

St Francis Catholic Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Jesus said 'Love one another as I have loved you'

St Francis School is a loving community, respecting every child and adult and caring for God's world, as we help each other to do our best and grow together in Christ.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.

1. Introduction

We begin by echoing those questioning words of invitation, which are the first words of Christ to his disciples in the Gospel of St John: 'What do you seek?' (John 1:38). We seek to foster in our children a true understanding of the Catholic faith, a reverence for God and a sense of love and respect for one another. Viewed in this context, Religious Education permeates every aspect of school life.

2. Aims Of Our Religious Education

- To present a comprehensive content which engages pupils and is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
- 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 so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society;
- To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
- To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;
- 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;
- To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.
- For our children to learn that:
 - Creation is a gift from God.
 - Jesus is a model. He is someone who tells us that if we are to find life, we must love God with all our hearts and our neighbour as ourselves (Lk 10: 27-28) supported by our mission statement to 'love one another as I have loved you'.
 - The Holy Family is sacred.
 - St Francis is the patron of our school.
 - Our Lady is the mother of Jesus and ourselves.
 - The apparitions of Mary fill us with hope.
 - Comfort is found in the Holy Spirit.
 - The mass is a celebration of our faith.

3. Implementation

To achieve our aims we use the Religious Education Curriculum Directory coupled by the Come and See programme of Religious Education. 'Come and See' is developed through three themes based on the documents of the Second Vatican Council. These are Church, Sacrament and Christian Living.

Religious Education is important because it addresses the needs of every pupil at St Francis. Christian values and attitudes permeate the whole life of the school. All children have regular Lessons based on the 'Come and See' program of study linked to the Curriculum Directory as recommended by the Brentwood Religious Education Service.

The Come and See program of study is based on theological foundations of the second Vatican Council, the Catholic Catechism and the revised RE Curriculum Directory and includes the Catholic attainment levels. It is a structured program delivered through 9 topics per year group, split into three topics per term, based on 3 main themes. Each topic is opened up through 'Explore' and developed through 'Reveal' and 'Respond'. A guide for time spent on each topic:

Explore	one week
Reveal	two weeks
Respond	one week

There is a whole school approach to planning and assessment using a common format relating to 'Come and See'. This program is well resourced through both the teacher's book and online resources. Things such as links to videos, music, images and a variety of activities support engagement and interest in the subject matter being taught and improve children's learning.

Overview of Content

Foundation and Focus

Each term, the mystery of life is explored within the Catholic faith tradition.

Autumn:	God, Creator	Life – Creation.
Spring:	God, Saviour	Dignity - Incarnation
Summer:	God, Spirit	Purpose – Redemption

The basic question/belief for each term is explored through three kinds of themes:

Community of Faith– Church Themes

Autumn:	Domestic Church	Family
Spring:	Local Church	Community
Summer:	Universal Church	World

Celebration in Ritual – Sacraments

Autumn:	Baptism/Confirmation	Belonging
Spring:	Eucharist	Relating
Summer:	Inter-relating	Reconciliation

Way of Life

Autumn:	Advent/Christmas	Loving
Spring:	Lent/Easter	Giving
Summer:	Pentecost	Serving

Attitudes

Through programmes of study and the skills developed, it is our intention to help pupils develop:

- A respect of God
- A respect for oneself
- A respect for other
- A respect for our environment
- A clear sense of right and wrong
- A sense of personal responsibility

4. World Religions

One week per term is devoted to the study of world religions. In the autumn term, Judaism is taught with Islam reserved for the summer term. Please note that in the spring term one week is set aside for either Hinduism or Sikhism

5. Planning

The RE Co-ordinator generates a term overview of topics and distributes it to each class teacher and displays it in the staffroom on a staff display. This denotes topics to be planned, taught and assessed. The short term planning of teachers is in accordance with the following:

- Objectives to be taught
- Main Teaching Activity
- Differentiated activities appropriate to age/ability and learning styles
- Plenary activity
- Evaluation of lesson
- Resources used

Teaching of the Come and See topics takes place in the classroom through a selection of differentiated activities including storytelling, role play, painting, discussion, hot seating, reading, independent research and assembly. Past planning is catalogued on the curriculum server to assist with evidence, monitoring and pupil assessment.

6. Assessment

Assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils in R.E. It involves the identification of each child's progress in each aspect of the subject - determining what each child has learned. This informs future planning for the next stage of his/her learning.

