St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, EPSOM

Religious Education Policy

To be reviewed in:
October 2027

School Mission Statement:

Our Mission

All that we do at St Joseph's is shaped by our commitment to our Faith. The choices we make and the expectations we nurture in our children emanate from a guiding desire to live our lives according to gospel values. In the words of our Mission Statement, written by the children:

- *God is at the heart of everything. Prayer is behind us in all that we do.*
- *We are God's family, here to learn and try our best.*
- *We are called to serve others.*
- *As friends of Jesus, we treat others with respect, as we would wish to be treated ourselves.*
- *We want everyone to be the best person they can be.*
- *We are all amazing in our own way.*
- *We look after the wonderful world that God created for us*.

Introduction

This policy has been formulated with our school community in mind and by seeking advice and guidance from outside agencies including the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Education Service, the Catholic Education Service and the Department for Education. The ideas and philosophies in Christ at the Centre (Stock 2013) and in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) have also helped to inform this policy.

The Importance of the Role of Parents in Religious Education

Our school community recognises the central role parents have in the religious education of their children. The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales re-iterated in their statement on Religious Education in Catholic Schools (2000): "***The first educators in the faith are parents."***

In recognition of this, we strive to maintain a faithful partnership with parents, communicating clearly both the curriculum and the wider spiritual opportunities offered to families and warmly inviting parents to share their knowledge and experiences with the school community.

Our school works closely in partnership with the home and St Joseph's parish community to which our children belong. The General Directory for Catechesis confirms, ***"This partnership between home and parish is enhanced by the role of the Catholic school in which the educational mission of the Church finds a particular and important expression."*** Religious Education in a Catholic school encompasses the whole educational mission of the Church and is not confined to timetabled Religious Education lessons.

The Importance of Religious Education

Religious education is the ***"core of the core curriculum"*** in a Catholic school (Pope St John Paul II). Placing religious education at the core of the curriculum helps the school to fulfill its mission to educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of their existence

A Catholic education is "***focused on integral formation of its students and at the same time prepares them for full participation in civic life. It forms the Catholic student as 'both human and a person of faith, the protagonist of culture and the subject of religion'. It teaches subjects with methods proper to them and at the same time imbues the whole curriculum with a Christian outlook. It is established for Catholic students and at the same time draws others to its doors. In short, the Catholic school reflects the apparent paradox of the incarnation that is resolved in Christ: it is both fully Catholic and really a school. Religious education in a Catholic school also bears witness to the same mystery: it is both fully religious and genuinely educational***." (Religious Education Directory p9).

Our Aims for Religious Education

Religious education is at the heart of our school life. We aim to ensure that all pupils will have the opportunity to:

- Understand and live out our school mission statement

- Recognise and appreciate the religious and spiritual dimensions of life
- Develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of Catholic teaching and traditions and of the teaching of other religions, so that they can explain these ideas confidently
- Make links between learning in religious education and in the wider curriculum
- Take the space to reflect and ask questions about their own and others' experience of life
- Deepen their personal faith commitment and respect the world views of others
- Develop a sense of love and responsibility for themselves, one another and the world around them, so that they can respond to this understanding in daily life (Catholic Social Teaching)

The Curriculum

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, religious education is primarily based on the Religious Education Directory (RED) "To Know You More Clearly". In line with the Bishop's mandate, the RE curriculum is taught through the Diocesan Day by Day resources.

In recognition of the importance of religious education in our school, we devote 10% of the teaching week to religious education lessons. In Key Stage 1 this is 2 hours 15 minutes and in Key Stage 2 this is 2 hours and 30 minutes, not including Collective Worship. In Early Years, the timetable and learning style is more flexible, but teaching of Religious Education is prioritised to give children the opportunity to engage fully with the curriculum.

The Religious Education Curriculum Directory has a clear framework for learning:

Four Knowledge Lenses: Hear, Believe, Live and Celebrate indicate what should be known by the end of each age phase.

