



ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC SCHOOL Diocese of Westminster

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Mission Statement: “We are special people on a journey, growing and learning together in search of excellence, as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus.”

Rationale of Religious Education

- We believe parents are the first and best educators of their children
- We believe in fostering strong parish – home- school links to enable staff, children, parents and parish to work together to support the community in which we live, work and worship
- We believe Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the church
- We believe Religious Education to be ‘the core of the curriculum’
- We are aware that evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school and we are clear that the specific contribution Religious Education makes to the Catholic Life of the school is primarily educational and will be planned , taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects.
- We understand Religious Education to be the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ

Religious Education is, then, the core subject in English Martyrs, it is a rigorous academic discipline and as such is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other core subject.

The outcome of Catholic Religious Education 'is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills -appropriate to their age and capacity- to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Religious Education in English Martyrs School aims to promote:

- knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life;
- knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose;
- the skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.

Leadership of Religious Education

Religious Education is the responsibility of the R.E. co-ordinator and the headteacher with support from Key Stage Leaders. Their role is to monitor and assess the R.E. curriculum and Catholic prayer and worship throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression. They also ensure that the aims and learning outcomes in the Curriculum Directory are identified and fulfilled. A link governor has specific responsibility for R.E. and liaises closely with the staff of the school to fulfil their monitoring duties.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Religious Education

The Religious Education Co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- Working with senior leaders and monitoring teaching and learning, planning and standards through lesson observations and work scrutinies according to school practice.
- Organising in-house moderation of standards meetings.
- Self evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Ensuring the curriculum offered is appropriate, suitable and relevant to pupils' needs and interests.
- Attend appropriate training and keeping up to date with current thinking, policy and developments and feeding back to staff.
- Organising and leading in-house staff training and development.
- Identifying training needs of staff to ensure their suitability to teach effective Religious Education.
- Supporting and advising colleagues in the delivery of Religious Education.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, Governors, parents, the Education Service on matters relating to Religious Education.
- Auditing, managing and developing resources within a given budget.

Curriculum Content

R.E. is a core subject in our school, alongside English, Maths and Science, and therefore we devote 10% of our curriculum time to its delivery. We adhere to the Curriculum Directory guidelines and learning outcomes. This provides a cohesive approach and opportunities for whole school assemblies and celebrations as well as displays which are relevant to every child.

The core of our curriculum is based on the Diocesan plans provided by Margaret Carswell. The content of this R.E. programme is based on the four major Constitutions of Vatican II; these are related to the Church's teaching on Revelation, the Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. These themes are treated and developed each year, though children are introduced to the theme through a variety of different "Life Topics" related to it. [The Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory for R.E. (January, 1997) follows the same structure of the major Vatican II Constitutions, relating them to study of the Trinity, Creation, the Scriptures, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.]

These themes are developed with greater depth and breadth each year as the child progresses through the school, and will form the core of our R.E. studies.

The purpose of these areas of study is to help the children as follows:

Revelation: Story, Scripture, Memory and Tradition of the Church

- a. to explore the importance of story in the human quest for meaning;
- b. to understand the role of Christian Scriptures as expressions of the ways in which humankind strives to understand the nature of God and the nature of human persons;
- c. to reflect upon the personal and community response to God invited by Scripture;
- d. to explore the sacred writings of other faith communities.

Church : Community of Believers, Pilgrim People of God

- a. to reflect on the experience of belonging to community at various levels;
- b. to reflect on the belief that, as people created in the image of a Triune God, Christians are called to be that community which is the Church;
- c. to develop a knowledge and understanding of people and roles in the Church and understand that to be the Church is to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ;
- d. to explore the relationship between the Catholic Church and other denominations and faiths.

Life in Christ: Lifestyle, Morality, Values, Attitudes

- a. to explore the values which underpin beliefs and actions in the human family;
- b. to understand the following of Christ as a call to holiness/wholeness of life;
- c. to reflect on the values which Christ expressed in his life and teaching;
- d. to explore the values and way of life of other world faiths.

Celebration: Ritual, Prayer, Sacraments, Worship, Liturgy

- a. to explore the meaning of celebration which marks the growth and development of every human being;
- b. to understand that spiritual growth and development is rooted in the Church's sacramental life which is expressed in sign and symbol throughout the liturgical year;
- c. to reflect on the place of prayer in the life of the Catholic community and of individual Christians;
- d. to develop a knowledge and understanding of prayer in other faiths.

"What are we to teach? Bishops' Conference of England and Wales'.

Marking

In line with the school's marking policy, the marking of children's religious work should always be positive and supportive to encourage the child in his/her faith journey as well as explaining their next steps in learning and addressing key misconceptions and errors.

Assessment and Recording

The assessment of Religious Education at our school is designed to assist our children's learning and to enable them to strive for a feeling of confidence and success in their understanding of the Catholic faith. Progress is monitored through discussion, questioning, posing problems and giving opportunities to present their knowledge to others in a variety of ways, e.g. class assemblies. Attainment level records are completed at the end of each half term to show children's levels of understanding and Senior Leadership Team monitor pupils' attainment and progress.

