

# ST MARGARET CLITHEROW PRIMARY SCHOOL



We live to love, learn, respect  
and follow Jesus who says,  
“Love one another as I have loved you.”

## RE Policy

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## Rationale of Religious Education

- Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the Church.  
*'At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education.'*<sup>1</sup>
- Religious Education is 'the core of the core curriculum.'  
*'Therefore Religious Education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school..... All pupils have the right to receive an overall education which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope which is within them. Religious Education is, then, the core subject in a Catholic school.'*<sup>1</sup>
- Religious Education is the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ and is a rigorous academic subject in its own right.  
*Religious Education is regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines.*<sup>2</sup> As such it is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.  
***"Excellence in religious education, then, will be characterised by a clarity of succinct religious learning objectives and of key content, by appropriate methodologies, rigour, richness of resources, achievement of identified outcomes and accurate methods of assessment. Classroom RE will be a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material."***
- The outcome of Classroom Religious Education is:  
*"religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life".*<sup>4</sup>
- **Whilst evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school for some pupils, the specific contribution Religious Education makes to the Catholic Life of the school is primarily educational and will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects.**

## Aims and Objectives

The essential nature of our Religious Education Programme is living out our beliefs in our daily life together.

The explicit teaching of Religious Education, as a subject, will help promote the physical, moral and spiritual development of children. It will work towards giving children an understanding of the aims and beliefs of the Catholic faith, and promote the equal value of all peoples, regardless of colour, race or creed.

Religious Education has a very important place in the curriculum of this Catholic school, which takes its share of the community's responsibility of passing on the Christian faith to the children.

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This responsibility is shared by the home, parish and school. If R.E. is to be effective, parents, priests, and teachers must all play their part to co-operate with one another.

Parents are the teachers of the child, and they must continue this role throughout the child's growing years.

The main responsibility for the development of their children's faith lies with the parents.

"As it is the parents who have given life to their children, on them lies the gravest obligation of educating their family. They must therefore be recognised as being primarily and principally responsible for their education. The role of parents as educators is of such importance, that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute. It is therefore the duty of the parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and devotion to God and their fellow man, which will promote an integrated, personal and social education for their children"

(Declaration on Christian Education)

The Aims of Religious Education as stated in the RE Directory are:

- to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;
- to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
- to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
- to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
- to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
- to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
- to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

## **Teaching Methods**

The school uses the planning provided by the Diocese on the Hub supplemented by the "Day by Day" resources. These materials are fully compliant with the RE directory "To Know you more Clearly".

The RED been designed alongside the Catholic Liturgical Year and is comprised of six Branches, one per half term. Each branch is taught through the lenses of HEAR, BELIEVE, CELEBRATE AND LIVE.

The Branches are:

1. Creation and Covenant
2. Prophecy and Promise

3. Galilee to Jerusalem
4. Desert to Garden
5. Ends of the Earth
6. Dialogue and Encounter.
- 7.

Each part of our curriculum focuses on key areas to help children understand and grow in their faith. These areas are designed to help pupils know, remember, and apply what they have learned.

The names of these areas are inspired by the Catechism, which teaches us that faith is something we *hear*, *believe*, *celebrate*, and *live*. These four areas guide the lessons and help support children's learning.

- **Hear:** Learning about the teachings of the Church.
- **Believe:** Understanding and growing in faith.
- **Celebrate:** Taking part in the rituals and sacraments of the Church.
- **Live:** Putting faith into action in everyday life.

Each topic lasts one half-term, and follows the recommendations of the Diocese. The teaching time for R.E. is: 10% of the curriculum. (KS1 – 2¼ hrs KS2 - 2½ hrs)

Children will have the opportunity to be taught as individuals, in small groups, in a class group, as well as a whole school. They will have the chance to pray as individuals, groups and as a whole school. In each classroom situation equal opportunity issues and special needs of the children will be addressed.

Within each class, the class teacher employs a range of teaching methods, styles and display to support and enrich the use of our chosen programme, also drawing on the liturgical year of the Universal Church.

There are display areas in the hall devoted to R.E. and these provides a focus that links themes and topics with the spiritual life of the school. This approach is also reflected in the well-chosen religious displays and images evident throughout the school, to provide stimulating and prayerful focal points. In addition, every class has its own special prayer area and we have a beautiful prayer room which can be used for prayer and meditation and an outdoor prayer area.

The teachers and teaching staff's role as models of our faith in practice is vitally important.

### **Special Educational Needs**

We aim for all children to have equal access to the R.E. curriculum, so that they are encouraged to strive for academic excellence and develop their full potential in recognition that we are all children of God.

