

## 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 relationships;
- 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 schemes 'Come and See' and 'Lighting the Path';
- 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.

- **Schemes of work**

Pre-Prep follow 'Lighting the Path' scheme of work and Juniors follow 'Come and See'. 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.

## 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 End of Year Progress Descriptors are 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 End of Year Progress Descriptors 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 schemes of work. 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 Faith 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. Attainment, Recording and Reporting**

In line with the Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy, assessments in RE are made against the End of Year Progress Descriptors (CES).

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 our schemes of work 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.

### **12. Curriculum Time**

Religious Education is at the centre of the daily life of the school. In line with the Bishops' Conference recommendations, a minimum 10% teaching time is allocated to RE each week, this does not include Collective Worship. Other subject areas, such as drama, art and English, complement the RE curriculum. RE is brought into other areas of the curriculum wherever possible, including thematic approaches to events such as 'The Year of the Creative Arts,' 'The Year of Conservation,' 'The Year of Hope.' RE effectively enhances other areas of the curriculum such as music, art, geography, science, school trips.

### **13. 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.

### **14. PSHE/RSE**

PSHE supports the RE curriculum and is taught in addition to the time given to RE. Pupils study topics such as the rights and responsibilities of individuals, the study of democracy and the parliamentary process, and bullying. Circle time gives pupils the opportunity to discuss and understand human feelings and emotions and their likely impact in relation to themselves and others.

We use the TenTen scheme 'Life to the Full Plus' as a resource for the teaching of PSHE and RSE.

## **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).

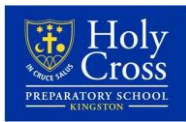
## **16. Role of the RE Co-ordinator**

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 enthuses 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. 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



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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.

### **18. Health and Safety**

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