

The Catholic Schools of the Waveney Valley

Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy



2020

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Mission Statement and Aims

The family of St Benet's and St Edmund's are school communities following in the footsteps of Christ and built on the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.

We seek to:

- Be a happy, welcoming and caring school where we recognise, affirm and develop the unique gifts and talents of each individual
- Provide a safe, purposeful and stimulating learning environment where all children can flourish
- To value childhood as an intrinsic right of all children
- Enable every child to learn, grow and reach their full potential
- Help children develop high self-esteem, confidence and a strong sense of identity
- Inspire the children through a child-centred, thematic and creative curriculum
- Capture the children's natural curiosity and foster a desire for learning and high achievement in a changing and challenging world
- Teach Christian values to children, inviting them to build their own lives upon them
- Provide a place where all are offered an opportunity to come to know Jesus better through their learning, through worship and through the daily life of the school
- Work together as a hardworking, dedicated and enthusiastic community, where all contributions are valued
- Recognise and value parents as the first educators of their children, fostering positive relationships and strong working partnerships between the school, parents, and all those responsible for the children's welfare and education
- Be an inclusive family, inspired by gospel values through service to others
- Teach the children to value and celebrate diversity within the school and beyond
- Help the children develop respect and responsibility for themselves, for others, and the world in which they live

In our Catholic school, we aim to:

- Be a school community reflecting the love of God in its relationships, standards, teaching and way of life in promoting the development of the whole child.
- Build on and extend the foundations of religious education begun in the home. In partnership with home and parish, we strive to deepen the children's knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and to contribute to their understanding and living of their own faith.
- Provide opportunities that will allow the children to develop skills needed to reflect upon and explore the beliefs, values and way of life of the Catholic tradition and of other faith traditions, to enable children to love and respect one another and to respect the religious convictions of others.
- Extend the children's understanding of God's family across the world by building a global dimension into both worship and the curriculum whenever appropriate.
- Help children to recognise and appreciate the religious and spiritual dimensions of life, and to deepen and enrich each child's understanding and living of their own personal faith.
- Stimulate children to explore the religious dimension of questions about life, dignity and purpose i.e. Where did I come from? Why am I here? Who am I?
- Develop in the children an understanding of the importance of celebration within the Catholic

tradition – the festivals, worship and liturgical practices.

- Encourage children to develop an understanding of sacraments as a celebration of Christ permeating every moment of their lives.
- Encourage children to develop an understanding of sacred writings, events, key religious figures and their significance for believers today.
- Create and maintain an environment where prayer is valued, fostered and developed.

Worship and Liturgy

Prayer and worship are central to the life of our school and, along with other areas of RE and Catholic Life, is always a focus of our School Development Plan.

Quiet times of prayer and reflection

- Collective Worship - Prayers and reflection begin and end each day in the classroom
- Prayers are offered before each meal
- Opportunities for prayer and worship are planned as part of the RE curriculum
- Children are encouraged to take a leading role in prayer and reflection; the school has growing Mini-Vinnie teams, as well as Faith In Action group in Year 6.
- Opportunities are made for children to use the prayer focal point in the classroom
- Children are encouraged to use the school's Spiritual Garden or Prayer Space as a place for quiet reflection
- Prayers are offered at the beginning of staff and Governors' meetings

During these times, children are encouraged to be prayerful and reflective and to develop a personal relationship with God, either directly, or through Jesus.

They become more confident in expressing themselves in prayer and become familiar with the traditional prayers of the Catholic faith.

Assemblies

The children come together as a school, upper/lower school, year or class group to pray, celebrate and meditate on God's word.

Assemblies may be led by the Headteacher, teachers, children or by special visitors.

Assemblies follow the liturgical year, our Gospel Values programme or the curriculum theme.

They may also be used to focus on current issues and initiatives involving the whole school.

Each class/year group prepares an annual assembly to which parents are invited in the Spring Term.

Staff are supported in their planning and preparation of assemblies.

Masses and Liturgies

The school comes together to celebrate feast days in the Church's calendar and parents and visitors are welcomed.

Mass is celebrated at the beginning and/or end of each term and on Holydays of Obligation.

Other feasts and celebrations may be marked with a Mass or liturgical service.

Mass is celebrated in the churches.

Parents are invited to join the children to celebrate Mass or a Liturgy with their class or year group each year through pray and stay sessions.

The children participate in age-appropriate Services of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.

From time to time, the school visits St. John's Cathedral and other churches in the diocese for Mass.

The school celebrates Mass and other liturgies alongside other schools in the St John the Baptist Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the Diocese.

Teaching and Learning

Our religious programme reflects the Catholic faith. It provides a systematic presentation of the Christian way of life in ways which are appropriate to the stage of development of each child.

Our religious teaching is based on the religious, social and educational experiences of each child. Some children will already be engaged in the process of catechesis. For others it will be their first opportunity to hear the Good News of the Gospel.