Teaching Staff

All teachers at English Martyrs School are either Catholic or are sympathetic to the teaching of the Catholic faith which permeates all aspects of our school life. Through example, commitment and teaching, the children are encouraged to develop a loving and trusting relationship with God, an experience which it is hoped will influence their attitudes to life and their relationship with other people. All teaching staff have the responsibility of teaching Religious Education to the children in their class and providing homework to parents for each topic.

Home Links

The school recognises that it cannot teach our children without the cooperation of the parents and the parish. The parents/guardians are the first educators and they are in partnership with the teachers who have the professional skills and training to help parents in the task of teaching the Catholic faith. We endeavour to do this in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. During the year, parents and friends are invited to join us at many celebrations. Parents are always invited and welcomed to all our school and class celebrations which include school masses, class masses and assemblies. Wednesday Word, CathCom Reach and termly letters detailing each Religion topic also help to keep parents informed.

Parish Links

We recognise that the school stands in the midst of the local community. At parish level, we take an active part in the holy days of obligation masses in the parish church. In addition, classes from KS2 will attend a weekday mass at church every term.

The parish priest, who is also a governor of the school, has responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community. The parish priest promotes the spiritual life of the school and leads the celebration of liturgies, mass, penitential services, and the other liturgical feasts and celebrations during the year. The parish priest also instructs pupils on traditions and rituals of the church and the church is often used for such lessons.

Prayer

An essential part of the Catholic ethos of the school is the prayer life. Staff meetings and Governors meetings begin with a prayer. The most important aspect of prayer for children is that they realise it is their way of communicating with God.

Children are encouraged to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development. The Diocesan plans offers progression for children as they move through the school. Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying:

- quiet reflection / meditation
- praying together
- writing own prayers
- prayers through music
- learning traditional Christian / Catholic prayers.

Staff are encouraged to pray with children, and to be an example for them. Through prayer, we endeavour to develop our relationship with God.

All classes have a prayer area which has displays of children's work. This area changes with the liturgical calendar. Class prayers are established throughout the school and each teacher uses prayers appropriate to age and ability of the class. Candles, pictures and objects are also used as a focus for prayer.

Children take part in whole school assemblies where children and staff join together to pray. Children are encouraged to pray their own prayers. Classes will have daily / weekly acts of prayer and worship including pupil-led liturgy.

Collective Worship

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. The act of worship is distinct from R.E. lessons. It forms an integral part of school life and is central to Catholic tradition.

Those responsible will ensure that acts of worship are in accordance with the school's instrument of governance and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

Collective worship in our school community provides opportunities to: deepen our relationship with God; grow in spiritual, moral and liturgical understanding; grow in understanding of our living faith tradition; develop a sense of wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ; reflect upon our own individual faith journeys and develop the skills of prayer. Collective worship is celebrated in a variety of ways including: whole school worship; class worship; worship through hymns; class mass or liturgy; whole school masses during the year, including holy days of obligation during term time.

As a Catholic school we hope that parents will be fully supportive of our approach to collective worship as part of living out our mission statement. However, we recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship and in such circumstances appropriate supervision arrangements will be made.

Class Saints

All classes have a named Saint for a prayer focus in their classrooms.

EYFS Holy Family	Year 2 St Francis of Assisi	Year 4 St Anne Line	Year6 St. Margaret Clitherow
Year 1 St Anthony	Year 3 St Therese of Lisieux	Year 5 St John Southworth	Whole School English Martyrs St. Thomas More St. John Fisher

Sacramental Preparation

The children are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion from Year 3. The course of preparation is carried out in the parish and the school works in close consultation and partnership with the priests and catechists. In this way we hope to achieve true partnership between school, family and parish, with the children celebrating their First Communion in their local churches.

Pupils in Years 4-6 will have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school during Advent and Lent and The Eucharist is celebrated often throughout the school year.

Multi-Cultural and Multi-Faith

English Martyrs is a Catholic school that encourages tolerance, respect and care for all people, regardless of colour, race or creed. While Religious Education is specifically the Catholic tradition, we welcome input from other faiths and denominations. We appreciate how the beliefs and values of other faith communities can enrich our own spiritual existence. Two weeks teaching and learning time per year is given to teaching Judaism and Islam..

Review

The RE Coordinator undertakes regular termly monitoring of RE, reports to Governors and meets with our Deanery Advisor. Outcomes are used to plan training and development needs for the coming year and prioritise actions in the following School Development Plan.

Religious Education Policy		Priority Level: Traffic light no (1-3)	
<p style="text-align: center;">January / Spring / 2016</p> Policy Date		<p style="text-align: center;">Spring / 2017</p> Review Date	
Approved/Ratified (Date): 	Name/Committee: Standards Committee	Signature: 	
Notes: Explanatory notes, statutory requirements, traffic light system			
Related Policies/Documents: Details of other policies, documents and websites (where published)			