English Martyrs'

RC Primary School

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

2026-2028

Our English Martyrs' School community aims to follow the example of Christ in welcoming, recognising, fostering and developing each individual as a unique and special gift of GOD with value and dignity

This policy is designed to reflect and support the school's Mission Statement:

To follow the example of Christ in welcoming, recognising, fostering and developing each individual as a unique and special gift of God with value and dignity.

We aim to be a welcoming, caring, loving and worshipping community, firmly rooted in the teachings of Christ, recognising and respecting each individual as a unique gift from God - together, forging a partnership working for the good of all, to enable us to grow and develop spiritually, academically, socially and morally.

ETHOS

Christ is the centre and foundation of a Catholic School. All members of our school community share the responsibility of making the school Catholic. Parents, teachers, the parish priest and Governors enable our children to live full lives in Christ and help them to participate in the building up a faith based on the Kingdom of God. It is recognised that the first educators in the faith are parents. By their example in the home and the participation in the Mass and other sacraments, the foundations of life-long faith and discipleship in their children are laid down.'(Bishop' Conference of England and Wales, 2000)

The Catholic vision of education and our school mission promote the dignity and freedom of every person created in the image and likeness of God. The vision inspires and encourages the beliefs and values that are lived out in the daily life of the Catholic school. Within this vision, religious education is very much a journey of formation involving every member of the school community, together with a pupil's family and parish community. For our children in English Martyrs' Catholic Primary religious education is a core subject in the school's curriculum. It is a rigorous academic discipline, and as such it is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.

OUR AIMS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our aims in the area of Religious Education are: -

- To situate Christ at the centre of all that we do. Jesus Christ is the absolute revelation of God. Through the Holy spirit each of us, in the Communion of Christ's Church, has the means to know and to love God, our Father, by knowing and loving his Son Jesus Christ.
- To engage all pupils in a systematic study of the mystery of Christ that holds the fullness of the truth that God has revealed. It will also provide the basis for an openness to the seeds of the Word that are to be found in other religions (CF Redemptoris Mission, 56; Nostra Aetate, 2).
- To develop a sense of wonder and an understanding of the Christian way of life based on the teachings of the life of Jesus.
- To develop a personal relationship with God.
- To experience belonging to a faith community which strives to live by and foster Gospel values.
- To become familiar with religious language, symbols and styles of worship and prayer.
- To develop appropriate skills, for example, the ability to listen, to think critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically, to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively, to make informed judgements.
- To foster appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth; respect for the view of others; awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural society.
- To make children appreciate that Christianity is a universal religion and to understand the diversity of Christian traditions, by introducing a variety of music and practices from a variety of cultures.
- To develop a social conscience identified as seeking the common good – working with agencies like CAFOD and MISSIO.

- To support parents and the parish in creating a Catholic Christian community built on the experience of prayer and liturgy.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

English Martyrs' School is an inner-city primary school with a roll of around 335 pupils situated on two sites close to the parish church of the English Martyrs, Walworth. The pupils from Catholic families attending our school predominantly come from the parish of English Martyrs' Walworth; with a few children attending from St. Winifred parish and other neighbouring parishes.

Our intake of children comes from a variety of family, social, ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds with varying levels of religious commitment. These factors mean that there is a wide spectrum of experiences among our children and their families upon which to draw and which always must be considered with care and sensitivity in all teaching and learning situations.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Leadership of Religious Education

The Foundation Governors

- Have a statutory responsibility to preserve and develop the religious character of the school
- The governors and headteacher are responsible for ensuring the Religious Education has a high profile, and is taught as a core subject.
- Ensure that 10% of taught curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education, in each academic year from EYFS to Year 6. These time allocations do not include collective worship, assemblies or hymn practice.
- That there is a named person who is responsible for leading Religious Education and the post holder is a practising Catholic
- As the post is a reserved post, it is expected that schools appoint a practising Catholic
- The appointment of a non-Catholic to the post of leader of Religious Education must be discussed with the deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality, as the post may require exemption from the Archbishop.
- The leader of curriculum Religious education should have parity in status and renumeration with leaders of other core curriculum subjects.
- The curriculum of Religious Education is well resourced, both in content and the continuing professional development of those teaching the subject.
- There is regular and comprehensive monitoring of curriculum Religious Education.

The R.E. leader is responsible for

- Monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education
- Plan and teach schemes of work that are engaging and accessible so that all pupils may progress appropriately in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith
- Ensure that R.E. contributes positively to the broad and balanced curriculum of a Catholic school through cooperation and dialogue with other subjects
- Supporting colleagues in the teaching of R.E.
- Being informed about current developments in the subject
- Providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school
- Updating the R.E. development plan and policy
- Encouraging the use of appropriate practice

- Consulting with staff at all levels and ensuring that information is communicated to them
- Leading staff in INSET
- Maintaining and updating resources
- Promoting the use of outside resources and opportunities

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education Programme is based on the Bishop's Religious Education Curriculum Directory and developed in accordance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

At English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Religious Education is a core subject, primarily taught through the 'THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE' programme, a book based resource published by CTS. This is organised in half termly topics for each year group. (See Curriculum Map)

Religious Education is taught through specific RE lessons but, where they naturally occur, links are made with other subjects in the curriculum – Literacy, PHSCE, Maths, History and Geography. RE cannot help but influence and permeate all we do in school.

