

1. Introduction

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Religious Education at Holy Cross Preparatory School.

2. What is RE?

Religious education is the conscience of the curriculum. It has a distinctive contribution to make to the children's spiritual development. It provides a place where the worship of God and Gospel values are made concrete and are manifested in the educational progress. The religious growth and development of pupils at Holy Cross Preparatory School is a whole school experience and more than simply timetabled RE lessons. Spiritual growth will develop alongside all aspects of learning.

3. Aims

The starting point is the children's own experience; that is their understanding of God, celebration and faith in ways suited to their age and development so that they may reflect on what it is to be a unique person created by God in his image. By starting with this implicit approach to religious education the explicit can be reached.

Our aims in teaching RE are:

- to enable pupils to realise their full potential spiritually, academically and personally;
- to enable pupils to grow in their spiritual development through reflection on their thoughts, feelings and relationship;
- to help pupils to explore the beliefs, values and way of life in the Catholic - Christian tradition;
- to develop particular skills (reflections, empathy, communication, reasoning, enquiry, analysis and evaluation) and attitudes (respect, open-mindedness, self-esteem, sensitivity, critical awareness, appreciation and wonder) which enable elective learning to take place;
- to develop knowledge and understanding of both Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain;
- to develop an understanding of how religious belief can be expressed in a variety of ways, e.g. through art, music and drama;
- to develop pupils' ability to evaluate their learning experience in RE;
- to teach religious education supported by the scheme 'Come and See';
- to provide a true Christian community where all members of that community can grow in faith together demonstrated through our living out of the 'Gospel values' in our daily lives;
- through assemblies, the regular celebration of Mass, prayer services, reflection and other services to develop the religious life of our school;
- to help children to develop their personal relationship with Christ, developing a clear understanding of the Christian message and a deeper commitment to Jesus;
- to support the children in relating their developing understanding of the Christian message to their own lives;
- to foster the maturation of the children's faith through their active participation in prayer, Sacramental life and service to others;
- to raise awareness, understanding, tolerance and respect of other religions and traditions;
- to help the children explore and become familiar with Bible stories as a means of developing their relationship and understanding of God.

4. Principles of Teaching and Learning RE

RE involves a wide range of teaching techniques and active learning opportunities, particularly since as a Catholic school, our faith is reflected in all areas of the curriculum. Work in class may be as whole class, groups or on an individual basis. Focus is given to activities through which children can express themselves e.g. creative play, art, storytelling, music, singing, worshipping and serving. Such activities give children of all abilities equal access. More formal work sessions will be differentiated according to task or outcomes. The RE curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities to make cross-curricular links with other subjects in order to make learning experiences more meaningful. Teachers identify these links in their planning and also work with specialist teachers.

5. Strategies for Teaching RE

We recognise that all members of our school community are on a 'faith journey' and will be at different stages on this journey. It is important that teachers differentiate for this fact in their teaching in the same way as they would with other areas of the school curriculum.

[i] The scheme – 'Come and See'

We follow the 'Come and See' RE scheme. In developing our scheme, we have ensured coverage of the Programme of Study set out in the 'Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges' and is based on Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The primary content of all the scheme material is the teaching and practices of the Catholic Church and their implications for the lives of people today and in particular the lives of the pupils themselves. This material therefore presents the three key elements of the Christian faith:

- that every human event is marked by the creative activity of God which communicates goodness to all beings;
- that the reality and power of sin limit and numb every person;
- that the life, death and resurrection of Christ, communicated by the Holy Spirit, gives believers the hope of a definitive 'fulfilment'.

The syllabus incorporates Learning *about* religion (Knowledge and Understanding), Learning *from* religion (Engagement and Response) and opportunities to analyse and evaluate. These are set out in the form of specific key learning objectives for each module.

The resources for the syllabus are imaginative, engaging and challenging. The teachers' online resources have theological notes, additional suggestions and activities.