At St Margaret Clitherow we believe that teaching R.E. to pupils with special educational needs is an extension of existing good practice. A feature of this is the matching task and resources to the needs of the pupils. (See SEN Policy) R.E. activities are best planned when based on sound knowledge of the pupils' abilities. This may involve breaking down an activity into a series of small achievable steps. The pupil should make gradual progress at each stage to overall success as the whole concept is taught.

### **Scaffolding, support and Challenge**

In order to implement a balanced curriculum, we build on the past achievement of individual pupils.

plan for specific development in skills, knowledge and understanding so that the pupils can be given appropriate tasks.

- build on the past achievement of individual pupils
- remove barriers to participation, e.g. where these apply to pupils with special needs.
- provide opportunities for individual pupils to experience success.

Teachers ensure that pupils experience a variety of groupings to meet specific needs e.g. work should be planned and support and challenge prepared for. Pupils experience a range of teaching and learning styles.

At St Margaret Clitherow we try to ensure that progression and extension activities are built into each lesson, enabling high achievers to progress to their maximum potential, extending their knowledge and experiences in RE.

### **Our Mission Statement**

Our aim is for the children to live out the mission statement in all they do. To achieve this, adults are encouraged to be know and understand the mission statement and lead in its example. The children should be taught about the Mission Statement which is placed inside every child's RE book along with the school prayer and is prominently displayed within the school.

### **Partnership between Home School and Parish**

The vital partnership of home, school and parish provides the context for the lifelong process of religious formation. "The first and primary educators of children are their parents" (Religious Dimension of education in a catholic school, p.24).

This crucial link is expressed to every parent during their initial meeting when their child starts school with the HT and the Parish Priest where the home school agreement is introduced.

We aim to work in partnership and seek ways of involving parents in the religious life of their children.

A curriculum overview is sent home for each RE topic that is taught (two per term) informing parents of the work their children will cover in Religious Education. In addition, the Wednesday Word is sent home weekly.

The school has close links with the parish. Children partake in liturgies and are encouraged to become altar servers. They also usually participate in masses and special events and children attend a whole school mass at the beginning of the year in the church as well as attending on a Friday on a rota basis in Year 4, 5 and 6. Year 1, 2 and 3 attend mass in the Summer Term.

The school supports the First Holy Communion programme in the parish e.g. through the taught topic 'Being a Sacramental People'. The children are prepared for their Communion in the parish. This involves regular sessions held at the church to prepare the children for liturgical celebrations.

Parents and carers are welcome to attend all school masses and assemblies celebrated by the children. Parent consultations during open evenings allow parents to discuss their child's RE work and their spiritual and moral development.

### **Equal Opportunities**

At St Margaret Clitherow School, all pupils are given access to, and confidence in, different activities, regardless of their sex or cultural/ethnic background, and appropriate to their ability. Pupils are valued as individuals, and teachers strive to create an environment in which from the earliest age in nursery pupils learn to respect and value each other. We encourage pupils to enjoy lessons and express themselves throughout their learning activities.

At St Margaret Clitherow School there is equal access and opportunity for all pupils in Religious Education in respect of:

1. curriculum balance
2. activities
3. time allocated
4. resources and facilities

### **Multi-Cultural Education and Other Faiths**

Our pupils are informed about and encouraged to respect and be tolerant of people of different faiths and cultures – in order to enhance positive attitudes so that they live and learn in the rich diversity of the world around them. We acknowledge key dates and festivals for other religions throughout the year. These are listed on the RE overview of the year. In addition, other faiths are visited in more detail during the “Dialogue and Encounter” branch.

### **Assessment, Marking and Recording**

Children’s moral and spiritual development can be identified:

- ☐ through direct conversation with children
- ☐ through class written work
- ☐ through analysis of their contribution in whole class experiences
- ☐ through topic evaluations
- ☐ through topic assessments

Marking and recording is in accordance with school policy.

R.E. Formal assessment takes place at the end of each topic. The assessment is planned for at the beginning of each topic. Teachers are asked to assess each child each topic and give a ‘best fit’ judgement against the standards for assessment. This ‘best fit’ judgement will be based on evidence gathered from a formally assessed piece of work as well as other pieces of pupils’ work that term. It is expected that teachers ensure at the planning stage that appropriate teaching and learning strategies are in place for each pupil to be challenged at the appropriate level.” Assessment is based on the core questions from the diocesan hub.

An assessment sheet is completed at the end of each topic. Each child is levelled termly in RE and this data is used to track progress by the RE and Assessment coordinator using our INSIGHT system.

