

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy



With God's Guidance, We Love, Learn, Respect and Forgive.



Part of the St Thomas Aquinas

Catholic Academy Trust

Religious Education Policy

Implementation	Whole Staff
Monitoring	Mrs Julie Spencer and Mrs Clair Dedman
Written	07.10.26
Signed (Head Teacher)	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
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Religious Education teaching at St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy underpins the sentiment of our mission statement. At St Joseph's, all our staff aim to fulfil the mission statement with collaboration, dedication, co-operation and shared support in order that our children, their families and the wider community are served and supported.

We aim to teach our Catholic message through our R.E. teaching and through our example as committed members of our school community. This is achieved in our RE lessons, our day-to-day virtues and Gospel values, as well as our weekly whole School Celebration of the Word. This is done so that we deepen our love and understanding of God, building a community where every individual is valued. We want to show that we value every individual as a unique creation of God, considering differences and through considered planning, questioning and reasoning encourage each member of our community to develop and grow. We aim to guide our children in their experience of God; 'To seek Him, to know Him, to love Him with all his strength' (CCC1)

As they develop their knowledge and love, we introduce the children to the various ministries which they can fulfil in the community. It is important to our school that we help develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life. We want our children to witness what it means to live out our faith every day as they belong to our school, their families and our parish community. We follow Jesus' social and moral teaching to help us become responsible global neighbours and how this affects the way we treat each other.

At St Joseph's, we aim to nurture every aspect of Catholic Life and to provide individuals with opportunities to develop a personal relationship with God by creating:

- An environment that uses Jesus as a role model, thus demonstrating the Christian values of love, respect, trust, honesty, forgiveness and co-operation
- A celebrating community, which uses prayer, assemblies, festivals, liturgies, positive discipline and worship
- A sense of belonging to and participating in a community
- A real understanding and practice of the Catholic Faith
- Opportunities to develop understanding, respect and appreciation of other faiths
- Familiarity with religious language, symbols, signs and gestures of worship and prayer
- A curriculum that develops the whole child, integrating physical and intellectual growth alongside moral, spiritual, emotional and physiological growth.

Religious education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.

Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.

Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.

In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

RED, 2023

The purpose of religious education: Fully religious and genuinely educational

Religious education is religious by virtue of its intent to serve the missionary mandate of the school. The Catholic school is a community of faith, and religious education is where that faith seeks understanding, where pupils learn to love God with all their minds, where they learn to 'know their creed so well that they can give an account of it'. (St John Henry Newman) In an atmosphere of faith, religious education is the engine room of the missionary dynamic of the Catholic school as a whole. Religious education is religious also because its central subject matter is 'the comprehensive and systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of his Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life'. (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000)

At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in religious education, which recognises the human person as one 'created in "the image and likeness" of God... unfaithful to God in original sin, but redeemed by Christ... [and] destined to eternal life'. Religious education is religious because it is the bond of the whole curriculum. It is in faithful and engaging religious education that a student can gradually appreciate other subjects as separate disciplines but find their rationale and unity within a Catholic religious vision of reality. 'Therefore, religious education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process.

RED, 2023

Compliance with the Religious Education Directory

The Religious Education Directory includes the programmes of study approved by the Bishops' Conference for the various age groups. The competence for approving these programmes of study is currently exercised by the Department of Education and Formation, but the Bishops' Conference can delegate this function to another department, commission, or committee of the Conference.

Catholic schools are required to comply with the Religious Education Directory (full compliance is expected in primary schools from September 2026).

RED, 2023

Implications of the primacy of religious education in the curriculum

Religious education is to be properly organised, coordinated, taught, and resourced.

In primary schools there is to be a Coordinator of Religious Education who is to have at least parity in status and remuneration with those of any other curriculum area.

RED, 2023

At St Joseph's, the leadership of Religious Education is held by Mrs Julie Spencer and Mrs Clair Dedman. Dedicated time is given to monitoring and evaluating the R.E curriculum to continue to develop

and strengthen this across the school.

The importance of the Religious Educator

Holding all these threads together, is the religious educator. The vocation of teacher is a high calling in the Church: 'God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers' (1 Cor 12:28)...If Catholic schools are

places of human formation, the task of the teacher cannot be underestimated since it takes the human to form the human. Time and again, the Church proclaims the irreplaceability of the teacher at the heart of education. They are essential to a school's success.

Evangelii Nuntiandi

In the context of Catholic schools where many teachers of religious education are not Catholics, there is a need to articulate what authentic witness requires in this context...