In addition, the **class approach** will:

- provide time for the children to pray together encouraging the children to pray spontaneously;
- provide a prayer corner/area in the classroom;
- provide opportunities to discuss attitudes and behaviour as members of a community;
- teach the children to respect themselves and others equally.

The **whole school approach** will:

- teach the children through assemblies and liturgies;
- classes present an assembly to the rest of the school and Junior classes lead Masses and services;
- provide opportunities for the school to celebrate Mass and liturgies together in the school hall or classroom based;
- encourage links between home, school and parish through support for sacramental preparation programmes [Eucharist and Reconciliation], harvest festival and Holy Week liturgies;
- encourage the children to support and participate in charitable events e.g. CAFOD and Lenten charities chosen by the pupils via the House Captains;
- encourage visits from the school chaplain [Parish Priest] - prayer services and talking to the children to support the curriculum;
- teaching the children about important feasts and celebrations in the Church's calendar, supported by visits e.g. to Wintershall;
- acknowledging the festivals and key aspects of world faiths.

[ii] Prayer and Reflection

At Holy Cross, we believe that we are a praying community and recognise the importance of prayer and reflection in our lives. We want the children to learn to value the importance of prayer in their own lives. We aim to teach the children both how to pray 'formally' and 'informally' in an atmosphere that is conducive to prayer; this could be by using candles, music and artefacts to contribute to the experience. Prayer and reflection is embedded into our RE curriculum as well as daily school life.

We recognise the importance that children learn some of the more formal prayers of the Church as they move through the primary years. By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to know the Our Father. In Year 3, pupils study and learn the Hail Mary and an Act of Contrition, in preparation for receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. In Year 4, pupils learn the Glory Be. The meanings of these prayers are explored as the children mature in Years 5 and 6. (See Appendix for list of prayers).

Our scheme encourages prayer by building upon the children's natural emotions which are evoked through a growing awareness of themselves, others and their world. At Holy Cross, children learn that prayer can be expressed through song, gesture, movement, dance, art, writing and silence. Spontaneous (informal) prayer is encouraged and highly valued and is an indication of a child's developing relationship with God. Therefore, we find time for children to write and share their own prayers in class, assemblies and Masses or prayer services. We help children to express their own acts of faith, hope, love, praise, thanksgiving and sorrow. In Year 2, pupils are given their own Holy Cross hymn book, which they keep for the rest of their time at Holy Cross. When they leave, they take it with them as a reminder of their time at the school. Year 6 pupils participate in retreat days in the summer term in order to help them to reflect on their time at Holy Cross and to prepare for their move to senior schools.

As a community, each day offers the opportunity to pray together - at the beginning and end of each day, before meals and during assemblies. As a staff, we pray before each staff meeting and at the beginning of INSET days. On occasions, we plan and celebrate Mass together as a staff and share in deanery diocese Masses.

[iii] Collective Worship

The opportunity to gather together as a community for collective worship is an essential part of our school life. We believe that this time together for prayer and reflection strengthens the children in their relationship with God. We value highly the chance to pray together, listen together, sing together and celebrate together. An act of collective worship takes place each day either in class or together in the school hall.

Whole school liturgies

Our whole school assemblies are led by members of the senior leadership team (SLT). Themes for these assemblies are based on events in the Church's liturgical year such as special feast days or holy days.

Class Assemblies

These take place each term; they are prepared by the class and their teacher, and presented to the rest of the school. This provides classes with an opportunity to share and celebrate their work. Themes are often based on work currently going on in class, linked with the RE scheme or in line with events in the Church's year.

Liturgical Services

Each class in the Juniors is timetabled to prepare a liturgical service for the rest of the school. This gives an opportunity for prayer, reflection and celebration. Parents are welcomed to share in these services. Pupils in Year 3 prepare a 'Service of Inscription' to celebrate the start of a faith journey for those who are embarking on their First Holy Communion sacramental programme in their own parishes and a final Going Forth Mass celebration. During Lent, services to mark the events of Holy Week are prepared by pupils: Palm Sunday (liturgy), Holy Thursday (The Last Supper liturgy) and Good Friday (A Lenten Reflection and walk through the school grounds). Parents are encouraged to participate. Pre-prep classes prepare a short class-based liturgy.

