



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Bognor Regis

Religious Education Policy

**Approved November 2017
Reviewed January 2020**

Religious Education Policy

Introduction:

At St. Mary's we aim to create a Roman Catholic environment that will help those in our care to base their lives on the gospel values of love, truth and caring, leading to a more active and personal faith.

"The distinctive mark of Catholic Education is that we rely not on our own talents and strengths but on the Wisdom and Power of God."
(Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Guideline No. 1 for Catholic Schools)

'In your Catholic schools, there is always a bigger picture over and above the individual subjects you study, the different skills you learn. All the work you do is placed in the context of growing in friendship with God, and all that flows from that friendship. So you learn not just to be good students, but good citizens, good people. A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints.' (Pope Benedict XVI The Big Assembly, Twickenham, 2010)

At St. Mary's we worship God who made us all, reflecting and wondering about His many creations so that we may deepen our personal relationship with Him. We make our journey in faith and endeavour to learn more about God who loves us and to grow in knowledge and understanding of His goodness. We try to pass on our own awareness and love of God to our pupils. We share our own faith, caring about others and seeing Christ in each other. We pray to our loving God for His unfailing guidance, help, strength and healing.

The purpose of our policy is:

- To translate our school aims and mission statement into practice
- To develop a shared understanding with regard to Religious Education in our school
- To provide continuity and progression

We intend to use our policy as a framework:

- To establish a whole-school approach to Religious Education
- To develop good practice and to identify criteria for monitoring and evaluation of the policy
- To inform the school community; children, staff, parents, governors, parish

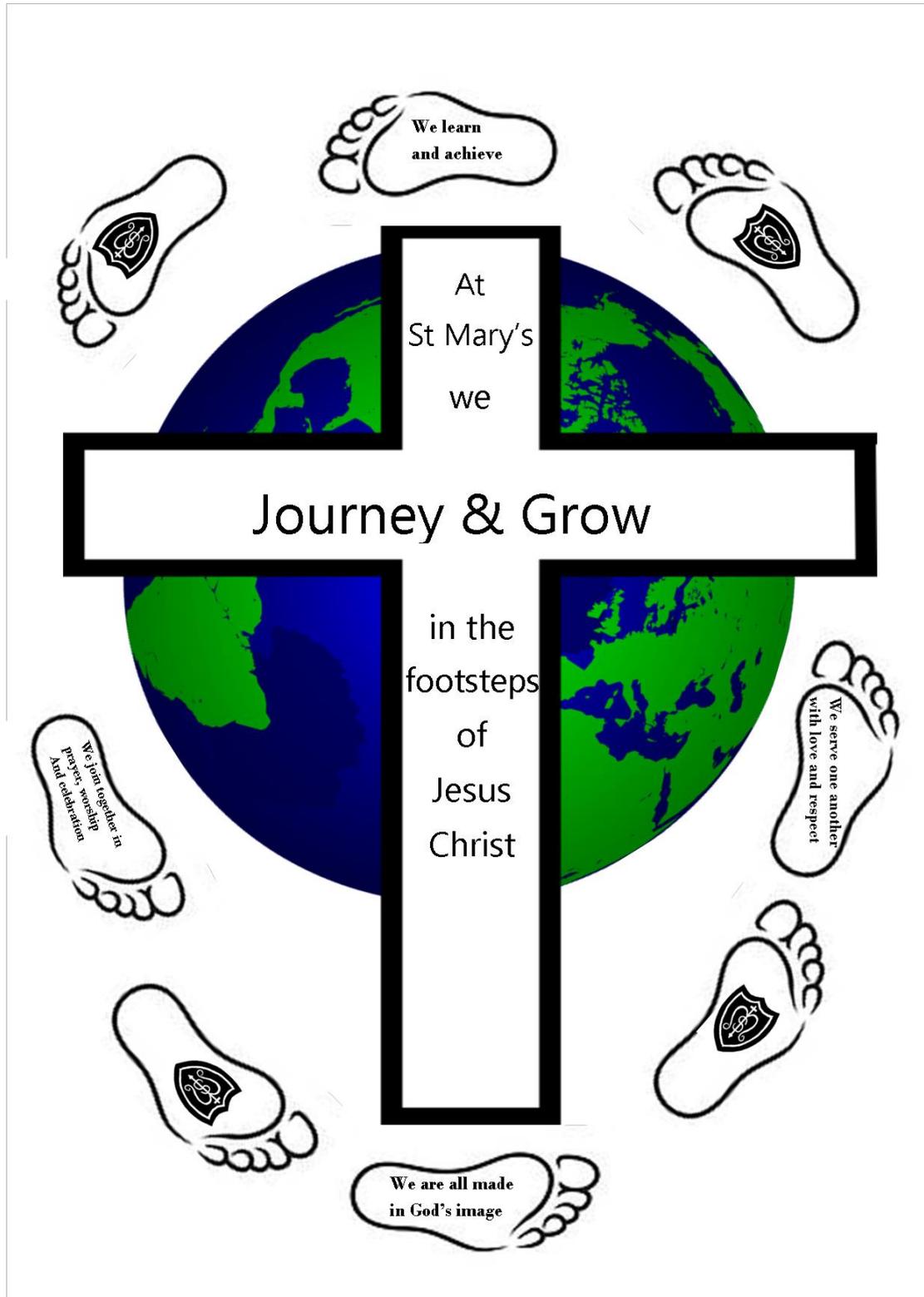
Aims of Religious Education:

- To help our children to grow in knowledge and love of God the Father, who created us; of God the Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross and rose from the dead to save us; and of God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us and makes us holy
- To introduce our children to the Christian Scriptures, the Bible, and to the teachings of the Catholic Church, and help them to see these as a means of learning more about the nature of God
- To help our children to understand right and wrong, and encourage them to live out Christ's commandments to love God and our neighbour
- To develop a knowledge and understanding of prayer and meditation, both collective and individual

- To teach our children about the Sacraments of the Catholic Church, that they may begin to develop and deepen their own sacramental life
- To introduce our children to the liturgical cycle of the Roman Catholic Church's year and to encourage them to play an increasing part in the celebrations of the various liturgies
- To help our children to understand that they are the Church, and this means being witnesses to the Good News
- To help our children to explore the relationship between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations and other religions
- To set a good example to our children by our own reverence, respect and sense of awe and wonder

Our Mission statement and aims of the school have directed our thinking and are at the heart of this policy:

Our Mission Statement:



The Aims of our school:

1. To teach the Catholic Faith and lead the children to a more active and personal faith in Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life, so that we are a sign of God's presence in the world.
2. To follow the example of Christ by promoting and interpreting the meaning of the Gospel values and reflecting them in all we do.
3. To pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and support us to fulfil our lives to their greatest potential.
4. To nurture the development of each child within a safe, secure and caring environment which reflects the Christian way of life.
5. To provide each child with opportunities and experiences to enjoy learning and to develop their potential to the highest level.
6. To develop each child's understanding of how to be healthy and safe.
7. To ensure each child has opportunities to express themselves and is able to make reasoned judgements and choices.
8. To collaborate with other agencies and services in order to provide children with quality education, support and care.
9. To work with parents/carers as partners in their child's education, listening to their views and providing guidance and support as appropriate.
10. To foster understanding and respect for other cultures, traditions and faiths.
11. To encourage each child to value our school in Bognor Regis and to use their gifts and talents to make a positive contribution to their local and global community.

St. Mary's approach to the teaching and learning of Religious Education

We endeavour to help the children in our care come to a fuller understanding of God's love in the following ways:

Prayer and Liturgy

We feel that prayer is a vital element of our school life and encourage our children to pray daily with, and for, others. They are encouraged to write their own prayers which they may share with others during Mass, collective worship and liturgies, and during RE lessons. Many of these prayers are put into class books. As well as being taught the more formal prayers of the church the children are also enabled to pray in their own words in their own way, and to use spontaneous and imaginative prayer on a very personal level. Thus we hope to lead the children to pray in a variety of ways so that their prayer life becomes increasingly meaningful and helpful to them.

Every school day begins and ends with prayer, grace is said before and after lunch and there are many other occasions for prayer during the day. We pray together as a whole school, as class groups or as other groups e.g. as Key Stages.