Ways of Knowing: Understand, Discern and Respond are the skills through which children progress and develop their thinking during the curriculum journey.

Expected Outcomes set out for each year group what pupils should be able to know, remember and do.

Curriculum Branches divide the model curriculum into half-term units of study which repeat annually, giving a spiral curriculum which allows children to build progressively on the prior knowledge and develop their understanding year by year.

The curriculum branches are:

Autumn 1	Creation and Covenant
Autumn 2	Prophecy and Promise
Spring 1	Galilee to Jerusalem
Spring 2	Desert to Garden
Summer 1	To the Ends of the Earth
Summer 2	Dialogue and Encounter

The curriculum is firmly founded on building children's knowledge and understanding of

Scripture, while providing opportunities to make connections to other faiths and cultures, as well as to their daily lives.

The Framework for Learning in Religious Education

		R	1	2	3	4	5	6
Autumn	Autumn 1	Creation and Covenant God made our world. God made me and loves me.	Creation and Covenant How God made the world and everything comes from Him. Caring for God's world.	Creation and Covenant The story of Noah and God's covenant. Psalm 139 The Sacrament of Baptism	Creation and Covenant The Creation story and the relationship between humans, God and the world.	Creation and Covenant The Story of Abraham and his covenant	Creation and Covenant Moses' Covenant and the Ten Commandments	Creation and Covenant The second account of Creation, Nicene Creed, Laudato Si'
	Autumn 2	Prophecy and Promise Mary has a baby. Advent Wreath	Prophecy and Promise The stories leading up to Jesus' birth, the Hail Mary and the Gloria	Prophecy and Promise The Annunciation John the Baptist	Prophecy and Promise How we celebrate Mass The Messiah would be born	Prophecy and Promise Scripture passages that speak of the Messiah and prophecy	Prophecy and Promise Scripture passages that speak of David's life and importance.	Prophecy and Promise Women of the Old Testament in salvation history, the Magnificat
Spring	Spring 1	Galilee to Jerusalem Jesus blesses the little children. Jesus came to show God's love for everyone.	Galilee to Jerusalem The beginning of Jesus' ministry on Earth	Galilee to Jerusalem Stories from Luke's Gospel. John the Baptist as a prophet.	Galilee to Jerusalem The Miracles of Jesus The Parables	Galilee to Jerusalem Scripture Passages from Matthew's Gospel on how Jesus reveals the type of Messiah He is	Galilee to Jerusalem The Beatitudes. Jesus summarises the law. The Our Father	Galilee to Jerusalem The Miracles of Jesus and the seven sacraments
	Spring 2	Desert to Garden Jesus died on the cross.	Desert to Garden Lent and the stories leading up to Jesus; final days on Earth	Desert to Garden Holy Week The Sacrament of Reconciliation	Desert to Garden The Miracles of the loaves The Last Supper	Desert to Garden The Events of Holy week from the Gospel of Matthew	Desert to Garden Ash Wednesday Temptation in the Wilderness	Desert to Garden Stations of the Cross and the stories leading up to Jesus' death
Summer	Summer 1	To the Ends of the Earth Pentecost Jesus went back to his father.	To the Ends of the Earth Pentecost	To the Ends of the Earth The Ascension Pentecost Conversion of Saul The fruits and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.	To the Ends of the Earth The Road to Emmaus The Mission to the world Early Church	To the Ends of the Earth The Empty Tomb The appearance on the shore of Tiberius The Apostles' Creed	To the Ends of the Earth The gift of the Holy Spirit Confirmation Baptism	To the Ends of the Earth The stories following Jesus' Resurrection and meeting Christ in the Eucharist .
	Summer 2	Dialogue and Encounter Friends of Jesus Talk about their local (faith) community.	Dialogue and Encounter Local Christian Community and Judaism	Dialogue and Encounter The Good Samaritan Local Christian Community Jewish Laws, beliefs and worship	Dialogue and Encounter Exodus Jewish Celebration of Passover	Dialogue and Encounter The different traditions in the Liturgy of the Church Islam	Dialogue and Encounter Judaism and Christianity	Dialogue and Encounter Promoting unity and love among all people. Connections between Dharmic beliefs

Achieving the highest standards in RE
What we believe we achieve at St Joseph's is that our children are living and breathing our Catholic faith, following the Gospel values and living out the school Mission Statement.