[iv] Masses

Mass is celebrated together as a whole school, usually three or four times per term. There is always a Mass at the start and end of each term as well as on all Holy days of Obligation if they fall within school time. Years 4, 5 and 6 are timetabled to prepare these masses. Once the pupils in Year 3 have made their First Holy Communion, they are involved in the preparation of the 'Going Forth' Mass in the summer term. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to celebrate with us at all Masses and non-Eucharistic services.

Children are encouraged to take an active part in the Mass, writing prayers, reading, singing and taking up the offertory gifts. We expect the children to learn and know the responses of the Mass so that they can take a fuller part in this way.

[v] Sacramental Preparation and Celebration

Children in our school community come from many different areas and are encouraged to celebrate the Sacraments and attend services in their own parishes. Catholic children aged 7-8 years enrol onto parish sacramental programmes where they are prepared to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. The school supports the children and their families. In the autumn term, there is an inscription service which marks the beginning of the preparation of these children. Towards the end of the summer term when all the children have made their First Holy Communion in their parishes, the school celebrates with them in a 'Going Forth' Mass. This is an opportunity for the whole school community to come together to celebrate and recognise this important step in their faith journey. All pupils are included and involved. During the Church's season of Lent, the children take part in services of reconciliation

as part of their Lenten preparations. Older pupils are offered the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during individual confession. The local parish priest spends some time in school to enable this.

6. Differentiation

“ a Catholic school should seek to plan a curriculum, which embraces the needs of pupils of all abilities. The curriculum should be planned as an enabling framework in which all pupils have the opportunity to develop their potential to the full within all areas of experience and, especially, the spiritual.” Evaluating The Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School - CES: 1994

The following key principles come from ‘Differentiation: A Catholic Perspective’ published by the CES.

Every learner:

- has a divine origin and is a unique individual;
- is gifted by the Holy Spirit;
- has the right to be included fully in the life of the Church community;
- has the right to an education and have potential identified and developed;
- has the right to be regarded as having equal value and worth;
- has the right to a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum;
- has a right to a genuine access to the whole curriculum;
- has the right to be challenged by and to achieve in the learning situation;
- has the right to share with and learn from others.

Planning a differentiated approach so that all children have access to the whole curriculum and providing effective learning opportunities for all children of all abilities necessitates a flexible approach by teachers including:

- using a variety of teaching styles to meet children’s differing learning styles;
- employing a variety of resources;
- organising available time to suit both the child and the curriculum;
- gaining an understanding of children’s previous learning experiences;
- identifying individual strengths;
- making use of appropriate assessment procedures;
- establishing a structured record keeping system;
- putting in place monitoring procedures to determine individual progress;
- planning future lessons on the basis of knowledge of individual learners.

In Catholic schools, this goes beyond consideration of academic achievement: for example, parents, chaplains, parish priests and others can contribute to the understanding of the child as unique and gifted by the Holy Spirit.

Exceptionally more Able, Gifted and Talented

At Holy Cross, the Bishops' Conference Age-Related standards in Religious Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges is embedded into our scheme of work, enabling us to provide increasingly challenging religious education to match each pupil's stage of development and ability. It helps us to monitor rates of progress so that provision and teaching can be adjusted to facilitate the enhancement of higher order skills and deeper levels of knowledge and understanding.

SEND

When planning religious education lessons and activities, teachers are able to use the Age-Related standards to make judgements on pupils' progress, understanding and ability. This enables them to identify those pupils who need a differentiated curriculum and plan accordingly. At Holy Cross, we feel that activities should provide a range of motivating and enjoyable experiences for all pupils which provide scope to enable them to demonstrate success. A wide range of support strategies is employed to help each child achieve their potential in developing their knowledge and understanding of RE. Sharing success criteria at the outset helps the pupils to make judgements about their own work and helps them to work through small steps in order to achieve success.

