

Our Diocesan Mission Statement:

Forming Christ-centred pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice.

Our School Mission Statement:

“With God, all things are possible” Matthew 19:26

As a Catholic school, Christ is at the centre of everything we do. We integrate Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into all aspects of learning, teaching and the totality of school life.

Religious Education forms the cornerstone of the life and work of St. Joseph's and permeates through the whole curriculum. We believe,

'At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in religious education. 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. We are committed to classroom RE, then, because 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'.

'A statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales May 2000'.

Aims:

- To provide children and staff with the knowledge, understanding and awareness of the Catholic faith and its beliefs
- To enable children and staff to communicate with God through prayer and scripture
- To enable children and staff to develop their spirituality

- To help children and staff to explore and express their sense of awe and wonder at the world God has created
- To encourage children and staff to respect those holding different beliefs
- To help children and staff grow in awareness of themselves and to develop a positive attitude to their own emotions, life, and learning
- To enable children and staff to grow in their awareness of others and to develop relationships in a secure and supportive environment
- To become aware of issues involving justice and the rights of the individual

How we meet these aims:

St. Joseph's adopts the scheme of work from the Archdiocese called Discerning Disciples. This document provides progression from Foundation stage to Year Six.

Philosophy:

This policy gives a framework within which all staff work and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the Diocesan scheme of work, Discerning Disciples, which gives details of expectations of pupils in different year groups.

Entitlement and Provision:

- RE is timetabled to cover at least 10% of curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference. This 10% must be provided each and every week of the school year.
- Religious Education is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as all core subjects.
- A minimum of two lessons of RE must take place every week and these must not be taught in a single block. Consideration is given to the time of the day allocated to RE.
- RE is taught as a discrete subject and our whole curriculum has religious education at its core. Opportunities are carefully planned to enable pupils to make connections between discrete subject areas to help pupils recall and reflect on prior learning so that they have the opportunity to see Christ at the centre of all that we teach; this is our Catholic curriculum.

- Prayer has an important role in the whole ethos of St. Joseph's. It is taught both as an integral and discrete area of study. Please see the Prayer and Liturgy Policy for further detail.
- Children are taught about the qualities we seek to nurture through the Catholic School Pupil Profile Values and Virtues. Each half term a specific pair of virtues are promoted, encouraged and focussed upon.
- Our Religious Education begins in our Preschool so that we welcome our pupils into our community and support their relationship with Jesus from the earliest possible opportunity.

Sacramental Education:

Sacramental education and preparation for Reconciliation (Y3), Eucharist (Y4) and Confirmation (Y6) is an important and integral part of our school life. As prime educators of their children, parents are fully encouraged to be involved in preparation with home, school and parish working closely together.

Preparation for the Sacraments is planned and provided in collaboration with our parish priest, Father Julian. Learning about the Sacraments is built into the Discerning Disciples scheme and all pupils, Catholic and Non-Catholic will learn about them. All members of the school community are invited to attend the celebrations. Parents are invited to attend meetings with the parish priest and school catechists and it is seen as vital that the parents attend both the introductory Mass and meeting and the celebrations themselves with their child. While school and parish will seek to encourage and support the children in their sacramental lives, it is the responsibility of the parents to provide opportunities for their children to participate in the Sunday Eucharist and to celebrate Reconciliation at the appropriate times in their lives.

Other Faiths and Religions

The Discerning Disciples curriculum includes the 'Dialogue and Encounter' branch which provides children with the opportunity to learn about other faiths. This part of the curriculum engages our children from Nursery to Year 6 in exploring how we respectfully interact with other Christian denominations, world faiths and non-religious world views.

This includes learning about how to live faithfully in a society that embraces difference. It teaches our pupils that engaging with others is essential for living peacefully, working towards the common good, and respecting the unique dignity of every person.

RE in Preschool

From Nursery, pupils at St. Joseph's access the Discerning Disciples curriculum. This curriculum is designed to start from children's lived experiences and gradually connect these to the Catholic faith through play, wonder, relationships, and exploration. There is no expectation that children have specific religious understanding or knowledge before they start to access this curriculum. As a result, the religious education experiences and bible stories shared in our Preschool are kept very simple and are told through pictures, play, songs, puppets, role play and sensory experiences rather than detailed reading. The following bible stories are focused on during each half-term.