In many lessons, children have the choice of a **challenge task,** which encourages deeper thought and reflection. This enables them to show a deeper understanding of the learning, often **making links** to scripture, Catholic beliefs and their lives.

The children are used to self-assessment in RE, where the **success criteria** enable children to reflect on their learning and strive for high levels of attainment.

The Special Books are one of the ways we measure how well knowledge and understanding is embedded in RE learning. Special Books in RE are always kept. At the end of year six the books are given back to the child, ribbon bound, as a record of the child's journey through the school.

Another is the way the children conduct themselves in and around school and the way they treat and respect each other and their school environment, both sound indications of how they have learned to live their Catholic faith and serve others.

When we talk to children, we hear them using religious language.

Children have the opportunity to share their work with their parents on three open days through the year, a shared time, which they relish.

RE in the classroom and beyond

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, the teaching of religious education is designed to be as varied and creative as possible, to help children to engage fully with the ideas explored, to ask wondering questions and to lead their own learning in discerning their response.

Learning within the classroom may include:

- Whole class discussion and teaching
- Group discussion and feedback
- Drama and role play
- Independent research
- Exploration through music and art
- Godly/small world play
- External speakers / workshops
- **development of religious language** and literacy – of people, places and objects – through stories, symbols and rituals
- a joyful learning journey, which marks out growth in learning and understanding of The Faith
- an experience and celebration of their success and that of others
- finding evidence of **"Christ in our World"** in their everyday experiences
- working together within a context of mutual support
- reflection points throughout the lessons

- The RE display within the classrooms reflect the current RED branch; children regularly select their favourite piece of work to be photocopied in colour and displayed.

Learning in religious education cannot always be recorded and does not begin or end in the classroom. Learning from religious education will also flow into other curriculum areas as pupils make links between their learning. We aim to give children the opportunity to connect their formal learning with their wider understanding through regular opportunities to reflect and respond.

Learning beyond the classroom may include:

- Following the example of a role model in daily life at home or in school
- Participation in charitable activity and fundraising
- Inspiration through reflection in prayer and liturgy
- Conversations with clergy or parishioners in school
- Response to catechesis in the parish e.g for Reconciliation or First Holy Communion
- Engagement with programmes based on Catholic social teaching. At St Joseph's we participate in the Faith in Action award.
- Application of the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) principles throughout the school environment.

We work closely with parents and with the St Joseph's parish to support children's progress in understanding and developing on their curriculum and faith journey. Regular contact between school and parish is maintained, this is enhanced greatly by the weekly visits of members of the Parish Team.

Other World Views

Catholic education seeks to form pupils who are well prepared to play a positive role in society and to follow Jesus' teaching to "love your neighbour". We therefore embrace learning about other world views with ***"a willingness… to try to understand better the religion of one's neighbours, and to experience something of their religious life and culture."*** (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales)

The Religious Education Directory includes a branch called 'Dialogue and Encounter' which focuses specifically on exploring other world views and recognising the connections with the Catholic faith. Opportunities for dialogue and encounter are sought throughout the academic year and especially focus on broadening pupils' experiences and on real-life encounters with those of other faiths or none, to enable connections and develop understanding. Examples may include:

- Opportunities for families in our community to share their faith and experience
- Conversations with invited visitors about their beliefs and experiences
- Q&A with faith leaders online or in person
- Visits to places of worship

- Guided exploration of artefacts from other faiths
- Independent reading, research and discussion

External speakers are always checked in line with the CES checklist for external speakers, to ensure safe and constructive dialogue and encounter opportunities for our pupils. External Speaker Checklist

Feedback, Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Feedback is given in Religious Education to support children's progress and to challenge their thinking. This follows the school's Teaching for Learning Policy.