7. Teaching of World Faiths

The Church tells us to be committed to respecting people of other religions and to recognise that God is at work in them. At Holy Cross, we aim for the children to develop a growing understanding of their own faith and a respect for and understanding of other faiths. The experience of another faith tradition is built into the scheme 'Come and See'. We want the children to learn that other faiths and people pray, fast, celebrate and go on pilgrimages. World faiths are addressed as a consequence of, and in the context of, Catholic teaching. Catholic teaching about the action of God in the world requires an informed and respectful approach to other faiths. By a study of the action of God in these faiths, Catholics can come to a deeper appreciation of the revelation of God in Christ.

Catholics can also learn from the practices of other faiths (e.g. patterns of prayer, fasting, pilgrimages etc).

It is always important to teach Judaism, "since Christians and Jews have such a common spiritual heritage."

Nostra Aetate 4 Vatican Council, page 741

At Holy Cross, we teach three different World Religions. Currently we teach Judaism, Islam and Hinduism.

We hold World Faiths week, once a term where we focus on a particular faith in detail:

Autumn term – Hinduism

Spring term – Judaism

Summer term – Islam

Each faith is taught separately from other faiths so as to avoid confusion and comparison. Comparisons will arise but should not be the starting point of the teaching. Where possible, children will have an opportunity to meet with people from other faiths and visit their place of worship. Books, artefacts, guest speakers and videos are used to support this.

Pupils are encouraged to understand the importance of showing sensitivity, respect and appreciation for feelings of people who hold religious beliefs different from their own. They gradually become

familiar with the stories celebrated at certain festivals and acquire a knowledge and appropriate vocabulary for worship, beliefs and festivals.

During the week spent on another faith, collective worship time is used to offer prayers for people of that faith, and sometimes assemblies prepared by classes are presented to the rest of the school.

8. Displays

Displays are important as it gives children a positive image of themselves and the work that they do. Displays are an integral part of every classroom and reflect the work of individual classes and, as such, RE should be reflected in the displays on offer in classrooms and around the school. Displays may also form part of the 'Prayer Corner'. Each class prepares displays for the central RE boards in the school which reflects either what is being studied in the classroom or may link with a topical theme in the Church's liturgical calendar. These displays are often interactive, encouraging children to respond in some way. RE displays in the pupil entrance reflect the changing themes in the Church's year.

9. Homework

Homework is used to support RE through tasks such as:

- follow up tasks related to the scheme of work;
- assembly preparation;
- Mass preparation;
- special services when there is no Mass;
- practical tasks - such as doing something special during the season of Advent or Lent;
- a practical application of a particular Gospel passage;
- bringing artefacts from home into school for display of a particular topic;
- a child of a different faith telling the class about their special days and customs.

10. Early Years

In the Early Years, RE is guided by the Early Learning Goals set within the scheme. It is taught mainly as a discrete subject, yet links are planned throughout, with other areas of learning, to ensure a meaningful cross-curricular approach. Children learn about God's world and how they are part of his family. They build a better relationship with God through Jesus and explore sorrow and joy. They learn about the Resurrection by thinking about new life and begin to learn that a church is its people. Lessons are planned and taught using clear objectives and provide opportunities for follow up in the areas of Communication and Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Expressive Arts and Design, Understanding of the World and Physical Development. The study of world faiths, following the school's programme of study, links closely with aspects covered in Understanding of the World.

11. Home, School and Parish

The role of the whole community of faith is essential to the religious education of the children. At Holy Cross, we believe religious education to be a partnership between home, school and parish. Parents are the first and prime educators of their children and the daily life of the Christian family makes up the first and most important experience of church and faith.

Thus, the role of home and Parish in religious education precedes, accompanies and enriches religious education in the school.

Parents are well informed at the beginning and throughout the year about dates for Masses and services. They are encouraged to celebrate with us. During special services, such as the annual Lenten Walk, they are fully involved.