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Creation	Jesus is born	The shepherds visit Jesus	Jesus welcomes the children	Jesus calms the storm	Noah's Ark

Through exploration and enjoyment of these stories, we hope our youngest pupils will:

- Know that God loves them
- Know that God made the world
- Recognise the Bible as God's special book for us
- Recognise and/or be able to make The Sign of the Cross
- Join in with simple prayers such as "Thank you God."

The Catholic Curriculum

Christ is at the centre of the curriculum and this is reflected through the carefully planned teaching and learning. The teaching of our faith has is woven into all curriculum areas through careful consideration and planning by subject leaders.

Pupils are actively encouraged to respond to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching supporting those in need locally, nationally and globally. They are given regular opportunities to embrace their responsibility to care for our common home and serve those in need.

As followers of Christ, we must respect ourselves and others and this is reflected in our Relationships and Health Education Policy (RHE). This follows the recommendations and teaching materials of the Diocese (see RHE policy).

Planning and Resourcing Lessons

Teachers use the Discerning Disciples curriculum resources alongside the Learning Builder to design their lessons. Planning and resourcing individual lessons is the responsibility of the class teacher. Teachers ensure that their learning builders identity opportunities for recap, support and challenge in every lesson.

Equal Opportunities

All staff actively seek to enact Our Lord's wish, 'Let the children come to me'. All children will have access to catechetical formation and Religious Education regardless of race, gender or ability. This education will be in accordance with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

The school seeks to raise awareness and celebrate world cultures, especially those of the children who are part of the school community. Pupils are expected to have a developing awareness of other faiths and a positive attitude towards them.

Each child will have activities and tasks appropriate to their ability. Adaptive teaching will be in place for those who need it.

Careful attention is given to the subject of family relationships e.g. one parent families, a non-Catholic parent, different cultural backgrounds etc.

Lessons and activities from Discerning Disciples are planned and adapted effectively to allow children to work at their own ability level including extending the most able. To ensure all children can access the curriculum, support and scaffolding may be needed at times for some children to achieve their full potential. This may be through quality first teaching, pre-teaching, overlearning strategies, alternative ways of recording, adult support etc.

Feedback

Effective feedback is an essential means of supporting and developing children's religious understanding and learning.

Effective feedback is:

- Supportive and encouraging – supporting the learner's self-esteem.
- Specific in that it informs the child what they have done well.
- Specific in providing guidance on how to improve.
- An opportunity to further the children's thinking through challenge/extension.

Feedback will take place with the child during the lesson by the adult or peers in the room. This in the moment, immediate feedback, during the lesson, provides instant feedback for the child and is designed to move their learning on in real time - "live feedback". This is the most influential means of feedback - especially for younger learners. This verbal feedback may be used when a child has a misconception, has made a simple error or needs to deepen their response. Teachers ensure that they question further to deepen understanding where appropriate. Subject specific spellings will be corrected e.g. God, Jesus etc. This includes errors with non-capitalisation of words.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment of pupils will be undertaken in accordance with the wishes of the Bishops' Conference. This will include the use of hinge questions in every RE lesson as well as Multiple Choice Quizzes and Discernment Assessments at the end of each branch of learning from Year 1 to Year 6. In EYFS, children's progress will be assessed against the Religious Education Learning Goals.

Teachers discuss children's work and progress in relation to RE through three parents' evenings. All parents receive an end of year written report that prioritises RE appropriately.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE leader and members of SLT will monitor work through learning walks, book scrutinies and pupil voice interviews in line with the monitoring schedule. All monitoring feedback is reported to governors through link governor meetings and through the Principal's report. Feedback to staff is given within staff meetings and good practice is discussed and shared.

RE Resources

Resources are available in a variety of media in order to deliver a broad and balanced Religious Education curriculum throughout the school.

All bibles, books and other materials are accessible either in class in the bible store cupboard or school libraries.

The Religious Education leader provides INSET opportunities for staff.

Early Career Teachers and new staff to the school are required to participate in all induction courses offered by the Diocese and collegiate. They are offered coaching with the RE lead.

Governors are committed to ensuring that there are sufficient, quality resources to meet the breadth of the RE curriculum. Priorities for new resources are identified in the School Improvement Plan and are purchased accordingly.

