

# St Mary's RC Primary School, Middleton



# Religious Education Policy

## September 2026-28

## Vision Statement:

Nurturing growth, igniting dreams, building  
futures, guided by God.

Our Pupil Voice School Council, in conjunction with staff, parents and governors created our Vision Statement.

## Mission Statement:

*As the family of St. Mary's, learning and  
growing in God's love, joyfully, we **pray, play  
and respect all**, changing our world forever.*

## **Purpose of and rationale for Religious Education: fully religious and genuinely educational**

### **Religious Education**

The Catholic school is a community of faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and Religious Education is where that faith seeks understanding. The primary aim of Religious Education in a Catholic school is to engage in a comprehensive and 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.

The curriculum subject of Religious Education presents the same demand for rigour and for being systematic as any other subject. While for some Religious Education may well deepen and enhance personal faith, and others may discover answers to the deepest questions of life, nevertheless, the primary criteria by which it is judged are educational.

### **Dialogue and encounter**

The Religious Education classroom must be a place of respectful dialogue. Religious Education has an important part to play in this dialogue, by presenting a curriculum that includes a study of other religious traditions and worldviews. There are good reasons why a Catholic Religious Education curriculum must include the study of other religions and worldviews. The first reason is because the Church itself teaches that by virtue of their baptism, Catholics are called to engage in dialogue with others. The Church teaches that a shared commitment to the promotion of peaceful societies requires educational institutions to allow various cultural expressions to coexist and, in that context, to promote respectful dialogue. In Catholic schools, where the presence of partners in dialogue occurs naturally due to their diverse nature, Religious Education becomes ideally placed to facilitate this dialogue. The dialogical attitude is nurtured by the Catholic school through its provision of a pluralistic Religious Education curriculum and its modelling of respectful dialogue in classroom practice. The second reason is that it prepares Catholic pupils for the world they will encounter outside of the Catholic atmospheres of the home, parish, and school. In addition, the provision of a pluralistic curriculum that opens for pupils the opportunity to engage in meaningful interreligious and intercultural dialogue gives a rationale for the subject that explains its relevance to all pupils, not just to those who are Catholic. (RED, 2023)

### **The primacy of Religious Education in the school curriculum**

1. Religious Education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
2. Religious Education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines. It must be organised, led, coordinated, taught, resourced and quality

assured as a core subject.

3. Religious Education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by Religious Education and have a strong relationship with it.

4. In primary schools there is to be a Religious Education Lead who is to have at least parity in status and remuneration with those of any other curriculum area.

(RED, 2023)

### **Outcome of Religious Education**

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and consciously 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 recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. (RED, 2023)

### **Compliance with the Religious Education Directory (2023) and Catholic School Inspection**

1. Catholic schools are required to comply with the Religious Education Directory Primary schools should ensure full curriculum compliance by September 2026.
2. Catholic primary schools in the Diocese of Salford are recommended to teach Religious Education using Lighting the Path scheme as the principal resource from September 2026 in EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
3. In each year of compulsory schooling, Religious Education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

### **The importance of the Religious Educator**

In our Catholic context, it remains desirable, as far as possible, that teachers of Religious Education should be committed Catholics. Where Religious Education is taught by a person who bears witness to their belief, they can bring the lived dimension of a life in Christ into their classroom community. However, we are full of gratitude for the commitment of every teacher whether Catholic or not who is part of the noble endeavour to teach Religious Education in a spirit of dialogue to the next generation. Every teacher of Religious Education requires a genuine expertise in the subject. Therefore, developing the skill set of all teachers must form a critical part of professional development to facilitate appropriate levels of theological literacy. Religious Education teachers also need to become guardians of dialogue. As well as being

competent in subject knowledge, they must be agile conductors of classroom debate, resilient custodians of religious wisdom, and sensitive mentors to enquiring pupils and students. (RED, 2023)

### **Curriculum provision: EYFS-KS2**

To fulfil the aims of Religious Education and to ensure compliance with the norms set out in the Religious Education Directory (RED, 2023) our curriculum provision for Religious Education follows the model curriculum from the RED and is structured in the following way:

### **Curriculum branches**

The curriculum is structured in six curriculum branches – a branch each half term. The branches are rooted in the story of salvation history and lead pupils/students on a journey each year that gives sequence and progression to their learning. As they revisit each branch in each year of school they come to a deeper understanding of its significance for Catholic belief and practice, as well as other Christian denominations and other religious traditions. The six curriculum branches are:

1. Creation and Covenant,
2. Prophecy and Promise,
3. Galilee to Jerusalem,
4. Desert to Garden,
5. To the ends of the Earth,
6. Dialogue and Encounter.

### **Knowledge lenses**

The first five curriculum branches are divided into four sub-sections called knowledge lenses that set out the object of study for pupils/students. These four sections are:

**Hear:** focuses on the Word of God which we hear: the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, a person in whom God is fully revealed, whom we know by faith and who is revealed to us through the Sacred Scriptures and the living tradition of the Church.