12. Spiritual and Moral Development

“Love of our neighbour and love of God is inseparable. The human person is by nature a social being; we need society to realise our human vocation. We must be concerned for the social good and for social justice, based on deep respect for every human being, and a desire to share together in the Kingdom of God. All human beings are equal in dignity: we have the same nature and the same origin, and we need one another.”

‘What Are We To Teach?’ Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales CES: 1994

Spiritual and moral development builds on the initial experiences offered from home. In school, we aim to help each individual to grow as a whole person developing an awareness of themselves and others, as well as the world around them.

We believe that spiritual development is promoted in our school through:

- acts of collective worship where, together as a community, we can pray, sing, reflect and praise together;
- through teaching religious education and learning about God, our faith and living as a Christian;
- by sacramental celebration;
- the quality of relationships offered and experienced in our community by all its members;
- the positive experiences offered in the home;
- the environment and the ethos of the school.

A simple statement cannot define moral education, nor can it be confined to one area of the curriculum. We aim to promote moral development by:

- the place of positive reward and emphasising positive behaviour and attitudes;
- an emphasis on Gospel values such as justice, peace and love;
- an emphasis on the responsibility of the individual and providing children with the opportunity to take responsibility;
- the work in Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE Education);
- acceptable standards of behaviour.

13. Attainment, Recording and Reporting

In line with the Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy, assessments in RE are made against Age-Related Standards in Religious Education: (Catholic Education Service July 2018).

At Holy Cross, teachers plan using the language of the progress descriptors and outcomes are expressed. When gathering evidence, teachers draw on the full range of work produced by the pupils over time. Additionally, specific assessment tasks from ‘Come and See’ are identified by the teacher and set within lessons. These are carried out termly.

In line with the school’s policy, ‘best-fit’ judgements are made termly based on a range of work over a period of time including the termly assessment task. These best-fit judgements are recorded using

Sonar, Juniper Education. This process of making judgements about pupil attainment then informs decisions about future planning.

14. ICT

Planning shows opportunities for ICT to be incorporated into class based lessons in order to enhance their pupils' learning and experience in RE. They carry out individual research, prepare PowerPoint presentations, collate information from surveys, make posters and leaflets and create images. Additionally, they use relevant and appropriate websites. Much use is made of digital photography to record children engaged in activities linked with RE such as role-play, prayer services and assemblies. Children are encouraged to use these photographs as a basis for further work.

15. Promoting British Values

British values permeate teaching and learning in RE. Also, refer to the school's policy for Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE).

16. Role of the RE Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator's role is to:

- be willing to listen to and think through the genuine concerns some teachers have about delivering RE effectively;
- keep in touch with local and national developments in RE through participating in courses and reading relevant publications;
- create and develop an RE policy statement which is educationally clear and entuses the reader about the contributions of RE to children's learning;
- support the school in the development of lively and imaginative schemes of work that provide clear detail, highlight key skills and attitudes, demonstrating links with the agreed syllabus;
- show variety in learning strategies and ensure these are effectively assessed and recorded;
- monitor and review the delivery of schemes of work in RE through meetings with colleagues, team teaching, sharing classroom work with other teachers and reviewing schemes of work once they have been delivered;
- ensure that progression and continuity are built into schemes of work so that recurring themes and topics are given new insights and material;
- support teachers in the actual delivery of RE through activities such as introducing a new RE topic, sharing ideas about using stories and artefacts in the classroom, suggesting ideas for reflective activities in RE (circle time, meditations);
- monitor children's progress through scrutiny of work throughout the year;
- lead staff discussions on RE sharing in the leadership of school-based INSET;
- obtain, organise and manage a good range of RE resources. This includes ensuring that the headteacher is aware of funding needs, and creating and maintaining a list of all available resources;
- support colleagues in the assessment, recording and reporting of RE with clear guidelines and objectives and review children's progress;
- contribute to the school development plan, agreed with the Headteacher, which is practical and realistic and moves RE forward;
- ensure that RE display work is prominent around the school;
- ensure that 'special' RE events are publicised on the school website, in the Friday Update to parents and through Classlist (a social media platform for the school community);

- establish and maintain positive relationships with the local religious communities, ensuring that there are practical opportunities for children to visit places of worship and talk with members of different religious traditions;
- lead pupil faith leaders;
- lead a faith steering group of named staff.