The teacher's role is to lead out and accompany their students on an intellectual journey...Across various dioceses, the teaching of religious education, particularly in the primary sector, may at times be undertaken by colleagues who are not Catholic. Developing their skill set must form a critical part of the professional development of the school and be embedded through reflection on the ecclesial and pastoral values of the school's mission...Religious education teachers need to become guardians of dialogue. As schools become 'ever more multicultural', teachers are tasked with 'helping people with different experiences to relate to each other... [to] act as mediators between such people'. For this reason, they need 'to offer shared perspectives, while respecting the individual nature of different people's development and world visions'.

If religious education classrooms are to become safe spaces to discuss difference, then it is religious education teachers who create those spaces and guarantee their safety...Ultimately, as well as being competent in subject knowledge, they must be agile conductors of classroom debate, resilient custodians of religious wisdom, and sensitive mentors to enquiring students.

RED, 2023

RE Training and Staff Continuous Professional Development

As a Trust, we come together at the beginning of each academic year to celebrate in prayer. This is followed by our Trust INSET day, which provides staff with dedicated opportunities for spiritual development and reflection.

The development of Religious Education (RE) remains a key priority throughout the academic year, with protected time for professional development embedded within our assessment and monitoring calendar. This ensures that RE is given the time and focus it deserves as an integral part of our curriculum.

The Diocese provides our schools with a comprehensive programme of professional development opportunities throughout the year, which we readily access to further strengthen staff knowledge, confidence and practice in RE and the wider mission of our school.

Aims of Religious Education as stated in the RED 2023

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;

to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;

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;

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;

to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;

to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith; to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is:

The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously 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 recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

RED 2023

"The task of handing on the faith to future generations is both the privilege and responsibility of the local Church. Its primary purpose is to bring young people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ"

Cardinal Basil Hume.

The process for the delivery of Religious Education

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. The model curriculum is rooted in the narrative of salvation history and leads our pupils on a journey in each year of schooling that gives a sequence to the learning. As they revisit each branch in each year of school, they come to a deeper understanding of its significance for Catholic belief and practice, which allows them to make links between the four knowledge lenses within the context of the narrative of salvation history.

The new Religious Education Directory (RED) 'To Know You More Clearly' objectives are taught through six curriculum strands for each year group. St Joseph's Leader, Julie Spencer has been part of the Working Party for the Diocese of Nottingham. Together with other leaders across the diocese, they continue to work on developing and refining a curriculum scheme of work "Meet in My Name".

The Curriculum scheme of "Meet in My Name" is carried out as follows:

Advent Term:

- Creation and Covenant
- Prophecy and Promise

Lent Term:

- Galilee to Jerusalem
- Desert to Garden

Pentecost Term:

- To the Ends of the Earth
- Dialogue and Encounter

Our children will explore their learning through four knowledge lenses:

- Hear/Word
- Believe/Creed
- Celebrate/Liturgy
- Live/Life

In addition to the teaching of Dialogue and Encounter (where children explore and learn about other faiths), there are three further opportunities throughout the year to support the teaching of other faiths. These weeks will be determined according to each academic Long Term plan.

Skills for our children develop as they progress through the Religious Education programme:

	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
Aim	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils to be able to understand deeply the meaning of sacred texts, religious beliefs, sacred rites, and the lives of individuals and communities who are shaped by these texts, beliefs, and rites.	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils to be able to judge wisely in response to different interpretations of the meaning, significance, and implications of texts, beliefs, rites, and ways of life so that they can arrive at justified conclusions about what is true, what is good, and what is beautiful.	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils reflect personally and with integrity on what they have learned and consider the implications for action these may have for their own lives and the world in which they live.
Skills	In this way of knowing, pupils will deepen their understanding by developing the skills to: - Remember and apply the meanings of key texts, beliefs, and concepts. - Provide explanations by making links between religious texts, beliefs, and practices. - Interpret and analyse the meaning of texts, practices, and rituals and their historical and cultural connections.	In this way of knowing, pupils will increase in wisdom, through dialogue with others, by developing the skills to: - Think creatively and critically, testing ideas by imagining other possibilities. - Compare different interpretations of religious expression, different ways of celebrating rites, and different ways of life, explaining differences within and between religions and worldviews. - Critically evaluate differences to arrive at wise judgements about what is true, what is good, and what is beautiful.	In this way of knowing, you will invite pupils to respond personally and with integrity by developing the skills to: - Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives. - Dialogue with others to understand themselves and others better. - Imagine how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned.