Bibles are on display in every classroom, with appropriate copies throughout the school.

There are visits and retreats to support sacramental programmes (One Life Music retreat, Alton Castle, St Chad's Cathedral) and work on other faiths (visiting Mosques, Synagogues and Gurdwaras).

RE Displays

In order to highlight the importance of RE and the Catholic ethos of St. Joseph's, displays of a religious nature should be evident in each classroom throughout the year. Similarly, whole school displays at appropriate times of the year will reflect the liturgical season or a particular theme with the school entrance, corridors or hall.

Each classroom and the school hall should have a prominent religious focus point. This prayer area has a prayer area cloth reflecting the Liturgical year, a crucifix and a Bible. The prayer areas should include pupils' work, artefacts and

prayers appropriate to the liturgical season. The Prayer Team in each class help support this. Pictures of the Pope, Archbishop, Bishop and Parish Priest are displayed.

Links with Parents and the Parish Community

We recognise and value the vital role of parents as the first educators of their children. Parents are supported in understanding how they can develop their child's spiritual growth, learning and understanding by encouraging a partnership of collaboration between home, parish and school.

The school, parish and our families work together during parish events which occur throughout the year.

The Role of the Principal

- Ensure that religious provision within the school meets the criteria laid down in the Instrument of Government;
- Ensure that Religious Education receives parity of finance, planning, curriculum allocation and resources as that of other core curriculum subjects;
- Make provision for the equivalent of at least one in-service training day to be allocated to staff development within Religious Education;
- Ensure that Religious Education is a feature of the whole curriculum within St. Joseph's and is not restricted to explicit lessons.

The Role of the RE Leader

- To liaise with the Principal, governors, link governor, Parish Priest and other laity regarding Masses, services, Sacraments and other significant events within the church calendar, where the school is involved.
- To ensure the celebration of the Church's Liturgical Year is upheld in school.
- To provide teaching and support staff with the specific knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith in order to ensure accurate and confident delivery of the doctrine.

- To monitor and evaluate the subject closely, through learning environment walks, book scans, pupil interviews, monitoring of planning and planned lesson observations.
- To consult with staff on the planning and delivery of the units of work when necessary, providing guidance and support to ensure high quality learning and teaching.
- To induct and train staff in the effective assessment of RE.
- To liaise with other SLT to monitor the quality of opportunities and activities provided for the children and the levels of achievement attained in relation to national standards and similar Catholic schools.
- To liaise with the Principal to update the RE section of the school website on a regular basis
- To order and allocate resources to classes and the central resource area within budgetary restrictions
- To highlight key areas of learning and experience through the policy document, action planning and the units of work
- To keep up to date with diocesan advice and to ensure that provisions in RE is compliant with curriculum directory and Bishop's directives.
- To audit resources, materials and equipment annually and to ensure permanent resources are respected and returned, to ensure easy access for all staff.

The Role of all other teachers of Religious Education

- Ensure that the aims of each branch within the scheme is planned and delivered within their particular year group through whichever methods are deemed appropriate;
- Support and encourage all pupils in their relationship with God;
- Make provision for some form of Religious Education across the curriculum, making links with Catholic Social Teachings and prior learning where appropriate;
- Provide a religious focal point within their classroom;
- Provide opportunities for children to learn and use the formal prayers specified in the Prayer & Liturgy Policy.

Health & Safety

At all times, children will be taught how to care for and handle equipment and media safely and with the utmost respect. When working with tools, equipment and materials in RE lessons or on visits, pupils will be taught about hazards, risk and risk control. During RE lessons and Collective Worship, all staff will assess risks when it comes to their prayer areas and the use of candles. Children will know of these risks and how to stay safe. When candles are used, they are in full view of the teacher as part of the risk management.

Legal Right of Withdrawal

Schools in England and Wales must ensure that religious education is provided as part of the school's basic curriculum. In Catholic schools this is done in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, discipline and norms of the Catholic Church.

Academies in England are required by their funding agreement and Articles of Association to comply with similar requirements. Similarly, in state funded schools in England and Wales are required by law to take part in an act of collective worship on each school day. In Catholic schools this is done in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. Parents should contact the Principal in the first instance if they are considering withdrawing their child from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship.

Policy Agreed: September 2026

Policy Review Date: September 2028