A general pattern for the week is usually as follows:

Monday	Whole school Collective Worship led by the Headteacher (or Deputy) based on Sunday's Gospel
Tuesday	Foundation/Key Stage 1 assembly in hall, Key Stage 2 class assemblies
Wednesday	Choral Worship in Key Stages
Thursday	Key Stage 2 assembly in hall, Foundation/Key Stage 1 class assemblies
Friday	Whole school assembly led by Deputy Head, Assistant Head or other Senior Staff

Assemblies/Collective Worship are very varied and may be led by teachers and/or children. There may be whole class participation or group involvement. There may be opportunities for music, mime, drama, dance, art or language but prayer is always at the heart of each gathering. Teaching staff and teaching assistants attend all involving their classes. Parents and friends and governors are actively encouraged to come and pray with us at many of our celebrations, including Key Stage assemblies. We try to create a receptive atmosphere by having a prayer focus as well as the use of music, candles, flowers, statues, small displays of work etc.

Throughout the year we celebrate the main feasts and seasons of the church e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Marian Feasts. We have an annual Harvest Festival, Grandparent's service, a Nativity Play, a Deanery Advent Carol Service and Spirituality Week. The beginning and the end of each term are marked by a special Mass held in the church. Key Stage 2 classes take turns attending the Friday Parish Mass throughout the year and in the summer term each Key Stage 2 class has its own Mass or liturgy either on the school field or in the church, while Year 6 has a half-day retreat at the parish Centre. Early Years and Key Stage 1 classes arrange their own liturgy on the school field, followed by a drink and biscuits to share. Early Years children and their families are welcomed to our school community with their own 'Welcome Liturgy' held at school with our Parish priest.

We are aware that some of our children may only attend Mass as part of their school life, so we also use our visits to Our Lady of Sorrows Church as a means of teaching more about the external practices of our faith; i.e. the use of holy water, genuflection, the Stations of the Cross.

Displays

Displays have an important function in showing both what we are currently learning and thinking about as well as presenting previously completed work. To this end there is an RE display inside or outside each classroom, linked to Come and See. In addition there is a permanent RE display in the School Hall and main school entrance, which is used to reflect the Liturgical Year and Come and See topics.

Curriculum

The children receive 10% of curriculum time as RE each week: 2 hours 15 minutes at Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1 and 2 hours 20 minutes at Key Stage 2. This does not include time for Hymn Practice or Collective Worship, which is over and above this time allocation. We follow the "Come and See" Religious Education Scheme of Work, in line with Diocesan policy, and use planning formats and assessment ladders as advised by the diocese. (See Appendix 1). Parents are advised termly of the areas that will be covered through a Parent's Newsletter, which is also available on the website and the celebrations that will be going on. All members of staff are aware that, whilst planning the RE lesson for a particular class of children, they can use this opportunity for personal reflection at their own level and staff often reflect these together using the "Come and See for yourself" sections. Whilst these lessons, as such, form the basis for our entire education process the beliefs and values expressed therein are reflected in all aspects of our school.

Differentiation

As part of our school aim to provide each individual with opportunities and experiences to develop their potential to the highest level teachers try to ensure, when planning, that the learning needs of all the children in their class are met. This may mean: providing adult or peer support for children who find it difficult to access the material, planning to meet the needs of children's learning styles, setting open ended tasks that allow the more able to display their deeper understanding and knowledge; giving children the opportunity to lead liturgies and collective worship, and presentations where they can display their individual gifts; providing a range of resources e.g. simpler and more detailed Bibles.

Inclusion

At St. Mary's we always try to emphasise that the Gospel asks us to recognise God in each individual. We strive to enable to have a deepening awareness of each other and all our individual needs. We recognise that loving everyone is difficult but that a mutual love, which values each person as unique and made especially by God in His own image, is an ideal worth striving for.

We encourage all our children to take an active part in Masses and assemblies and the general prayer life of the school. Their efforts and achievements are recognised, respected and celebrated. Children with learning needs are given the extra support they may need in order to access the learning at their RE level, regardless of their levels of literacy. Oral contributions and other evidence of learning are welcomed, valued and encouraged as a positive way in which we can boost self-esteem.

Equal Opportunities

As a Christian community we aim to foster a climate where spiritual and moral development is highly valued. People are regarded as individuals with a dignity and worth given by God and so respected regardless of race, colour, culture, gender or innate ability. Our curriculum is broad and balanced and the ethos of our school is such that positive attitudes of tolerance

and understanding towards others are engendered at all times. Whilst RE lessons provide many chances to promote equal opportunities the whole environment of our school reflects our caring and Christian approach to life, each other and our common home.

Assessment

We use the Diocesan Interim Standards of Assessment in line with Diocesan recommendations.

