

Cottesmore St Mary Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy



'Manus nobiscum Domine'
(Abide with us O Lord)

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Policy updated by: Cath McLoughlin (all staff and children consulted)

Policy reviewed & passed by: Curriculum Committee

Key people responsible for Religious Education: Cath McLoughlin,

Key Governor responsible for Religious Education: Katie Raymond

Other linked policies:

Teaching and Learning, Collective Worship and Prayer, Spirituality and Moral Development, EPR, RSHE, Positive Behaviour

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Our Mission

*As a community of life-long learners,
with Christ at the centre,
we strive to do our best and make a difference to the world.*

*Dare to dream and always have hope,
revealing Jesus to others through the choices we make,
while living life to the full.*

Mane Nobiscum Domine – Stay with us Lord

Luke 24:29

LOVE

BELIEVE

ACHIEVE



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 local parish communities 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 fulfil 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 Cottesmore St Mary 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.

RE in the classroom and beyond

At Cottesmore St Mary 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 Play
- External speakers / workshops

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 e.g. Mini-Vinnies; Faith in Action; Oscar Romero Award

We work closely with parents and with the local parishes to support children's progress in understanding and developing on their curriculum and faith journey.

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 recognizing 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

Developmental feedback is given in Religious Education to support children's progress and to challenge their thinking. This follows the school's Feedback Policy and may be given verbally.

Marking should follow the whole school Marking Policy to:

- challenge and further children's learning and understanding
- be interactive and give pupils time to respond to teacher comments as needed
- correct the spelling of religious vocabulary, as well as encourage correct use for proper nouns, e.g. capital letters for God, Jesus, Holy Spirit.

Assessment follows diocesan and national guidelines, assessing against the expected outcomes for each branch in the Religious Education Directory. Pupil attainment is recorded 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.

End of Unit Assessment

At the end of a branch, a sample of 6 children (two from each working level) will undertake assessment questions with the class teacher, linked to each learning focus of the branch. The children chosen should be different for each branch over the year, and different branches in subsequent years. Children's responses will be recorded on an iPad via video. The questions will be formed from the 'Understand', 'Discern' and 'Respond' strands. Teachers may also make handwritten notes or use video transcriptions to inform future planning. Visual prompts including art work may be used to support the children in the assessment process, but not their RE books. The responses will be used to inform target setting for the next branch for all children in the class, which will be added to their next cover sheet.

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.

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.

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 all diocesan training on the curriculum directory resources, as well as school based/personal CPD, e.g. CCRS, INSET et. The RE Lead collaborates with other local schools to share best practice more widely.

Appendix

General Guidance for Teachers

Medium Term Planning – Topics

Learning objectives, content and ideas for tasks are provided by the RED curriculum for each year group, linked to the objectives.

Beginning an RE Lesson

RE lessons should begin with the lighting of a candle, making the sign of the cross, a prayer and a moment of awe and wonder (for example an image/artwork, Visio Divina, a song or quote.) The lights should be dimmed. This is to demonstrate how RE lessons have additional significance in our school: they are marked with importance that is different to the other subjects.

How Learning is Recorded

Reception classes have a class floor book, where children's work, photographs and quotes are recorded for each learning focus taught.

In Year's 1 – 6, children have their own RE exercise books to record their learning. Each class also has a floor book called The Living Word Journal, to compliment the RE exercise books. This will include, for example:

- Quotes from class discussions
- Wondering questions
- Role play
- Prayers
- Continuous provision opportunities (Year 1)
- Whole school events linked to Catholic Social Teaching strands (such as antibullying week, show racism the red card day)
- Class lead worship
- Liturgies (e.g. Harvest Liturgy, Easter Liturgy)

RE displays

- In every class there is evidence of the work, through display, being undertaken – post it notes with wondering questions are added.
- In every classroom there is a prayer table to bring attention to the importance of Christ at the centre of our lives and reflect the liturgical season.
- Class displays have a white or hessian background, a gold border and all items are double backed to reflect the current liturgical colour and gold.
- Class displays contain the topic title, key vocabulary, scripture quotation, key questions and children's work. All the above are to be double backed, as above.
- Class displays are interactive and allow for children's reflections and questions in the form of post it notes, or speech bubbles
- The main display at the foot of the main stairs reflect the current liturgical season or Holy Day.
- Displays around the school contain a Bible quote to reflect Christ at the centre of our community.
- Displays around the school reflect our values and ethos, such as the Good Shepherd display on the Top Corridor and the Parish display in the ICT suite.

- **Links to Catholic Social Teaching**
- Links to the strands of Catholic Social teaching will be made using the visual icons which depict each strand. These can be added to slides and referenced in any curriculum subject or school activity where relevant.
- The strands are Dignity, Common Good, Solidarity, Subsidiarity, Participation and Care For Our Common Home.

Appendices

- Cover sheet format (available on the school system)
- End of topic evaluation sheet format (available on the school system)
- LO for work template (available on the school system)
- Slides LO (available on the school system)

Links and websites

Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Education:

<https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/re-catholic-life>

School of Education – for original RED documentation and updated guidance on units taught:

<https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/academic-areas/structure/fablet/school-of-education>



Lesson Observation Templates (Green/RE/Monitoring/Observation forms 2026)

Class Teacher:	Year Group:	Date:
Current priorities [SDP 2023-24] - Implement the new Religious Education Directory in Y1 and Y6, in order to further raise standards in RE - To provide timely and effective feedback and marking - Continue to refine the curriculum to ensure long term retention of knowledge across all subjects		Agreed next step[s] from previous monitoring
Overview of the lesson: Inputs: How are the children engaged and enjoying lesson? Tasks – clear S2S, driver words, explanation and modelling, support and scaffolding, retrieval practice, vocabulary. Which assessment strategies are used? How is feedback given? Effective? Resources? Use of TA.		
Independent/ group tasks: (differentiation) What are you learning - partner talk; Know steps to success? Know target? Are the children moving on in their learning? Are they making progress? Questioning, GDS and challenge.		
Other: Displays support learning - Current topic, key words, children's work, liturgical colours, interactive questions, scripture Pupils' work - What do we see in books quality of presentation, quantity, marking, task completion General comments - Teacher subject knowledge and understanding of core ideas of topic		
Areas to celebrate:		
Areas for development:		
Suggested Ways forward:		
Class Teacher comments:		
Talking to the children: possible questions - Do you like RE? What do you like about it? - What are you learning about in this lesson/ topic/ previous topic? - How could this lesson help you in your life? Learning from previous topic? - What questions do you have about this lesson/ topic/ previous topic? - How are you progressing in RE? can you show me something that you have got better at? What do you need to get better at?		

