



SAINT NORBERT'S CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Mission Statement: To live, love and learn in the footprints of Jesus.

Religious Education Policy

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

As a Rights Respecting School, we acknowledge our role as 'duty bearers' in promoting and protecting children's rights.



We respect the dignity and worth of every child. We believe that children have the right to choose their own religion and beliefs and that they should be helped to decide what is right and wrong and what is best for them.

Aims and Objectives

Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At our school we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of their own faith and the major world faiths; we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit.

We enable children to develop a sound knowledge - not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

The aims of Religious Education at St Norbert's are to help children:

- develop a deeper understanding of Catholicism;
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious faith;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;

- develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

The Legal Position of Religious Education

Our school curriculum for Religious Education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the Reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from Religious Education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done after the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach Religious Education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors.

The Religious Education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Nottingham Diocesan Religious Education Directory materials and therefore meets all the requirements of the Nottingham Diocesan Age-Related Expectations. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

We spend 10% of the curriculum teaching time on Religious Education in accordance with the Bishop's Conference.

Teaching and Learning Styles

We base our teaching and learning styles in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at Christian religious festivals, celebrations and Masses such as Easter, Advent, etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also explore the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues, sometimes using computers, sometimes working individually or collaborating in groups.

At least twice per year, each class leads a Celebration of the Word which is shared with the school and parish community through Collective Worship. All families and parishioners are invited to participate.

We recognise that all children have widely differing abilities and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child (and particular need in the case of children with special educational needs or disabilities). We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- using a variety of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches to suit different learning styles;
- setting tasks of increasing challenge;

- signposting and scaffolding to support the child;
- sometimes using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children according to need.

Curriculum Planning in Religious Education

Nottingham Diocesan materials, designed to deliver and fulfil the requirements of the Religious Education Directory ('To know You more clearly') are used in all RE lessons. All staff receive the training necessary to plan and teach lessons and assess pupil outcomes using this approach.

Learning in Religious Education builds upon pupils' prior learning and experiences. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each 'branch', and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school. Work for children with SEND is adapted, depending on their precise needs, so that they can access the same learning as their peers.

There are six 'branches' delivered over the course of each academic year, with each taking approximately one half-term to complete.

Contribution of Religious Education to the Teaching of Other Subjects:

English

Religious Education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting and exploiting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in literacy lessons have religious themes or content, which encourage discussion; this promotes the skills of speaking and listening. Children write and learn material for collective worship. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in different ways to increase creativity and to develop their writing ability.

Computing

We use computing where appropriate in RE. The children find, select and analyse information using the internet; they also use computing to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation. We have an interactive whiteboard in every classroom which is used as part of the RE lesson.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

Through our Religious Education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour, thus – for example – contributing to discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs, health education, love and relationships.

'A Journey in Love' and 'Life to the Full' form the basis of our Relationships and Health Education, incorporating elements of sex education for upper Key Stage 2 which align with the statutory requirements of the Key Stage 2 Science curriculum. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility.

In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be proactive members of our pluralistic society. Our weekly 'Statements to Live By' enable all the school to focus on one particular aspect of their social and emotional learning.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Through teaching Religious Education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to 'Big Questions' concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions.

We enhance children's social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society using the principles of our 'Rights Respecting School'. Children explore issues of religious faith and

values and, through this, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Religious Education for Children with Special Needs or More Able Children

In our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a core component of our school curriculum and ethos.

When teaching RE, we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of individual children; adult support and scaffolding are provided as necessary. We adapt planned learning depending on the targets set for individual children in their Graduated Approach Plans (GAPs) as necessary. Children who are more able in RE are given opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills, linking their knowledge to how they can live this out in everyday life.

We do not view Religious Education as an isolated subject and all classes make curriculum links between RE and other subjects such as art, music, drama or science. Visiting a place of religious significance, followed by time to create and deliver a presentation, is another way of adding depth to the RE curriculum.

Our school participates in religious celebrations, pilgrimages and visits which all further enhance pupils' understanding of faith.

Assessment and Recording

Assessment for Learning is used to inform future planning as each 'branch' is being taught. The portfolio of work accumulated by each child facilitates summative assessment by the teacher throughout and at the end of each term; these assessments are moderated by other staff and – periodically – by the Nottingham Diocesan Lead Advisor for RE.

Our school Marking and Feedback Policy includes 'hearts', 'clouds' and 'footprints' which are designed to further deepen or extend understanding. Children use their green pens to respond to this feedback.

Our approach to feedback in all subjects is designed to accommodate the distinct 'nature' of each discipline. Marking and feedback is used in RE to stimulate children's creative expression and ability to make meaning through reasoned argument.

Resources

Diocesan materials are used to plan teaching and learning which fulfils the requirements of 'To know You more clearly'.

A wide variety of school resources and artefacts enable us to teach all Religious Education 'branches', as well as about other Liturgical feasts and seasons. We store the majority of resources for Religious Education in individual classrooms at age-appropriate levels. Every pupil has access to Bibles. Each class has access to RE text books, candles, drapes and artefacts to be used at different times in the Liturgical year. Each class has a Liturgy Box which is used as a mini altar containing all materials required for child-led liturgies.

We are fortunate that the Catholic Church of St Norbert is situated next to the school building, enabling us to celebrate regular masses each term, besides being a useful teaching resource which the children visit as part of the wider curriculum, together with the support from our parish priest.

Additional teaching materials can be accessed as necessary from the RE Subject Leader to enhance lessons and displays. Homework encourages family participation - e.g. Travelling Advent bags or Lenten bags, depending on the season. We also have a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in Religious Education. A set of Jewish artefacts and other major world faith resource books are also available for studying different faiths. The school library has a supply of RE topic books and other world faith books which are updated as required.

Computer software is available to support the children's individual research and each classroom has an interactive whiteboard. Additional whiteboards are located in the hall and our 'Workshop' and are used (where appropriate) as part of Religious celebrations such as family collective worship and religious performances.

Religious Education and Collective Worship

The link between RE and Collective Worship is expressed through moments of prayer which form the foundation of our lesson experience. Our Prayer and Liturgy Policy is available separately.

Staff and Governor Training

Our school works closely with the Diocesan Advisor, who provides a regular range of training for both staff and updates for Governors. The RE Subject Leader attends regular training in all aspects of the RE curriculum. All new members of the teaching staff undertake training on 'Teachers new to Catholic Schools', unless they have prior experience of working in a similar setting. The 'Bishop's Certificate' has also been part of training for several staff, as well as 'Catholic Foundation Stones'.

Our Advisor provides support through both regular observations and bespoke training according to our needs.

Please see the School Development Plan for further details.

Monitoring and Review

The RE Subject Leader, Alex Dawson is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in Religious Education. He is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of Religious Education, advising on Assemblies, Catholic life, Acts of Collective Worship and Liturgies; he is also responsible for organising resources needed for teaching different topics and displays.

The Subject Leader is responsible for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school, with support from our Parish Priest, Canon Matthew Jakes, who is available for the needs of our school family.

The RE Link-Governor, Mr Gary Heane, meets regularly with the RE Subject Leader to review progress.

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