

St Mary's RE Policy

Introduction

St. Mary's Primary School is dedicated to developing the uniqueness of each child and adult made in the image and likeness of God. Each day we are committed to teaching, practising and passing on and understanding of the Catholic faith to all our young people.

We maintain very close links with our local parishes and our priest, Father Martin, and deacons, play an important role in the life of our school.

Our religious education teaching is based on the 'God Matters' programme, a scheme which was written by the Diocese of Portsmouth and is now being used in many Dioceses.

The scheme promotes the following:

- The presentation of the life and teaching of Jesus and of His calling to us to follow Him, spreading the Gospel message by the example of our own lives.
- Opportunities for analysis, a critical appreciation of sources, prayer, reflection and celebration.
- Spiritual growth.
- The language of religious experience.
- An awareness and understanding of other faith communities and cultures within our society.

The 'God Matters' programme contains units of study that are closely linked to the liturgical year of the church. They are as follows; Creation, Prayer Saints and Feasts, Sacraments, Advent, Christmas, Revelation, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost and Mission. Each unit of study also includes learning about a different world religion. The skills we wish to develop are:

- Interpretation
- Reflection
- Evaluation
- Analysis
- Application
- Expression
- Investigation

Our school terms begin and end with a Mass for the whole school and there is a class Mass for every class, St Mark, St Francis and St Alban, each term. Every week the children and staff take part in a liturgy based on the Sunday reading(s), and are involved in Collective Worship in their classes.

Every term we also celebrate a more special 'Day of Faith' which is a reaching out between generations. A group of our parishioners spend the day in our school and involve the children and staff in many activities which further develop their understanding of the Catholic faith and the importance of living the life that Jesus showed to us. These days are eagerly anticipated by our children.

All parents are made fully aware of the Catholic ethos of the school. They have the right to request that their children be withdrawn from Religious Education lessons, religious activities and Collective Worship,

although in choosing to exercise this right they need to consider whether or not their choice of this school is an appropriate one.

All that happens in our school, the curriculum, behaviour and our relationships should speak to us of God's loving care for each individual involved in the school's life.

Our aims, concepts and attitudes, bear this out.

Our aims, which are directly related to our Mission Statement, are to:

- Create and maintain a safe, healthy, happy and stimulating environment based on the teachings of Jesus
- Recognise that each child is created by God and is an individual on their own unique journey of faith
- Develop Christian values and the confidence to do what is right
- Develop in children an understanding of other faith traditions

The concepts we are trying to promote are:

- Creation - the uniqueness of each one of us and our role as caretakers of the earth
- Family – school, church, local and global community
- Symbol - ritual, prayer, celebration and sacrament
- Gospel - sacred writings, parables, religious language
- Living out our beliefs and values in our daily lives

The attitude of all our staff as they go through each day will give a clear witness to pupils, parents and colleagues.

We want to encourage: humility selflessness respect
co-operation curiosity forgiveness responsibility awe & wonder
 kindness self confidence generosity tolerance honesty empathy

Knowledge and understanding of RE

The Head of RE takes responsibility for supporting those teachers of RE who are not Catholic in furthering their own understanding of the Catholic faith so that they can teach our children effectively.

Acts of Worship

The cultivation of an active prayer life for children and adults is central to our work. This aspect of school life is covered in a separate worship policy. Although the teaching of R.E. is distinct and separate to Acts of Worship, some class R.E. time can sometimes be given to helping the children to develop skills to enable them to prepare, organise and lead Acts of Worship.

Religious Education in the Classroom

To fulfil the requirements of the Curriculum Directory, we ensure that Religious Education receives ten per-cent of the total teaching time at each of the Key Stages. This is explicit curriculum RE, as distinct from liturgies and masses. Teacher use the planning set out in 'God Matters' giving the appropriate time to the Engage, Explore and Express sections of each topic.

More informal Religious Education occurs every day as opportunities arise.

Children are supported to develop their understanding of situations they might have to deal with among their peers or with adults. Showing children how to build and mend relationships in God's way is a hugely important part of our work. You will find that we also teach this within our Personal, Social, and

Health Education, (P.S.H.E.) which in our school is always underpinned by the moral teaching of the Catholic Church.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

At the end of each topic an informal assessment is carried out by the class teacher. It is important that we know how children are absorbing facts in knowledge and understanding as well as learning from religion.

One topic a year will be assessed formally and samples of work from 3 children at differing levels in each class will be kept by the RE co-ordinator.

Work done in the children's books is marked according to the school's marking policy, with particular importance placed on interactive marking and the correction of any errors of doctrine.

A large class book records our collective experiences including any involvement in Masses. We feel that this is important as many of our children only learn about the Catholic faith from each other and within the school.

The R.E. leader samples children's books and occasionally observes lessons in order to gain an overview of the current position of R.E. within the school.

Reporting to parents is carried out as part of the annual written report on the child's work and response to school life.

Displays and Focal Points

We have a focal point for prayer in each classroom and at the main entrance to the school. The focal point in the classes is appropriate to the liturgical season and incorporates the correct liturgical colour. It is distinct from other displays which may be in classrooms or around the school which can reflect the current unit of study in RE. We have a statue of Our Lady outside the school for Marian celebrations. The children are encouraged to care for the flower bed around our statue.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Religious Education Leader (currently the Consultant Head) and is evaluated and reviewed by the head of teaching and learning, whole staff and governors .

Date of policy:

Date to be reviewed: