St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Plumstead
Policy on Religious Education

Introduction and Rationale of Religious Education:

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of religious education in St Patrick's School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff and will be overseen and monitored by the subject leader for Religious Education and the Headteacher.

At St Patrick's Primary School, we provide a safe and stimulating learning community where children are able to grow spiritually, academically and morally. We are a Catholic School where the ethos is underpinned by gospel values, Catholic Social teaching and development of the whole child through love, care and respect for others.

The purpose of our Religious Education is to nurture the Catholic faith and its teachings in all our children to create an established Christian ethos in the community.

A way in which the children access this is through our mission statement.

Our Mission Statement

'Christ be within me'

At St. Patrick's school, we aim to grow and learn together in our understanding of God and the world He created. Prayer and worship are at the heart of all we do. We welcome all into our loving and caring environment which reflects the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We encourage all our children to reach their full potential in all aspects of their education and lives. We aim to achieve this through:

Striving to witness the teachings of Christ reflected in all aspects of the school's life and in the relationships within our whole school community.
Working in partnership with parents and families (who are the first educators) and our parish families.
Ensuring that all children are given equal opportunity to achieve their full potential, spiritually, academically and socially.
Nurturing the care and welfare of all our children.
Encouraging children to develop self-discipline, self-respect and self-confidence so that they can contribute to the good of all.
Recognising that this is a learning community where we grow together.
Providing learning experiences which will recognise the gifts of each individual and fulfill each child's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum.

By helping children to live this faith, we hope to encourage our children to deepen their awareness of their relationship with God and others around them. We recognise that everyone at St Patrick's, staff and children are on their own, personal journey of faith.

Central to our ethos are the opportunities for prayer and worship which lie at the heart of our faith. We will promote and encourage these at every level, together with the skills and attitudes necessary to live out the Christian message in the modern world.

Religious Education (RE) will promote pupils' cultural, mental and physical development and prepare children for the opportunities and responsibilities that are to come. This will be in the context of a moral and ethical Christian framework.

RE is a core subject at our school and will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects. At present, it is delivered mainly through the religious education programme, 'The vine and the branches' and 'The way the truth and the life' to meet the requirements of the Religious Education Directory, 'To know you more clearly'.

Study is also encouraged through links with home, the Parish Church, the local community and other subject areas, especially Art, RHE, Geography, History and PSHE. We believe that all aspects of RE should be woven into the fabric of school life.

The Aims of Religious Education in St. Patrick's

• To develop children's faith and relationship with God; enabling them to have a personal relationship with Jesus, in partnership with parents and the Parish.

• To give children experience and knowledge of the 'good news' of the Gospel.

• To provide appropriate liturgical experiences, including the sacramental life of the church, which will enhance pupil's sense of awe and wonder to assist them on their faith journey.

• To develop the children's knowledge and respect of other people's beliefs and values.

• To give the children a clear understanding of their place in the world and how that links with our Catholic Social teaching.

Approach

These should inform liturgy, planning, teaching and assessment.

• To deliver the 'Way the truth and the life' / 'The Vine and the branches' programme from Foundation Stage to Year 6.

• To mark RE lessons as special events by prayerful/reflective openings that differentiates the experience from other lessons.

• To plan lessons with a variety of teaching and learning styles.

• To give learning opportunities that are matched to children's needs by class teachers. Some, such as drama or quiet reflection, will be differentiated by outcome. Differentiation should be matched to a child's spiritual understanding rather than their academic ability.

• To have displays in line with the topic being studied.

• To give the children the opportunity to assess the learning objective in each lesson.

• To assess children's understanding at the end of each unit.

• To give each child a level at the end of each year against the Expected criteria in RE.

• To plan and deliver collective worship that reflect the Liturgical year, the sacraments, charitable events, Gospel Values, British Values such as tolerance and respect, Catholic social teaching and celebrate the children's achievements. TenTen online Resources can be used to help plan.

• To develop prayer as a primary form of worship, developing the informal everyday language of praising, thanking, asking and saying sorry, in addition to teaching formal prayers.

• To plan and prepare masses to celebrate special times in the school and church's year.

• To enable children to consider how they can live the Gospel Values, relating them to their own lives.

• To enhance and develop children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development making and developing links with the curriculum.

• To teach the beliefs and features of different world religions, promoting tolerance and respect of other people's beliefs and culture.

Assessment

Work and pupil progress is assessed three times a year alongside moderation of books. Teachers may plan for an alternative assessment opportunity for example a re-enactment or role play. These teacher assessments are recorded.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage In the Foundation Stage assessments will be made through discussions with the children or pictorial representations both at the beginning and end of each topic. Judgements will also be made alongside the RE attainment targets as appropriate and against the Early Learning Goals for Personal and Social Development and Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

Equal opportunities

All children are given an equal opportunity to participate in Religious Education lessons, regardless of religion, gender, ethnicity, background, or AEN. Provision is made to meet the needs of all children in all lessons.

SEN

Work is matched accordingly for children with SEN. Support may also be given in the form of extra teacher or TA input. A special endeavour is made to identify those children who are perhaps less able in literacy, so find recording difficult but do have good RE skills.

Links with the wider community

The school supports the home, school parish triangle and welcomes members of the parish to special assemblies and termly school/parish masses. We encourage and welcome the Salvatorian Fathers to come into school to meet with and talk to the children and staff and share events and special occasions with them such as school plays. As a Catholic school, the children are encouraged to think and learn about people who are less fortunate than themselves and take an active part in fund raising for charities and involve themselves in the community ie. School Council cookie sale for the Catholic Children's Society.

Links with parents

Parents are encouraged to come into school to celebrate whole school masses and celebrations. Parents are informed about RE each term through the class newsletters. We recognise and value the vital role of parents as the first educators of their children. Parents are always welcome and are often invited in to support out teaching of R.E. topics; for example, during Baptism.

Other Faiths

We believe that learning about other faiths and cultures is essential for a better understanding of our own faith and culture. These faiths are explored to develop community cohesion and develop understanding of our wider community. We endeavour to give children first-hand experience of other faiths - 'children with children' sums up our philosophy. We also look for opportunities to discuss and share other faiths as they arise in the year. Other cultures are also celebrated through subjects such as English, Maths, History, Art and Music. Cross curricular links Teachers are encouraged to make meaningful links with Religious Education across the curriculum. Links are especially encouraged through topic work, citizenship, circle time and RHSE.

Catholic Social Teaching

We always actively incorporate Catholic Social Teaching into the curriculum. Children are asked to put their faith into action. Acts of Worship reference Catholic Social Teaching which helps make the worship relevant our lives today. Children are celebrated for their involvement in this.

Prayer and Collective Worship -Please see separate Collective worship policy.

The Mass

The Church describes the Mass as the "source and summit of the Christian life" and the school shares in this sacramental life of the church on special occasions including Holy Days, as well as the the weekly class parish mass celebrated once a term by each class. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for children to participate will be maximised.

Voluntary Worship

Children are given the opportunity for voluntary worship, eg. to voice their own intentions at prayer time, write prayers, choose hymns and readings for Mass, produce their own assemblies, share decades of the Rosary at lunchtime, represent the school and lead Mass at our local Churches.

Parents' right to withdraw pupils form Religious Education

The Religious Education Act (Section 30) states that parents have the right to withdraw their child from RE. The school would comply with parent's requests, but as a Catholic school, we aim to include all children in all aspects of the religious life of the school. Given the importance of RE in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents are made aware of the fact that worship and living and teaching our faith can never be confined to 'timetabled slots', but may take place in a 'With God's love, we can be our best' variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

The Headteacher will keep a record of all children who have been withdrawn from RE.

Reviewed October 2024