An emphasis is placed on the sharing of ideas and experiences through class and group discussions and through collective worship, assemblies, and a variety of services, liturgical and non-liturgical.

'The Way, the Truth and the Life' scheme is supplemented with work linked to the liturgical year e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, building up an understanding of the Celebration of the Eucharist, and through studying the life of the Saints. Each year group studies their class Saint and feasts of different Saints and Liturgical Feasts. Through 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' programme we teach children about other faiths and cultures. This is to give them the knowledge necessary to appreciate and respect the beliefs and traditions of others. In the autumn term Judaism and in the summer term Islam, Sikhism or Hinduism are taught on a three-year cycle.

In the Early Years children are provided with a holistic, outcome-based curriculum which is responsive to our spiritual and each child's diverse social, emotional learning and developmental needs. This is developed through effective collaboration within our learning community and learning experiences which are relevant, meaningful and activity based.

PRAYER AND LITURGY

Prayer is taught and explored in R.E. lessons, and experienced through prayer times and liturgy. Children will be offered a wide variety of prayer and worship experiences. Prayer forms a part of the everyday life of the school. Prayers are said at the beginning and end of each school day and also take place at dinner times. We aim to create and maintain an environment where prayer is fostered and developed and to have focal points for prayer in each classroom. Prayer will include traditional prayers, informal, spontaneous, meditative and reflective prayers, litanies, silent prayer, hymns music and singing. Gestures, prayer services and liturgies, celebrations and the use of visuals. Care is taken to explain the meaning of traditional and formal prayers at an appropriate time and level of understanding. Participation in many forms of liturgy is an integral part of the Religious Education in the school. This enables the child to learn through participation and it provides common experiences on which to reflect in lessons.

EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATIONS

The celebration of the Eucharist takes place throughout the school year in the Parish Church as part of the school community. Whole school mass is at the beginning and end of term and the celebration of holy days of obligations. The theme of the mass is normally based on the R.E. programme themes or the Church liturgical calendar.

For a number of years, Year 6 pupils have been going for retreat to Aylesford which is run by the Carmelite Friars who were based in our parish at English Martyrs. The Friars accommodate and help us with the religious preparation and meditation supported by the class teachers.

LINKS WITH HOME AND PARISH

The home, parish and school have distinct but complementary roles in the process of nurturing and educating the faith of our children. The school has strong links with the Parish of English Martyrs'; we liaise with the Parish Priest and other visiting priests who support the school with the planning of school Eucharistic celebrations and other celebrations such as Reconciliation services for years 4, 5 and 6 pupils.

Parents form a vital element in the Religious Education of their children. The school keeps parents informed of their child's progress in R.E. at termly learning conferences and in their annual report. The school staff are always willing to give advice and to support parents in helping their child on their journey of faith. Parents and parishioners are encouraged to attend Masses held in the church with the pupils. In order to further enhance the School-home partnership, every half term a newsletter goes out to parents/carers on the different topics being studied and the feasts being celebrated.

A copy of the Wednesday Word is sent home each week to support home/school/parish links.

INCLUSION

The school recognises that children have varying needs and takes care to differentiate tasks in Religious Education to meet the abilities of the child. We are aware that children are at different Levels in their faith development. Some children only have a simple understanding, while others are deeper into their faith journey. We aim to give all children opportunities to deepen their faith and this informs planning of RE lessons by teachers.

PLANNING, ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

Documents from the Catholic Education Service (CES) publish standards on religious education and assessment which are followed by the school.

Each Half Term the RE topic is assessed. Class teachers assess pupils formally through a written piece of work which for each topic as well through their interaction with pupils during that half term. The assessment of RE establishes what pupils know, understand and can do. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith.

Pupils' progress is regularly monitored through book looks, lesson observations and moderation of pupils work in RE and with literacy.

The R.E. subject leader keep samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement in R.E. in each year group of the school is. Assessment data is also collated and analysed by the subject leader at key assessment points throughout the year. R.E is reported to parents at Termly Learning Conferences, as well as the annual end of year report to parents.

RESOURCES

The resources for the teaching of RE include a variety of Bibles, stories with a biblical theme, prayer books, posters, artefacts, ideas for services, assemblies and role play, tapes and music. These are stored in Building one first floor and our collection of R.E posters can be found in the set of drawers in the under croft in building one. The RE Co-ordinator is always willing to help teacher's select suitable resources.

In each classroom there should be:

- A focus for prayer/class assemblies /worship.
- A Teacher's copy of 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' for that year group.
- 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' text books for pupils
- A selection of religious books as part of the class reading materials
- A selection of prayer books to be used by pupils.