We aim to provide all children with opportunities to recognise, reflect, value and test their experiences against Christian revelation and the experiences of others, so that their experiences take on a deeper meaning and grow.

Religious Education is a rigorous academic discipline and as such it is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as other subjects.

Planning allows for continuity, progression and assessment opportunities.

The Curriculum Directory for RE in Catholic Schools is the foundation of our RE programmes of study. Along with other schools in the CMAT and diocese, our school uses the Diocesan Primary Religious Education Curriculum to fulfil our aims and objectives.

Ten percent of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of RE at Key Stage 1 and 2.

The sacraments are explored each year through the appropriate topics within the RE Curriculum.

Children are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion in the parish in which they live. The school celebrates together with a Mass in school to which the bishop is invited to preside.

In the Autumn or Spring terms, children in Key Stages 1 and 2 are given the opportunity to learn about children brought up in the Jewish faith. They explore other faiths in the Spring/Summer Term.

We focus on activities which evoke an active response in the children's lives and worship, and through which the children can express themselves. We provide activities that allow and encourage children to actively explore and reflect upon their own experiences and feelings freely and deeply, as well as upon those of others.

We provide a balance between practical, investigative tasks and teacher-led activities, and between paired, small group and class sessions.

Such activities could include:

- Recorded work – writing, drawing, digital records
- Listening to or reading stories, poems, reports, accounts etc.
- Music – singing, listening, composing
- Authentic resources such as Art and Photographs – investigation, appreciation, expression
- Meeting visitors, sharing personal experiences and asking questions

Drama and role-play

Big questioning through Big Book time

- Investigating topics and collecting facts
- Prayer and celebrations in worship
- School visits

We strive to ensure that, where appropriate, links are made between religious education and other areas of the curriculum. In particular we draw on techniques from areas of philosophy and PHSE. We use a range of resources produced by CAFOD, and other charities and organisations have enhanced our RE and helped to develop the global dimension of our curriculum.

By offering these kinds of teaching and learning opportunities we encourage children to develop an understanding of the relevance of the following Gospel values in their lives:

- Love of God
- Love of themselves and others
- Care for themselves and others
- Forgiveness of themselves and others
- Respect for themselves and others
- Giving of themselves to and for others

We encourage children to

- Develop a spiritual understanding – a sense of awe, wonder and mystery, and a sense of God in the world
- Develop a sense of uniqueness and worth
- Have respect and tolerance for others who hold different religious views
- Develop an understanding of the obligations, responsibilities and joys of belonging to the Catholic community.

We foster in children the ability to:

- Listen, think critically, ethically and spiritually
- Make informed judgements
- Take responsibility for their own actions
- Recognise the consequences of their own actions
- Examine, and evaluate their own feelings and motivations
- Choose, change and forgive,
- Reflect on their actions and experiences
- Develop skills of interpersonal relationships
- Respond in faith, gratitude and love of God

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We regard the purpose of assessing, recording and reporting as to ensure effective learning, to celebrate growth and achievement and to enable further progress and development.

Assessment, recording and reporting are related to overall RE aims, and the specific learning objectives of themes and topics.

Attainment is currently measured using descriptors agreed by the Bishop's Conference Department for Catholic Education and Formation.

The school is keeping itself abreast of further developments in this area.

In order to illustrate progress, each child has an RE Assessment Book which travels through the school with them and contains six examples of assessed work each year. Children are encouraged to express what they have learned through double page spreads, that connect their heart to their learning.

Teachers' end of term assessments are collated and analysed by the RE Leader.

Assessment is both formative and summative. The assessment of the progress made by individuals and groups informs daily and weekly planning. Children are given opportunities to reflect on and evaluate

their own academic progress and spiritual development, e.g. during RE sessions, circle time. Peer and self-assessment are both becoming increasingly important and effective parts of the assessment process.

Recording of RE may take many forms and can include:

- Written work in books – accounts, poems, prayers etc.
- Work completed for display
- Art work and taped music recordings
- Photographs and recordings of drama work in progress

A formal reporting to parents takes place at the end of each school year.

Assessment information is passed on the next teacher at the end of each academic year and to Notre Dame High School and other secondary schools on transfer.

Children's progress is tracked by the RE leader and reported to the Headteacher and School Governors.

The RE leader is responsible for the monitoring, evaluating and development of all areas of RE and Collective Worship. The RE leader and Headteacher monitor the different areas of RE on a rolling programme. These areas include:

- teaching and learning
- quality of worship
- display and prayer corners
- percentage of curriculum time dedicated to RE

Most monitoring is done through direct observation, but also includes a scrutiny of planning and assessment, and recorded RE work.

Resources are audited and spending needs identified on an annual basis.

This policy will be reviewed every year

Next review date: January 2021