17. Faith Leaders

Pupils from the Juniors volunteer and apply to represent the school as a faith leader. Their role is to discuss, plan and implement new initiatives in line with the school's Mission Statement and ethos. Faith leaders support and develop the faith journey and collective worship throughout the school.

18. Resources

Teachers have full access to a folder on the school network where an extensive range of resources are stored including resources for lessons, assessment, PowerPoint presentations, Masses, liturgies and key documents. There is a central RE resource cupboard situated in the Prayer room which includes artefacts and resources to teach Christianity and other world faiths. Additionally, a selection of resources to support teachers across the liturgical year, and with the preparation of Masses, assemblies and services is available. There are sets of Bibles for use in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Big books are available for younger pupils. Age-appropriate Bible story books and prayer books are available in all classes to support teaching and learning. Resources are reviewed and updated regularly. Each class teacher has been provided with a RE folder which supports planning, teaching and assessment of RE and is updated regularly.

19. Co-Curricular Activities

An early morning meditation group for parents 'Time for God' meets weekly in the Prayer Room lead by Sr Ursula. The school choirs meets during lunchtimes throughout the week and regularly contribute their talents during whole school celebrations and Masses.

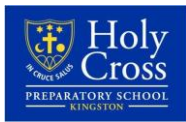
20. Contribution to the Common Good in Education

At Holy Cross, we believe that "through the opportunities provided for spiritual, moral and social formation" our pupils "will develop a distinctive and vital contribution to social cohesion in our society. This will be grounded in their respect for all people as made in the image and likeness of God, and shaped by the spirit of dialogue and respect that is such an integral part of the Catholic Church's understanding of its role and mission in the world. This is encapsulated in the statement of the second Vatican Council that the Church is a 'sacrament or instrumental sign of intimate union with God and of unity for the whole human race' (Lumen Gentium I)."

From Diocesan Policy on religious Education and Collective Worship 2014

21. Health and Safety

Refer to the school Health and Safety Policy and the Educational Visits Policy for requirements regarding visits.



RE POLICY

Appendix I

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day, our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we
forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but
deliver us from evil.
Amen

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with
thee; blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour
of our death.
Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning
Is now
And ever shall be
World without end
Amen

Act of Contrition

O my God,
Because You are so good,
I am very sorry that I have sinned
against You, And by Your help
of Your Grace,
I will not sin again.
Amen

Morning Prayer

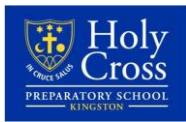
Heavenly Father, I give you today,
All that I think and do and say.
Uniting it with what was done
On earth, by Jesus Christ, Your Son.
Amen

Evening Prayers

God our Father,
I come to say,
Thank You for Your love today.
Thank You for my family
And all the friends You give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night
And in the morning send Your light.
Amen

Angel of God
My guardian dear
To whom God's love entrusts me here
Ever this day be at my side
To light and guard
To rule and guide
Amen

Help me Jesus,
Know Your ways,
Through the nights
Through the days,
Give me love to show a friend
You're always there
You never end
Amen



RE POLICY

Grace before meals [sung or spoken]

At the table, at the table
Bless this food, bless this food.
Bless this food we ask You
Bless this food we ask You
And us too
And us too

Thank You for the world so sweet,
Thank You for the food we eat.
Thank You for the birds that sing,
Thank You Lord for everything

Thank you God for the food we have
eaten Thank you God for all our friends
Thank you God for everything
Thank you God
Amen

OR another prayer of choice

N.B. It is important to encourage spontaneous prayer and to use prayers written by the children themselves.