Lesson Observation		Outstanding (1)	Good (2)	Requires Improvement (3)	Inadequate (4)
Learning	Enjoyment	Pupils demonstrate passion and commitment in their learning	Pupils enjoy their learning	Whilst pupils are not uninterested in Religious Education they show few outward signs of enthusiasm for it.	Pupils lack all interest and enthusiasm for Religious Education
	Focus	Most pupils concentrate very well and are rarely off-task	Pupils apply themselves diligently and work at a good pace	Pupils work steadily but they are not completely focussed and the lesson is such that pupils are often inattentive.	Pupils unable to work independently and are frequently off-task
	Progress	Almost all pupils, including the most able and those with D&SEN, are making progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time.	Most pupils, including the most able and those with D&SEN, are making progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time.	A minority of pupils are making progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time.	No more than a very small minority of pupils are making progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time, including the most able and those with D&SEN
	Pupil knowledge of progress	Pupils have a detailed understanding of how well they have done, what they need to do to improve and are able to precisely articulate how they have made progress within lessons and over time.	Pupils have an understanding of how well they have done, what they need to do to improve and are able to give some examples of how they have made progress within lessons and over time.	Pupils have a limited understanding of how well they have done, what they need to do to improve and find it difficult to give examples of how they have made progress within lessons and over time.	Pupils have no understanding of how well they have done, what they need to do to improve and cannot give examples of how they have made progress within lessons and over time.
	AT1	Pupils learn exceptionally well and as a result acquire knowledge quickly and in depth and are developing their understanding rapidly	Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their understanding	Whilst pupils acquire knowledge and understanding over time, the pace of learning requires improvement	Insufficient new knowledge and understanding is gained in individual lessons or across a sequence of lessons
	AT2	They develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect, including the ability to interpret sources and symbol, to ask deeper questions, to understand nuance and subtlety, to reflect and evaluate, the ability to engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives	They develop and apply a range of skills well, including the ability to interpret sources and symbol, to reflect and evaluate, to engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives	Pupils are developing skills appropriate to their age and ability, although the pace of this skill acquisition requires improvement	Skill acquisition is neglected or its pace is inadequate and pupils demonstrate little or no ability to apply learning about religion to their own lives in any meaningful way
	Behaviour	Behaviour for learning is outstanding and the lesson proceeds without any interruptions.	Behaviour for learning is good and disruption to the lesson is unusual.	Behaviour for learning requires improvement since there are at least some examples of low-level disruption that are not addressed often enough to prevent impediments to learning for some pupils.	Persistent low level disruption occurs more than occasionally and hinders learning for many pupils. Lesson is disorderly.
Teaching and Assessment	Subject Knowledge	Teacher has a high level of confidence and expertise both in terms of their specialist knowledge and their understanding of effective learning in Religious Education.	Teacher has a confident level of specialist expertise which is used well in planning and teaching Religious Education.	Whilst teacher has some specialist expertise which is used in planning and teaching, this lacks depth and breadth.	Specialist expertise is limited and, as a result, teacher does not provide the resources or teaching strategies necessary to ensure a basic minimum level of learning.
	Assessment & Planning	Teacher plans challenging and focussed learning activities based on systematic and accurate assessment of pupils' prior skills, knowledge and understanding.	As a result of good assessment procedures, teacher has a good awareness of pupils' prior learning and capabilities and plans well to meet the needs of all pupils, both the most and the least able.	Teacher uses assessment to arrive at a broadly accurate understanding of the prior learning and capabilities of the class, though it is not refined enough to fully meet the needs of all students.	Teacher does not assess regularly enough and/or no account is taken of this assessment of prior learning in planning.
	Use of time	Teacher consistently uses time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in lessons and across sequences of lessons.	Teacher manages time well and secure good learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons.	Time management requires improvement since the pace of learning in lessons or across a sequence of lesson is too slow.	Time is grossly mismanaged; learning experiences within lessons and across sequences of lessons remain incomplete; pupils' time is wasted
	Activities	Teacher uses a very wide range of innovative and imaginative resources and teaching strategies to stimulate pupils' active participation in their learning and to secure outstanding progress.	Teacher uses an appropriate range of resources and teaching strategies to promote good learning.	Teacher uses only a limited range of resources and teaching strategies to which leads to at best a minimal level of learning.	Learning activities are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of pupils so that they make inadequate progress.
	Expectations	Teacher communicates high expectations, enthusiasm and passion about Religious Education to pupils.	Teacher has a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education which they communicate effectively to pupils.	Teacher has a basic but limited understanding of how to maintain pupils' interest in Religious Education.	Teacher does not have sufficiently high expectations and/or teaching over time fails to excite, enthuse, engage or motivate particular groups of pupils.
	Homework	From KS3 onwards, regular homework contributes very well to pupils' learning, providing stretch and challenge for the most able and consolidation for the least.	From KS3 onwards, regular homework contributes well to pupils' learning, allowing all pupils to consolidate their learning.	From KS3 onwards, homework is sometimes set and when it is, it contributes reasonably well to the quality of learning for most pupils. However, homework is not set frequently enough and is not well planned enough to make significant contributions to learning.	Even where the setting of homework is required it is set very infrequently, if at all and/or the demands it makes on pupils has no measurable impact on the quality of their learning.
	AfL	Teacher regularly listens astutely to, carefully observes and skilfully questions groups of pupils and individuals during the lesson in order to re-shape tasks and explanations to maximise learning for every pupil.	Teacher systematically and effectively checks pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, anticipating where intervention is needed and this has notable impact on the quality of learning.	Whilst teacher monitors pupils' work during the lesson, adaptations made as a consequence require improvement since they are not timely or relevant enough and hence do not impact effectively on pupils' learning.	Teacher does not assess learning during lessons and/or does not reshape learning in response to recognising where learning is slower.
	Feedback	Marking and constructive feedback are frequent and of a consistently high quality. Pupils have a detailed understanding of what they need to do to improve and are given the opportunity to respond to advice in a systematic and planned way.	Marking and constructive feedback are performed regularly and accurately so that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. They are given time to respond to advice on improvement.	Marking and feedback is sometimes given so that pupils are informed about the progress they are making and how to improve. This does not occur frequently enough, or the gap between it and the completion of the learning activity is too great to allow it to be fully effective. Whilst advice on improvement is given, there are few opportunities provided for pupils to respond to this advice.	Marking and feedback are either too infrequent or insufficiently focussed to have any impact on learning or progress.
	Self-assessment	Pupils are consistently involved in evaluating how well they achieve. This contributes to their improved achievement and provides them with a high level of confidence in making further improvements.	Pupils are often involved in evaluating how well they achieve which gives them greater confidence in making improvements.	Pupils are only sometimes involved in assessing how well they are achieving.	Pupils are never involved in evaluating their own learning
	Celebrating achievement	Celebration of achievement and effort are central to the teachers' assessment strategy.	Achievement and effort are often celebrated.	Achievement and effort are only sometimes celebrated.	Achievement and effort are rarely, if ever celebrated.

Catholic Life and Mission

Catholic Live and Mission
Can you tell me what your Mission Statement is?
Is there anywhere in the school that you can see your Mission Statement?
Can you tell me what you think it means?
What would your school look like if you all followed your Mission Statement?
Can you tell me about something that you have done in your school that shows that you are trying to follow this mission?
How did doing this change you?
What are the challenges or difficulties to living out this Mission?
Can you think of any other ways that your school could do more to follow your mission?
Why do you think your school has this mission statement?
How do you think that following this mission statement will help you as you grow older and go to other schools or even as an adult?
What can you tell me about Catholic Social teaching?
Why do you think it is important to learn about Catholic Social teaching?
Can you think of any ways that we try to live out one of the principals of Catholic Social teaching in this school?

RE

RE
Tell me about an RE lesson that you had recently
Do you think you did well in that lesson?
How do you know?
How do you know what you can do to get better in RE?
Can you tell me about something in your RE lessons that helps you to learn?
Can you tell be about anything that stops you learning in RE?
Can you tell me about an RE lesson that you remember that changed you or how you see the world?
Why do you think you have RE lessons?
Do you think RE is an important subject? Why?