Ages 5-7	- Retell, in any form, a narrative that corresponds to the scripture source used, beginning to recognise the different literary forms in scripture. - Correctly use religious words and phrases to recognise features of religious life and practice. - Recognise links and simple connections between sources, beliefs, worship and life.	- Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions, saying what they wonder about and suggesting answers, imagining how they and others are feeling. - Identify and name their personal responses to a variety of creative and artistic expression (for example, texts, stories, paintings, music...) and say why they respond in that way. - Express a point of view with a relevant reason. - Express a preference with a relevant reason - Listen to the stories and experiences of others from different communities and ask questions about the stories and experiences of others.	- Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives. Talk about their own experiences, feelings, and the things that matter to them, and listen to others. - Consider how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned. - Act to bring about transformation in their own lives and in the communities to which they belong, as a consequence of their learning.
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	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
Ages 7-9	- Describe a narrative that is accurate in its sequence and details, identifying literary form and beginning to understand the original author's intention, drawing out the moral sense of scripture for today. - Correctly use developing specialist vocabulary to describe a range of religious beliefs, symbols, and actions, correctly identifying their meanings. - Make links between sources, beliefs, worship, and life, giving reasons for the links.	- Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions, suggesting answers and imagining consequences and implications for themselves and others. - Suggest meanings considering the maker's intention, in response to a variety of creative and artistic expression (for example, texts, stories, paintings, music...) - Express a point of view with reasons that relate to sources/experiences. - Express a judgement with relevant reasons, having considered different preferences. - Explore people's different worldviews and the reasons for their responses to life and to questions of meaning and purpose.	- Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives. Dialogue with others about their experiences and feelings and the things that matter to them, recognising the ways in which this could influence the way they live. - Consider how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned. - Act to bring about transformation in their own lives and in the communities to which they belong, as a consequence of their learning.

Ages 9-11	- Show understanding of scripture passages, identifying literary forms and authorial intention and beginning to recognise the historical context of the intended audience and the ways in which the interpretation of scripture may change over time. - Use specialist (theological, religious, and philosophical) vocabulary to describe and explain the meaning of different religious and secular beliefs, rituals, symbols, and actions. - Show understanding of sources, beliefs, worship, and life, by making relevant links between them.	- Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions, building logical theories, and imagining different people's responses. - Explore how they and others interpret their own and the maker's meaning, in response to a variety of creative and artistic expression (for example, texts, stories, paintings, music etc) - Appreciate differing points of view are not all equally valid. - Articulate the reasons which might lead to judgements different to their own, recognising that some questions are difficult to answer. - Consider people's different worldviews, using evidence to express insight into differences in their responses and offer reasoned arguments why they disagree with some features.	- Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives. Compare their own and others' experiences and feelings, the things that matter to them, and the ways in which this may lead to different ways of life. - Consider how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned. - Act to bring about transformation in their own lives and in the communities to which they belong, as a consequence of their learning.
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Teaching and Learning

Our religious education aims to equip our children to become religiously literate, to understand our Catholic faith and to think critically.

Our curriculum is strongly rooted in scripture and follows the story of Jesus as we journey with Him through His life, death and resurrection. It is designed for children to be curious and is an invitation to 'know Him more clearly'. We encourage an inquiry-based approach to RE, with our children asking questions and discovering through their branches of learning. Through continuous reflections on a 'Big Question' or 'I wonder questions' for each Branch, children aim to discover their response to each question.

The outcome of our Religious Education:

'The outcome of Religious Education is religiously literate and consciously 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 recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life'
RED, 2023

Teaching and learning strategies from across the curriculum are appropriately adapted to inspire the learning needs of all pupils and to help foster children's sense of awe and wonder.

Time Allocation

The time allocation for Religious Education is 10% of the taught week in each key stage, in accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops of England and Wales. Therefore, children in EYFS will receive two hours of RE per week and children in KS1 and KS2 will receive two and a half hours per week. This allocated curriculum time does not include forms of Prayer and Liturgy as outlined above.

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Differentiation

A central message of the Catholic faith is that although we are all different, God loves each one of us equally, regardless of background, gender or ability. It is, therefore, vital that we recognise and cater for the individual needs of our children, acknowledging that all children have different gifts and talents and that these should be celebrated. Learning tasks should be matched to the abilities of our children to enable them to achieve success, helping them to develop to their full potential and to develop a positive self-image. We aim to ensure that resources do not reinforce any kind of stereotypes and that they do reflect our own school community. It is important that our children are provided with images, which reflect the multi-cultural society in which we live, enhancing their awareness and knowledge of other faiths and cultures, respecting the rights of the individual at all times. Children with special educational needs, whether they are children with learning difficulties, or children who are able and talented in RE, will be presented with tasks to suit their ability. Adaptation for these children may be in the amount of support offered by the teaching and support staff, by scaffolds or tasks with varying levels of difficulty, including tasks which will extend the more able children's spirituality or knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Branch being covered.