In addition, a whole school Moderation Portfolio is regularly updated with examples of children’s work levelled and moderated by staff, in local diocesan cluster groups and also some examples of cross diocesan moderation.

There are many factors involved in the evaluation of the effectiveness of our Religious Education Programme. These include the relationships between the entire school community – children, parents and staff.

It cannot be stressed too greatly, that R.E. in its broadest sense, should not be confined to the timetabled lessons, collective worship assemblies or church services, but is reflected in the whole ethos of the school.

## **Organisation and Management**

Each class teacher is responsible for providing the opportunity for the pupils to celebrate, pray, reflect, learn and share together within God's family, as well as guiding and supporting them on their faith journey.

Preparation for the receiving of First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Reconciliation begins as soon as the child enters the school. In Year Three the school liaises with the parish throughout the Sacramental Programmes. Children receive their detailed preparation programme tuition at the church.

The Headteacher has had delegated by the governors, the day-to-day leadership of the school community and is charged with sustaining and developing all aspects of Catholic identity and safeguarding the Church's teaching within the whole learning environment. From this all members of the school staff and pupils are supported in their own faith journey.

### **The role of the R.E. Coordinator is to;**

- Co-ordinate the development of R.E. within St. Margaret Clitherow School
- Link with home and parish concerning developments in relation to St. Margaret Clitherow R.E. policy
- Co-ordinate with staff regarding religious celebrations and liturgy
- Attend In-Service courses led by the Diocese and disseminate information to colleagues
- Ensure that prayer and worship are an integral part of the life of the school and help to organise sacramental and liturgical services

## **Resources**

- The school community, pupils, staff, advisors, governors, parents/carers, priests and parishioners.
- The Margaret Carswell Programme – for providing a teaching framework and structure for the school year.
- RE and Other faiths resource folder in "Staff Share"
- R.E. Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- A range of resources for teaching R.E. is available e.g. reference books, bibles, children's books
- In-Service training
- Annual R.E. budget

## **Health and Safety**

The school's Health and Safety guidelines will be observed for all religious outings.

Candles will not be left unattended while alight. They will be placed on safe, fireproof bases. Pupils will be closely supervised when candles are involved in lessons. Where possible electronic candles are used instead.

## **Collective Worship**

In St. Margaret Clitherow School dove-tailing with the Diocesan hub programme we celebrate the liturgical year using assemblies, collective worship and classroom prayer time. Here we endeavour to examine, explore and reflect upon the world around us.

Whole school Collective Worship occurs three times a week. This is when the whole school gathers to worship in the school hall. The aim is to promote school togetherness. It is a time when we pray together, worshipping God. On the days where there is no whole school act of worship this takes place within the classroom.

Usually, these whole school assemblies consist of firstly, one Monday morning collective worship session based on the Gospel delivered by a different member of staff each week. Secondly, a member of the teaching staff leads either a themed assembly or the Certificate Assembly which is a celebration of the efforts and achievements of the whole community. Each teacher awards certificates to members of his/her own class. These can be given for academic or sporting achievements, or politeness and helpfulness. The children are allowed to award certificates to the adults in the school who they feel have warranted such accolades. In addition, there is a weekly "Hymn Practice" session led by our Music Teacher.

The Parish Priest celebrates eucharistic and non-eucharistic liturgies with the whole school.

It is believed that spiritual development is not the sole preserve of the children but that the climate generated will provide for the spiritual development of all members of our community.

For more details see Prayer and Liturgy Policy.

## **Links with Parents**

To support R.E. in our school, we have set up the following links:

1. Information regarding RE curriculum communicated to parents e.g. via curriculum guidelines and the school website.
2. Parents are invited to class assemblies.
3. Parents are invited to school masses.
4. Parents are invited to join class trips to English Martyrs Church when children attend.
5. Parents are invited to join class and whole school celebrations
6. Parents are invited to attend class liturgies.

## **Links with Parish**

1. Years 4-6 attend a parish mass at English Martyrs Church on Friday morning on a rota basis once per term. Younger children attend where appropriate once per year.
2. The school provides a support network for the Parish First Holy Communion programme
3. The school choir sing regularly at mass and at parish events.
4. Members of the parish are volunteer helpers in school and invited to all school events.
5. The Parish Priest is a regular and welcome visitor to school.



## **R.E. Displays**

The RE display boards are located in the hall. Other work is displayed in the classrooms, each of which has a designated prayer area. In addition, the school has a display board in the church, which keeps parishioners up to date with school news and the Catholic Life of the school.

For further information- please see the RE handbook.