**Believe:** focuses on the content of the Church's own profession of faith, what she believes, professes, defines, and teaches. In this lens we look at those doctrines that constitute the Catholic faith: trinity, incarnation, the Holy Spirit, the communion of saints, the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and salvation and eternal life.

**Celebrate:** deals with the liturgy in which the Church celebrates the Paschal mystery of Christ which accomplished the work of salvation. In this lens we look at prayer, liturgy, and sacrament,

sacraments of initiation, the Eucharist, sacraments of healing, sacraments at the service of communion, and other liturgies and sacramentals.

**Live:** focuses on the impact of faith on how Christians live. In this lens we look at the dignity of the human person; freedom, conscience, and virtue; law, grace, and sin; Catholic Social Teaching; and the relationship between faith and life as expressed in art, in culture, and in the lives of those who are exemplars of Christian living: the saints.

Two other knowledge lenses constitute the sixth and final curriculum branch: Dialogue and Encounter.

**Dialogue:** is an exemplification of the Church's teaching on the relationship between Catholicism and other Christian traditions, between Catholicism and Judaism, between Catholicism and other religions, and between Catholicism and non-religious or atheistic worldviews. It is called 'dialogue' because it focuses on the importance of dialogue as the only authentic way of living faithfully in a pluralistic world.

**Encounter:** pupils are expected to engage in a discrete study of other faiths, religions, and worldviews. As they progress, pupils will study:

-  Other Christian denominations
-  Judaism
-  Islam
-  Dharmic religions and pathways

The study of other religions is a study of how those who profess that religion or worldview understand it on their own terms.

## Ways of knowing

There are three ways of knowing: ***Understand, Discern and Respond***, that set out the skills that pupils should develop as they progress through the Religious Education curriculum. They are called ways of knowing since they describe the holistic ways human beings experience education: as a growth in understanding, as a creative and critical assimilation, and as a recognition of the application of learning to one's own life. Each age phase has its own exemplification of the ways of knowing.

## Expected outcomes

The expected outcomes are a synthesis of the content outlined in the knowledge lenses and the skills described in the ways of knowing. Each age phase has a set of outcomes that indicate

what pupils are expected to know, remember, and be able to do, using the language of the ways of knowing and applying it to the knowledge within each lens (In EYFS there are **no prescribed outcomes**).

## Curriculum Provision

The Religious Education curriculum for EYFS through to Key Stage 2 is taught through The Oxford University Press scheme – Lighting the Path which is approved by the Diocese of Salford. The programme follows the model curriculum from the Religious Education Directory.

## Teaching of other religious traditions and worldviews

*At St Mary's RC Primary School, we endeavour to expose our children to wide and diverse traditions and worldviews. In addition to teaching the Branch 6 Dialogue and Encounter in Summer term, we use opportunities throughout the academic year to celebrate festivals such as Eid-ul-fitr, Diwali, Passover, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year and also celebrate diversity within the wider Christian church with celebrations incorporating Eastern Orthodox icons where appropriate. In addition to this, as part of our wider curriculum, we participate in Oracy sessions where worldviews such as vegetarianism, Flat Earth theories and debates around Scientific theory vs belief are discussed in Upper Key Stage Two. From an early point in their schooling, our children are exposed to listening and responding respectfully to others. This is to enable our children to become respectful towards other views and to support our local community to open to a wider viewpoint.*

## Inclusion and Equality

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children. All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme. This is to recognise each child as a gift from God and should be valued. Resources used do not reinforce stereotypes and instead reflect the school, the wider community and its diversity. We adapt lessons and work in order that all children may participate in lessons at their level and this is done through a variety of ways, such as:

-  First Quality Teaching;
-  Support from an adult;
-  Kagan partner work;
-  Adapted tasks and extra resources.

This is not an exhaustive list; please see our SEND policy for further details. We also refer to guidance from the CES entitled “RED Guidance for Special Educational Needs and/or

Disabilities”.

## Assessing and Recording Achievement

As a Catholic school our main concern is with the development of:

- ✚ the whole person
- ✚ the formation of character
- ✚ the ability to take their place in society
- ✚ the fulfilment of academic potential

In this broad context, we use assessment against the expected end phase outcomes stated in the RED. In EYFS through to Key Stage 2 the assessments offered through each of the branches in Lighting the Path forms the assessment practice.