Pupils are assessed against end of year statements and teachers plan lessons according to this criteria. Success criteria for each lesson uses the driver words from the assessment standards, so that the children are enabled to meet the knowledge and skills relevant for their stage of learning.

Teachers will decide on a best-fit judgement for each pupil 3 times a year, based on their learning from that term and informed by moderation. The data is entered onto our tracking system 3 times a year in line with school policy for subjects and Diocesan recommendations.

Assessments take a variety of forms dependent on the age and stage of the child and the objectives of the topic, as well as the Interim assessment standards.

Formative assessment is in line with other subjects and work is marked against the success criteria with 'tickled pink' showing what the child has achieved and 'green for growth' showing what they need to do to improve. There should be regular next steps set as targets, in line with other core subjects. Please also see Feedback and Marking Policy, and the 'Target' Expectations in the Teaching and Learning Guide.

Staff make observations and record oral comments and other evidence of learning using post it notes that are put into RE Books.

Children are assessed against AT1, Knowledge and understanding (learning about RE), AT2 Values and attitudes (learning from RE) and for KS2 children, AT3 Analysis and Evaluation.

Standardisation takes place at school level. Moderation is conducted at Deanery level and annually at Diocesan level.

Other Faiths

The 'Come and See' Scheme of Work builds into its programme a developing understanding of Judaism and Islam through a series of units starting in Early Years. These units are blocked into a week for each religion per year, Judaism (Autumn term), Islam (Summer term). We seek to arrange visits from members of these faiths and use resources e.g. prayer mat, toran to develop the children's knowledge. We always try to involve representatives from local Mosques and Synagogues.

Administration, Organisation and Management

Role of the Religious Education Leader

The curriculum leader for Religious Education is the Deputy Headteacher Mrs Beaven. The role of the RE Leader is to act as a catalyst and a focus for the subject within the school. They are directly responsible to the Headteacher, Mr Edgington, for all matters pertaining to the subject. These include disseminating all relevant documentation and information in a digestible form. They are also responsible for establishing and implementing policy and initiatives throughout the school.

In addition the Religious Education Leader works closely with the Headteacher, Governing Body Catholic Ethos & R.E. Committee and the Parish priest to arrange the school's liturgical year and to organise opportunities for staff development.

The role of the class teacher

The class teacher is expected to:

- Prepare fully for all aspects of the lesson;
- Adhere to school policy guidelines;
- Plan the agreed schemes of work and effectively use agreed forms of assessment;
- Attempt to achieve the highest standards of achievement and quality of learning which are possible;
- Set a suitable example in all aspects of the RE curriculum and school life;
- Promote the Catholic ethos of the school;
- Place all medium-term plans on the school network system.

Staff Development

The staff spend two days per year at a retreat centre and these days have provided us with invaluable opportunities, not only to get to know and appreciate each other better, but also for personal prayer and reflection. These retreats now form an integral part of our staff development. 1 of these 2 INSET days is a Spiritual Retreat day in order to nourish the faith of our teachers. A half day retreat for support staff is offered in the summer term each year, which follows a similar theme to that of the teachers.

The INSET day at the start of the school year begins with a Mass for staff and governors, celebrated at school.

Just before the start of each school day the staff pause for a moment of quiet prayer led by a member of staff. We have a longer liturgy at the start of INSET days and also during end of term staff celebration circles. NQT's and new members of staff attend the relevant Come and See training at Dabcec. The Deanery RE Leaders meet annually and Deanery teaching staff also meet annually for moderation. In addition the school works in liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service which includes frequent advice and monitoring in our school.

Resources

The "Come and See" Scheme of Work is the main resource used for the teaching of Religious Education. It is supplemented by advice on Education for Personal Relationships from the Diocese (See EPR Policy). The school adds to this scheme those areas that we feel need clarification; e.g. at which age children learn by heart certain prayers and parts of the Mass, to understand the different parts of the Mass, particular Bible stories and characters.

The Key Stage 2 classes have sets of Bibles suitable for the age group of their children. Teachers have a range of Bibles for their own use and for sharing with the children, and each class also has a copy of "Youcat" as a teacher/staff reference and a children's "Youcat". There are a several sets of the "God's story" and "Churches story" books to support the teaching of "Come and See".