One piece of quality work is expected in the special books each week. If for any reason a week is missed then compensate in future weeks. Other weekly work is added to the Spiritual Journey book.

All work in the Spiritual Journey book is either collaborative work or reflection.

In Reception, one piece of quality work is recorded in the special books for each branch. The children may choose to add more than this which they often do. Other work completed by the child during deliberate practice sessions or during continuous provision could also be added, if it is special and relevant to the branch.

Work is marked with encouraging comments and include the driver words from the learning objective, where appropriate.

Only spellings corrected are the key words and basic religious language.

Assessment follows diocesan and national guidelines, assessing against the expected outcomes for each branch in the Religious Education Directory. Pupil attainment is recorded half-termly on the school's assessment recording system and progress is tracked regularly by the RE Lead and SLT in line with the school's Assessment Policy.

The RE Lead moderates outcomes in Religious Education both internally and with local Catholic schools, to ensure consistency of expectations with other schools in the diocese.

Outcomes for Religious Education are shared in line with other core curriculum subjects, both during parent consultation meetings and in end-of-year reports.

Monitoring and Evaluating

RE Leaders and SLT monitor every aspect of Religious Education in line with other core curriculum subjects. Monitoring is conducted at least termly and feedback is given to individual staff. Outcomes may inform further training at staff meetings or actions for the subject action plan.

Leaders for RE and senior leaders triangulate evidence of standards in RE through:

- Observation of teaching and learning in classrooms through regular drop ins

- Book looks where the leaders verify the extent to which the standards of work match planning expectations and those consistent with pupils achieving mastery in the subject.
- Pupil discussion to evidence that policy and practice align with outcomes
- Senior leaders monitor all aspects of the above

Self-evaluation of Religious Education is the responsibility of the Headteacher, the RE Lead, Governors and the Senior Leadership Team, with further input from all teachers of religious education, from families and from pupils. This process ensures a culture of continuous improvement, so that teaching and learning in Religious Education remains the best it can be.

A dedicated RE governor has responsibility for reporting on RE to the full governing body. There are regular meetings between the governor and the subject leader.

Staff Formation

All staff support the Catholic ethos of our school and strive to develop children's progress and understanding in matters of faith. There are regular opportunities for all staff to engage in personal prayer and reflection which may support their professional role.

All teachers involved in planning and delivering Religious Education lessons have attended half-termly diocesan training on the curriculum directory resources. The RE Lead collaborates with other local schools to share best practice more widely.

Catholic Life and Mission

Witness to our Faith
Our children, through their house groups raise money for charity. House groups organise fundraising days spaced through the year. In this way, we donate to:

- Missio
- HCPT
- Faith in Action
- Mary's Meals
- Epsom Foodbank

In addition, at Christmas, families donate to CAFOD in place of sending Christmas cards to each other. Through the World Gifts initiative, we buy goats, education packs, water for a village and other items.

We also support an annual charity, which is typically suggested by school families.

Contribution to Parish Life
On Holy Days of obligation and special days, we join with parishioners and parents for prayer services and masses, in our adjacent parish church. For these occasions, the school prepares the liturgy, including readings, singing, offertory and serving.

At other times, our children attend specific services at St. Joseph's Church. Of particular importance is the Advent Service, the Passion Play, May Procession and Harvest.

We launch our year by welcoming newcomers to the school, when children are presented with a prayer card as a memento of joining our school worshipping community.

The end of year mass for the children who are transferring to their secondary schools is particularly special. At this, we present each child with a crucifix to take with them as they go forth. They also receive a ribbon wrapped set of their Special Books, for each of their years with us.

During Lent and Advent, the children attend a reconciliation service.

Regular contact between school and parish is maintained, this is enhanced greatly by the weekly visits of members of the Parish Team.