling the RE lead to use the children's comments to feed into school action planning;
- Monitoring of teaching and learning to share good practice;
- Monitoring of prayer and liturgy – including observations to share/model good practice;
- Recording progress and achievement;

Reporting on progress and achievement in Religious Education to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.

- Reporting on Religious Education to governors;
- Celebrating the children's successes and achievements in RE.

Management of the Subject

The headteacher, Claire Russell, and deputy headteacher, Siobhan Richards, has responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Headteacher, RE Coordinator and Link Governor. It will be updated every 2 years and shared with the FGB and staff.