

Holy Trinity RC Primary School

Religious Education Policy.

Mission Statement

"To go forward together in Christ, respecting our neighbour and striving for excellence."

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

Other faiths such as Islam, Judaism and Dharmic faiths are covered in Branch 6 (Summer 2 term). One of our Islamic members of staff delivers workshops for Islam celebrations throughout the year, including a visit to a local mosque. Visits to and visitors from other faiths are also built into the calendar each year to promote tolerance and understanding of other beliefs.

Inclusion and Equality

At Holy Trinity RC Primary School, we recognise the God-given dignity, worth and uniqueness of every child. We are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can access, participate in and achieve success in

Religious Education. We believe that every child is created in the image and likeness of God and should be enabled to flourish spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is carefully adapted to meet the needs of all learners. Staff use a range of strategies including high-quality differentiation, scaffolded learning, visual supports, practical resources, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, additional adult support, flexible grouping and adapted outcomes where appropriate. Teachers take account of pupils' individual strengths, needs and learning profiles to ensure all pupils can engage meaningfully with the curriculum and demonstrate their understanding.

Resources and learning materials are selected carefully to reflect the diversity of God's family and the reality of the modern world. Teaching promotes respect, inclusion and understanding, avoiding stereotypes and encouraging pupils to value people of all backgrounds, cultures, faiths and experiences.

The school follows the guidance outlined in the Catholic Education Service's *RED Guidance for Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities* to ensure that all pupils can access the aims and content of the Religious Education Directory. Provision for pupils with SEND is planned and reviewed in collaboration with teachers, support staff, parents and external agencies where appropriate.

Further information regarding the school's approach to inclusion and SEND can be found in the school's SEND Policy.

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.

As a Catholic school, our primary concern is the development of the whole child, encompassing spiritual growth, religious literacy, moral development and academic achievement. Progress and attainment in Religious Education are assessed against the expected outcomes outlined in the Religious Education Directory (RED) and through the assessment opportunities provided within the *Lighting the Path* programme.

Teachers regularly assess pupils' knowledge, understanding and application of learning through classroom discussion, written work, observations and end-of-unit assessments. Assessment information is used to inform planning, identify pupils requiring additional support or challenge, and monitor progression over time.

The Religious Education Lead, alongside the Senior Leadership Team, monitors the quality of provision and outcomes through a programme of lesson visits, learning walks, planning scrutiny,

pupil voice activities and work scrutiny. Moderation of pupils' work takes place at least termly to ensure consistency of teacher judgement and to identify strengths and areas for development across the school.

Progress and achievement in Religious Education are reported to governors on a termly basis through the Headteacher's Report and curriculum monitoring reports, enabling governors to fulfil their strategic responsibility for Religious Education as a core subject.

Parents and carers are informed about their child's progress and achievement in Religious Education through parental consultation meetings and an annual written report at the end of the academic year. Opportunities are also provided throughout the year to share pupils' learning and celebrate achievements in Religious Education and the wider Catholic life of the school.

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

At Holy Trinity RC Primary School, the Headteacher is also the Religious Education Subject Lead and therefore has overall responsibility for the leadership, management and development of Religious Education across the school.

The Headteacher ensures that Religious Education remains at the heart of the curriculum and is taught in accordance with the Religious Education Directory (2023) and diocesan requirements. Responsibilities include monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, overseeing curriculum development, analysing pupil achievement and progress, leading staff development, managing resources and ensuring compliance with diocesan and statutory expectations.

The Headteacher monitors Religious Education through lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutinies, planning reviews, pupil voice activities and assessment analysis. Findings are used to inform school improvement priorities and support continual development of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school.

The Headteacher also liaises with the Diocese of Salford, attends relevant training and network meetings, and reports regularly to governors on standards, provision and developments in Religious Education.

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). At Holy Trinity RC Primary School, we value the strong partnership between home, school and parish and recognise the importance of working closely with parents and carers to support pupils' religious development and growth in religious literacy.

Parents and carers are kept informed about the Religious Education curriculum through newsletters, the school website and other school communications. Opportunities are provided for parents to engage with and celebrate their children's learning through liturgies, Masses, prayer celebrations and other events that form part of the Catholic life of the school.

Information regarding pupils' progress and achievement in Religious Education is shared with parents through parent evening meetings and the annual end-of-year written report. Where appropriate, additional discussions are held with parents to ensure that pupils are fully supported in their learning and faith development.

The school welcomes regular dialogue with parents and carers and seeks to work collaboratively with families to nurture pupils' understanding of the Catholic faith, their relationship with God and their commitment to Gospel values.

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:

- Prayer and Liturgy Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- SEND Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Behaviour Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Policy
- Personal Development Policy
- British Values Statement
- Teaching and Learning Policy

Consultation process

This policy was drawn up by governors in consultation with staff of Holy Trinity RC Primary School and will be reviewed on a three year 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.