Assessment is undertaken by: observation, discussion and marking by teachers in the course of their teaching and by the use of self-evaluation by pupils. At the end of each topic, the children assess their own learning against objectives providing a comment on what they feel are their strengths and weaknesses in that particular area.

Teacher's record their assessments in an Assessment file containing sheets from the Come and See assessment document providing continuity and consistency throughout the school.

7. Journey in Love

The Journey in Love programme is used to teach relationships and sexual education. The children realise that their own sexuality is a gift from God. Approved by BRES, the programme centres on respect for self, for others and ultimately - God the Creator. St John says that God is love (1 John 4:8) and the whole purpose of Christianity is to live it as fully as possible in and through love. This means that we have to link every aspect of our being, from birth to death, with love. We follow Dr Jack Dominian's foreword of the Journey in Love syllabus: 'The whole purpose of education at home, in the primary school is to connect every aspect of growth, physical, emotional, intellectual and social with love'.

8. Prayer

A prayerful atmosphere is integral to our school life. Our school day begins with a prayer of hope and ends with thanksgiving. Religious icons are in situ in all classrooms and children actively participate in religious assemblies. Children regularly have the opportunity to write their own prayers which form their class prayer books. At different times throughout the year, children elect to attend lunchtime Rosary group and offer their private intentions. Class masses are held throughout the academic year. In addition, the school regularly attends Mass with the wider parish community. Children of all ages and ability participate in the following services: Feast of All Saints; Christmas Mass; Education Sunday; Ash Wednesday; Feast of St Francis; Feast of St Peter and St Paul; Leavers Mass. Whole school assemblies are convened to mark days/events specific in the Catholic Calendar.

9. Saints

In order to celebrate the call to holiness of our saints, each class studies a particular saint:

St Francis – Reception Class
St Christopher – Year 1
St Bernadette – Year 2
St John Bosco – Year 3
St Patrick – Year 4
St John Payne – Year 5
St George – Year 6

Children are also allocated a House saint in Reception:

St Anthony
St Francis
St Mary
St Teresa

10. School and Community

We celebrate parents as the primary contributors to our children's moral growth. We warmly welcome parents, guardians and other interested visitors to our school masses, and class assemblies. In addition, a term newsletter of topics is generated and distributed to parents. This provides an opportunity for further exploration of skills in the home environment. Children are made aware of their social responsibility to assist those less fortunate than themselves. As part of our development strategies, we involve the children in charity fundraising events throughout the year. This is particularly evident during Harvest, Advent and Lent.

The vital partnership between home, school and parish provide the context for the lifelong process of spiritual formation.

The parish is responsible for the religious formation of its members and provides the setting for family catechesis. As outlined in Diocesan policy, children are prepared for the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation by their parents with the help of Parish Catechists. Our parish priest is Father Mark Reilly.

Whole school masses are celebrated in the school — Holy Days, beginning of the school year for St Francis' feast day and Leavers Mass.

Key Stage 2— each House has an annual mass celebrated in the church of Our Lady of the Assumption.

Class based masses are celebrated in the autumn term.

There are opportunities for children to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent

Children participate in Easter and Christmas celebrations.

11. RE Co-ordinator

The RE Co-ordinator attends regular meetings organised by BRES and reports back to the rest of the staff. At the start of each term, the onus is on him/her to provide a reflective overview of each topic to teaching staff. A termly overview is presented to each class teacher and made available in the staffroom to ensure consistency throughout the school. The RE Co-ordinator is available to support members of staff whether or not of the Catholic faith and develop their confidence in delivering the scheme of work ensuring consistent implementation. In addition he/she arranges for staff inset/retreat days throughout the year.

Masses are planned in conjunction with our Parish Priest who assumes an active role in school life. The Re Co-ordinator takes the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity throughout the school. This then leads to devising and advising staff on assessment and record keeping activities which are monitored on a regular basis.

12. Resources

A range of material resources, including music and artefacts of the Catholic faith and other religions are used to supplement the syllabus. Each class teacher has a copy of the Come and See folder and a wide variety of books to support this programme. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is available for reference. St Francis School is committed to developing the use of ICT on line resources (Come and See Website) in Religious Education.

13. Conclusion

We believe that all pupils are unique and that whatever their backgrounds or stage in faith development, each one should have the opportunity, through prayer to develop a personal relationship with God and thus to live out the Gospel in their daily lives.

Mrs. A Hanner (Subject Leader)

Mrs. L Collins (Link Governor)