- ✚ We assess RE throughout the academic year in various ways:
- ✚ Staff are encouraged to use specific marking codes to assess children against learning objectives (WALTs) throughout the unit;
- ✚ Every lesson begins with a recap and revise “Sticky Knowledge” retrieval practice to match alongside other core subjects in school. This starts orally and moves to written as children’s ages progress. The amount of questions also change depending upon key stage, One question is about previous learning, one is always about the liturgical calendar. Staff mark these with the children and this knowledge / expression of opinion is also taken in to account when assessing;
- ✚ The final lesson of each branch is a recap lesson, which is used as a final assessment. This can incorporate elements of learning already done and brought in to one final piece or it can also be a series of questions that children have had access to on their knowledge organiser. In lower year groups, this is done orally with staff members scribing answers for the children.
- ✚ All of the assessment above is to ensure we collect evidence from more than just one piece of work and ensures our assessment is rigorous and well-evidenced.
- ✚ As with all other subjects, RE assessments are tracked on Sonar.
- ✚ RE assessments are reported to parents at three times in the year: Autumn and Spring parents evenings, plus the final end of year written report, where a “best fit” final grade is given, based on judgements from across the year. This is in line with other subjects in school.
- ✚ As RE relies on subjectivity, we provide opportunities for staff to bring books to staff meetings and discuss assessment. As the Lighting the Path scheme becomes more

embedded, we will contribute to a bank of standardised pieces of work to use as benchmarks.

- ⦿ Monitoring of RE is completed by the RE Lead, a member of SLT and members of the Governing Body at least twice during the year. This includes book looks and where appropriate observations / learning walks.
- ⦿ The RE Lead informs Governors of changes, assessment data, progress and achievement at least once a term; this is done through reports and meetings. We also have two link governors for RE – Mrs Maria Poole and Cannon Tadhg Mullins.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **Governors**

- ⦿ To draw up the Religious Education policy, in consultation with relevant staff
- ⦿ To ensure the policy provides adequate coverage of the RED (2023)
- ⦿ To ensure the policy is available to parents
- ⦿ To ensure the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g. Catholic ethos / spiritual and moral policy, SEND policy and in accordance with Equalities Act 2010.
- ⦿ To ensure parents know of their right to withdraw their children
- ⦿ To establish a link governor or a group of governors to share in the monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education.

### **Headteacher**

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy but can delegate the operational responsibility to a subject lead for Religious Education. The headteacher has overall responsibility for liaison with the governing board, the Diocese of Salford and Catholic Academy Trust.

### **Religious Education Subject Lead**

In line with diocesan protocols 14.6, in primary schools, the Religious Education Lead should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team if they are not the headteacher. In recognition of her interim leadership as RE Lead during a staff absence and over the previous inspection period, Miss Emma Thomas is our current RE Lead under the guidance of the previous RE Lead and Deputy Headteacher, Mr Michael McGrail. This decision was made by school in order to provide professional development to an experienced teacher who had already led school through the previous Outstanding Catholic Inspection.

## **Parents and carers**

Catholic schools exist to assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children (Christ at the Centre, A1.2). It is essential therefore, that there is a close relationship and a dialogue between parents and the school to support pupils' religious formation and growth in religious literacy. St Mary's supports parent's understanding of their children's learning in RE by producing a specific RE newsletter termly, delivered by Class Dojo and the school's website; parents evenings in Autumn and Spring and the final end of year report. Class Dojo whole school posts are also provided when celebrating festivals from other cultures, world faiths and world views as well as the GIFT team producing a podcast, which is published on both the school's website and Class Dojo at least once every month to support with the liturgical season. The Wednesday Word is also shared weekly on the school's website and Class Dojo. Our Year Three children participate in the Sacramental Programme, which is delivered as an after school club by Mrs Brown and Miss Dakin with support from Canon Tadgh Mullins.

## **Right to Withdraw**

Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of Religious Education. The law provides parents with a conscience clause; this should not be understood as a general opt out of Religious Education. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher in writing following the school's policy. However, before granting such a request it is good practice for the headteacher to discuss this request with parents and if appropriate with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of Religious Education. The school must ensure a record is kept of requests to withdraw from Religious Education.

## **Relationship to other policies and curriculum subjects**

This policy supports and complements the following policies (this is not an exhaustive list):

Assessment Policy

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

English Policy

SEND Policy

Equalities Policy

Marking Policy

## **Consultation process**

This policy was drawn up by governors in consultation with staff of St Mary's RC Primary School and will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis.

## Appendix 1

### The Role of the RE Lead

- ✚ To be responsible to the Headteacher and colleagues for the monitoring of teaching, assessment and planning of Religious Education based on the development of the children at each stage. Monitoring occurs in order to support staff and should include classroom observation, learning walks, book scrutiny, planning and discussion with pupils.
- ✚ To manage resources for Religious Education.
- ✚ To liaise with the Diocesan Department for Education particularly through attendance at RE Leaders meetings, and inform the Headteacher and colleagues of current standards and developments within Religious Education.
- ✚ To attend appropriate training for Religious Education, keep up-to-date with current developments and feed these developments back to staff.
- ✚ To advise individual colleagues and induct new members of staff as required on the Religious Education process and teaching methods.

Revised and adopted by the *Governing Body*

Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2028