

# **St Joseph's Voluntary Academy**



## **Religious Education Policy**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**Jesus is the heart of all that we are and do together.**

**We seek to excel in every area of our learning.**

**Our children's motto is:**

**Live like Jesus.**

### **At St Joseph's, we aim:**

- To encourage all the members of our community to grow daily in the knowledge and love of God
- To work to develop everyone as a whole person – spiritually, morally, socially, culturally, intellectually and physically
- To encourage an appreciation of the need for compassion and good citizenship within our society
- To serve the Gospel, while demonstrating that differences of place, language, race and culture are gifts to be celebrated, not boundaries to divide.

### **We achieve these aims by:**

- Creating a strong working and spiritual partnership between the governors, staff, parents and children of the school
- Providing a broad and balanced curriculum, working within the guidelines of the National Curriculum and adhering to the Diocesan 'Come and See' programme
- Aiming for every individual child in school to reach his or her full potential, with a fulfilling, happy and successful experience of school.

## **Rationale and Context**

- Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject amongst many, but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life.”

(Bishop’s Conference of England and Wales 1988)

- We must acknowledge the many aspects of today’s society which have a profound and unsettling effect on children and adults alike - some of which are directly obstructive to the growth of the faith and spiritual life that we aspire to nurture.
- Through our Religious Education program and our faith setting, we must act on the opportunities and rise to the challenges of living in an increasingly multicultural society.
- We must be rigorous in our delivery of the curriculum and the pursuit of the knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and its context within an increasingly secular, multi-faith society.

## **Religious Education: Aims and Objectives:**

- Religious Education will be treated as an academic subject in its own right, taught, resourced and developed as any other core subject.
- The ethos of Catholic education promotes the ideal that children should be able to achieve their full potential as unique individuals by fostering a sense of belonging and support. For those children from a strong faith background, it will be a chance for their faith to grow, for some it will be a chance to develop some knowledge of their faith and for some it will be the first opportunity they will have had to hear the Gospel message.

**Through the use of the ‘Come and See’ programme, as followed by the schools of the Diocese of Nottingham, we will aim to develop:**

- Knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- Knowledge and understanding of some other faiths and religious festivals.
- The skills necessary to engage the children in :
  - examining and reflecting on religious belief and practice
  - study, investigation and reflection
  - listening skills
  - thinking critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically
  - making informed judgements
- Recognition of appropriate moral attitudes and self-responsibility
- Respect for truth and the views of others

- A sense of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life
- An appetite for the challenges and opportunities of living in a multicultural society

We aim to teach all these knowledge-skills and attitudes with due regard to the age, ability and special needs of each child.

### **Religious Education in the classroom:**

- The whole school curriculum is underpinned by our School Mission Statement and founded on Gospel values. As such, we see all education as playing a part in revealing God in our lives. This impacts on our Religious Education both implicitly and explicitly:

Implicit are those opportunities which arise naturally during the school day – to lead the children through the curriculum, through problems and through relationships, to a wider religious, moral or spiritual understanding of their implications. It is school policy to use such opportunities as they arise. Added to this, the school's active liturgical life enhances the curriculum and is shared by children, parents, staff and parishioners.

Explicit are the planned periods, making up 10% of curricular time, devoted specifically to the consideration and study of Religious Education. These follow lessons planned according to the 'Come and See' scheme of work and include periods of time allocated to the study of other faiths and festivals. The scheme works on a yearly rotation of topics which follow the seasons of the Church and focus sequentially on faith within the family, the parish and the wider community. Each term includes learning about a Sacrament, which is explored through relevant Scripture at the child's level of understanding.

### **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion:**

Staff will ensure that :

- activities match the academic abilities of children in their class, including provision for especially gifted or talented children and those with any kind of learning difficulty.
- no child is disadvantaged, whatever the stage of his or her own faith journey or whatever his or her own faith background .
- issues of equal rights, race or negative discrimination of any kind, arising through this subject, are handled with care and respect, in accordance with our faith and Mission statement.

### **The Role of the subject leaders:**

Because Religious Education is integral to school life at St Joseph's and more than a Curriculum area, coordination is spread over the three areas of Collective Worship, Catholic Life and the RE Curriculum. Together, it is the job of the leaders to:

- produce and update the necessary policy documents within school
- keep up-to-date with curricular developments regarding Diocesan advice and the 'Come and See' scheme and feedback to staff attend appropriate in-service activities and courses
- monitor standards of teaching and learning within school
- collect samples of work and evidence of appropriate assessment as part of the monitoring process
- manage the purchase and deployment of resources
- maintain and encourage a meaningful prayer and liturgical life within school
- liaise with the governors, parish priest and parish community and contribute to Parish life
- involve parents in the religious life of the school – encouraging their feedback and keeping them informed of developments, events and opportunities to support the parish

### **The Role of the Class Teachers**

- To utilise the Diocesan-backed 'Come and See' scheme of work as the core of their religious teaching
- To actively promote the faith life of the school, in accordance with its mission statement and Catholic ethos
- To ensure that there is an area in the classroom set aside as a focal point for prayer and thoughtful interactive engagement with relevant themes
- To help maintain the spirituality and daily prayer-life of the school through collective worship opportunities and periods of reflection
- To link homework to the children's study of RE and involve parents in supporting their children with this on some occasions

### **Involvement of Parents**

Parents and carers are the first educators of their children and their involvement in school is the beginning of an ongoing partnership. We aim to help them to feel involved and important in teaching the children about the beliefs and traditions of the Catholic Faith, as well as helping them to develop a personal faith. They are invited to all school masses and most liturgies, including instances where we visit the parish church to worship and celebrate. Together with parish catechists Fr Robbie provides a supporting course for parents of children making First Communion, send out termly information letters about RE topics and involve them in homework tasks.

### **Resources**

- Each class has – or has easy access to – a set of Bibles or Bible Stories, at an

appropriate level for the age of the children.

- Books for assembly ideas, commentaries and other curricular texts, along with DVDs, posters, artefacts and liturgical objects stored in the RE cupboard.
- Each class has links to curriculum and ICT resources provided on the Come and See website.
- Topic boxes containing artefacts, books and resources for other major faiths are stored in the RE cupboard.
  
- Each class has its own 'Come and See' scheme of work file and access through the 'Come and See' website to other resources.
- Collections of school liturgies, masses and hymns are available on the school network.
- Altar vessels and vestments belonging to school are stored in the RE cupboard.
- Multi-cultural and multi-faith stories and information texts for children are kept in the library

### **Safeguarding**

St Joseph's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

Like all subject areas, we work in full conjunction with the school's over-arching Child Protection Policy, and those listed below, but we also recognise that RE can provide particular opportunities for children to share personal feelings and concerns. All staff are expected to be vigilant to the nature and frequency of worrying or sensitive disclosures and to be aware of the subsequent process for safeguarding the child's welfare.

Other policies of particular relevance to RE:

- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Personal, Social and Health Education Policy
- School Safeguarding Policy
- We actively support the Government's 'Prevent' Agenda to counter radicalism and extremism.

Policy Monitoring and Review:

Last reviewed: September 2021

Signed: Charlotte Webster

This policy will next be reviewed: September 2022