Each class has a prayer focus in their room which follows the correct liturgical season and includes statue, a crucifix and a candle, as well as other visual and kinaesthetic stimuli/resources. These are used as a focus for prayer, and enhance the quality of class liturgies. A school focus is displayed in the school hall and updated regularly in line with the liturgical year and Come and See key themes.

Each class has a set of liturgical coloured drapes to use as part of their focus and to reflect the Church's seasons of the year.

The library and RE cupboard is well stocked with reference books about the Christian religion as well as the other main faiths as well as other useful resources and materials to support the preparation of lessons, collective worship and liturgies. Each teacher has a list of useful websites for Religious Education.

Relationships with Home, School, Parish and the Wider Community

Many of our children belong to the parish of Our Lady of Sorrows, Bognor Regis, but we also have some non-Catholic children. We are aware that for some of our families their main contact with the church is through the school and, as stated previously, we do encourage all our parents and friends to join us for various masses and liturgies whenever possible. We also have an open policy of welcoming parental help in the classrooms etc. and we have an active and lively FSA, which provides support in many ways.

We actively support and assist in the parish programme for Reconciliation and First Communion - not least by our prayers. There is excellent liaison with the catechists, indeed some of the staff are catechists and some of the others are parents from the school. Some of our parents and staff organise the children's liturgy each Sunday in Our Lady of Sorrows church and St Anthony's at Rose Green (also part of the parish). The school sends out the weekly parish newsletter and often co-operates in displaying posters. We have our own display board in one of the entrance halls of the Church where the children's work is put up on display e.g. for Remembrance, Lent etc. At Christmas the children are invited to attend a special Christmas Eve Mass for the younger people of the parish. A regular school newsletter is included in the parish letter.

The Deanery Advent Carol Service held each year in December, at the Cathedral, is well attended by pupils and parents alike and money is raised for a charity each year chosen by one of the four schools on a rota basis. Our annual Harvest Festival is used to raise awareness of the work of CAFOD but also raises money for our local homeless shelter and food bank. During Lent the children collect money for Mission Together and the members of the RE Council attend the Good Shepherd Mass at Worth Abbey at which the money is presented. Mission Together and CAFOD representatives also visit when possible and lead an assembly to demonstrate how the money raised is used.

We regularly take part in various sporting activities with other schools and have a strong link with our Deanery secondary school, St Philip Howard, for sporting events as a deanery, dance festivals and science mornings, school council and enrichment days.

At Christmas the choir and some classes sing at various venues in the town including care homes.

During Lent we have our main 'sponsored event' fundraising day. Every child takes part in a fund raising event the proceeds of which are donated entirely to charity. The charities vary from year to year, depending on the children's choices, but are Catholic and non-Catholic, local, national and even international. We also raise money for other causes throughout the year according to need and request, often from the church or families.

We liaise regularly with the Parish Team, and are pleased to receive visits, both formal and informal, from the priests of our parish. We have a strong link with them, and they co-operate in providing us with help and guidance on a spiritual level and to support the range of spiritual and liturgical activities we plan for the children e.g. our spiritual days at Easter, liturgies, rosary, Reconciliation services and Masses. We invite a priest to join us in our spiritual retreat. We work with the Parish Team to develop the Parish and reach out to families in our care. We seek to find ways in which we can reach out to the elderly e.g. through invitations to celebrations.

We believe community links support our children's learning by enriching and broadening their life experiences so that relationships are built on mutual self-respect and understanding.

R.E. Council

The RE Council is comprised of 8 – 10 members of Year 5 and Year 6 chosen because they outwardly show and share a strong faith, as well as having skills to help them conduct tasks such as leading Advent, Lent & rosary prayer groups, collective worship, speaking to visitors and showing them around our school, as well as being good role models for our Catholic Ethos.

Religious Education Leader: Mrs. Beaven Reviewed: October 2019

Appendix

If not directly covered by the 'Come and See' topics the following events in the church's year will be acknowledged by means of lessons, prayers, liturgies or Masses.

September Harvest Time

October Our Lady, the Rosary

November All Saints, Holy Souls, St. Andrew (30th)

December Advent, Christ the King, St. Nicholas (6th), Immaculate Conception (8th), Christmas

January Epiphany (6th)

February Candlemas (The presentation of our Lord, 2nd), Ash Wednesday, Lent

March St. David (1st), St. Patrick (17th)

Easter Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday

April St. George (23rd)

May Our Lady

June Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Peter and St. Paul (29th)

(As appropriate to the age of the children)