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 our 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.

Assessing and Recording Achievement

As a Catholic school at St Joseph's, our main aim is with the development of: the whole child; the formation of the Christian character; the ability to take their place in society; the fulfilment of academic potential.

To this end, the profiling of the pupil's whole person development is as important as the assessment of academic outcomes. To ensure that this is the case, St Joseph's assess against the 'Ways of Knowing' - Understand, Discern, Respond - throughout each Branch, as well as against the end of year outcomes. This helps guide pupils' attainment outcomes. Teachers report pupil attainment on 'Arbor', the platform we use to record assessment in all subject areas. This is completed termly.

In R.E books, teachers assess using each Branch lesson outcome, along with lesson driver words, and answering of 'Thinking Deeper' questions. In Lesson 9 and Lesson 10, children have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and form part of this assessment through verbal and written responses to specified Branch questions and written responses to their 'Big Question'.

Marking and feedback is given regularly. In line with our Marking and Feedback Policy. Each lesson is assessed against the learning outcome

Moderation is planned throughout the year (Assessment and Monitoring Calendar) and has been implemented so that teachers are able to moderate and ensure accurate assessment judgements.

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).

Pupil Progress meetings are held termly for each class with the Head Teacher. Children may be identified and targeted thereafter to ensure at least expected progress is made in RE. 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.

	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
The following list gives an indication of the ways in which these skills develop through the use of 'driver words and phrases' that are applied progressively as pupils move through the different age-phases of the curriculum content:			
Driver words and phrases	• Recognise... texts, beliefs, rites, ways of life. • Name... • Remember... • Recall... • Retell... • Describe... • Make links... • Explain... • Show understanding... • Interpret within a historical context...	• Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions. • Say what they wonder about. • Recognise similarities and differences. • Point out what is the same and what is different. • Express a point of view or a preference. • Listen to different viewpoints. • Support a preference with reasons. • Explain differences. • Construct arguments. • Weigh strengths and weaknesses. • Arrive at justified conclusions. • Recognise complexity with reference to different interpretations and historical context.	• Talk about their own feelings and experiences. • Respond personally to questions that are difficult to answer. • Make links between their own feelings and beliefs and their behaviour or way of life. • Compare their own and other peoples' responses. • Explain differences of belief and ways of life with reference to religious commitments. • Critically reflect on their own beliefs and ways of life in response to dialogue with others. • Respond with integrity to personal conclusions about questions of value and meaning.

Reporting to parents is through written reports where R.E. is a discrete subject and through opportunities to discuss the reports with parents. There are also opportunities to share progress in R.E. through Parents' Consultation Evenings. Parents are able to view their child/ren's R.E. books at this time.

Leadership, Monitoring and Review

The coordination and planning of the RE curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also supports colleagues in their teaching by keeping them informed about current developments in RE and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject. The RE subject leader will provide CPD opportunities for all staff where necessary, and will lead RE staff meetings to ensure teachers are provided with current information and support in the planning, teaching and assessment of the subject.

The RE leader is to work closely with the Head Teacher and is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in RE which is then used to form an action and development plan for the next academic year. The quality of teaching and learning in RE is monitored and evaluated by the RE leader and Head teacher as part of the school's agreed monitoring cycle.

How Schools will be Inspected

All Catholic schools, academies and colleges are subject to canonical inspection by their diocesan bishop. Some schools and academies are subject to a Section 48 or 50 inspection (or their academy equivalents) and for those schools the canonical inspection fulfils this statutory function. Section 5 and section 28 inspectors must not inspect religious education or the content of collective worship. This is the legal prerogative of the Catholic Bishop.

An inspection under the National Framework makes judgements on the Catholic life and mission of the school, **religious education**, and collective worship. Schools will be inspected every 5 years if Good or better.

When inspecting Religious Education, inspectors will consider and evaluate:

Pupil outcomes: how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education. Provision: the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in religious education.

Leadership: how well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education. (CSI Handbook-Inspection)

The Policy

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the staff and governors St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy Primary School and will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis.

Governors are responsible for the R.E. Curriculum.

The school governors are informed and involved in the religious education at St Joseph's and are present at masses and important celebrations in our school calendar.

This policy is managed by the RE subject leader, Assistant Heads and Headteacher and on a day-to-day basis.

This policy outlines the aims and implementation of Religious Education taught at our school. It is the responsibility of all staff to put this policy into practice with the support and encouragement of each other and the advice and training provided by senior leaders and our Diocese.

This policy should be read in conjunction with: Prayer and Liturgy Policy
Catholic Life and Mission Policy

