



St. Ethelbert's RCP School Religious Education Policy (including Prayer & Worship)

Love, Care, Share...

Love learning as friends;

Care for our community as neighbours;

Share our faith in Jesus as disciples.

The children of St. Ethelbert's RCP, Bolton, are welcomed into a safe, secure environment; every pupil is known as an individual and has a strong sense of belonging to our special community. We recognise that our children come from a range of backgrounds and abilities and that our teaching of Religious Education will reflect this. (cf. Curriculum Directory, pg. 9) Every child is encouraged to aim high and to become the person God wants each of them to be. The school strives to nurture their Catholic faith and to help them to have a strong sense of self-worth and well-being, knowing that they are loved by God. Our pupils have a strong awareness of faith, morality and responsibility due to the school's authentically Catholic ethos.

"Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject amongst many, but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life." (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 1988)

The Catholic life of the school, including its curricular provision, encourages curiosity, a love of learning and a deep understanding of the teachings of Jesus, which our pupils witness to through their relationships, behaviour and their care for those in need. Achievement, at all levels, is celebrated and valued.

We aim for our children to have a life-long commitment to their faith; we want them to know of God's love and compassion for everyone and to work towards living by His teachings; we believe this is best achieved through good example and clear instruction, underpinned by meaningful celebrations of faith, including masses, liturgies, assemblies and prayer opportunities.

Through our Catholic ethos and religious provision, we aim to actively implement our school's mission statement, establishing a solid foundation of beliefs and values for all our children so that the Gospel of our Blessed Lord is truly alive within our school.

Community: **(see also 'Caritas in Action')**

At St. Ethelbert's, we aim to develop in the children, concern and charity towards others in the community. The school is committed to involving the children in charitable works throughout the year; gifts offered at our annual Harvest Mass are donated to Urban Outreach and the

Missionaries of Charity, local charities which support the homeless and families in need; during Lent, money is raised for HCPT, CAFOD and Caritas. Additional fundraising takes place in response to local, national and world events.

The school works closely with the parish; termly Sunday Youth Masses and links with the Sacramental Programme, as well as school support for parish events, foster a sense of belonging to a wider faith community.

Our pupils are encouraged to reach out to others within school and beyond through taking on additional responsibilities, including: GIFT team; prefects; lab technicians; litter-pickers and altar servers.

It is hoped that through these and other activities, our children become aware of the needs of others both near and far, and develop sensitivity, generosity and a sense of responsibility towards their neighbours in Christ.

Leadership:

Governors:

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board to ensure that the best possible Catholic education is provided for all our pupils. The governors ensure that the school is run according to its Instrument of Government and that its religious character is preserved and developed, with the aim of attaining the highest academic standards.

The governors ensure that the school consistently bears witness to our Catholic faith in every aspect of its life.

In terms of curriculum RE, the governors make a priority of their strategic role in setting its aims and objectives and play an active role in monitoring the effectiveness of provision and its impact on the spirituality and faith development of our children. They monitor that the school's curriculum is rooted in the Gospel, ensuring that Diocesan guidelines are met.

The governors also pay due regard to the needs of Catholic education as a whole, giving full support, both financially and in terms of time, to the work of BOSCEP (Bolton Catholic Schools Education Partnership).

Headteacher:

The Headteacher's first responsibility is to establish and sustain the Catholic identity of the school and safeguard the teaching of the Church. This must be reflected in every aspect of school life, including: the curriculum; the day to day organisation of the school; staff development; staff and pupil relationships and partnership between school, home, parish, local community, other schools, the LA, and the Diocese.

The Headteacher, working with the governors and others, draws on the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ to create a shared vision and strategic plan, which inspires and motivates pupils, staff and all other members of the community.

To do this, the Headteacher is responsible for:

- communicating the mission of the Catholic school
- promoting Gospel values in policy, practice and relationships
- ensuring that the Religious Education programme is given full regard both in terms of classroom religious education and in the whole Catholic life of the school
- ensuring that the vision for the school is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all
- leading by example, providing inspiration and motivation for pupils, staff, governors and parents, demonstrating the vision and values in everyday work and practice in order to create a shared culture and positive climate
- working within the school community to translate the vision for an effective Catholic school into reality, through agreed objectives and action plans which will promote and sustain school improvement and secure the school's mission
- creating and implementing a strategic plan, underpinned by sound financial planning, which promotes school improvement; priorities and targets are identified to ensure that pupils achieve high standards and make good progress and so protect and pursue the right and opportunity for everyone to be the best they can be as a child of God

RE Leader:

The RE Subject leader is Mrs Angela Meskell.

Role and Responsibilities of the RE Leader

Strategic Direction and Development:

- Supporting the Head Teacher in carrying our vision, values and Catholic ethos out into the school and wider community
- Coordinating Religious Education (including prayer and worship) throughout the school
- Leading staff in the review of RE policies
- Coordinating the implementation of the RE Assessment framework
- Monitoring attainment in RE through analysis of assessment data. (i.e. scrutiny of pupils' work / assessment tasks)
- Providing information regarding RE to the governing body so that they are able to carry out their statutory responsibilities
- Working alongside the Headteacher, SLT and governors in developing the school's RE SEF
- Contributing to the School Development Plan
- Identifying and organising appropriate Diocesan training for the development of the RE leader role and for other staff within school

Developing Teaching & Learning:

- Supporting colleagues in the implementation of Diocesan schemes of work through the dissemination of good practice
- Supporting colleagues in the implementation of the school's Prayer and Worship policy
- Keeping abreast of new initiatives regarding teaching and learning in RE, and sharing best practice with staff
- Monitoring teaching and learning activities in order to inform school self-evaluation
- Delivering staff training, where appropriate, in aspects of RE / Prayer and Worship

The management of staff:

- Taking on the role of coach/mentor for staff who are participating on the Catholic Middle Leadership Programme

The management of resources :

- Updating and managing resources for RE and Prayer and Worship
- Promoting an attractive environment which stimulates learning and enhances the appearance of the school and expresses its Catholic identity

Relationships :

- Liaising with the parish Sacramental Programme Coordinator
- Liaising with leaders of other subject areas in order to create meaningful cross-curricular links with RE
- Liaising with the parish priest with regards to developing the Catholic life of the school and parish links
- Liaising with the staff who coordinate the GIFT team
- Keeping parents and carers informed about the school's RE provision and the Catholic life of the school
- Developing links with external agencies such as CAFOD, Urban Outreach, HCPT etc.

The RE subject leader is provided with one afternoon per week of Leadership and Management time in order to fulfil the role.

Curriculum Religious Education

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)

Aims and Objectives:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and Jesus Christ, of the church, and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold
- To develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and of the vital relationship between faith and life, life and faith
- To encourage study, investigation and reflection by the pupils
- To develop appropriate skills: for example, ability to listen; to think critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically; to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively; to make informed judgements
- To foster appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth; respect for the views of others; awareness of the spiritual, of the moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural, multi-faith society
- To create a solid foundation of beliefs and values so that pupils can live their faith independently and by their own choice

Religious Education in the Classroom

Since the total curriculum in our school is based on the values of the gospel and because we see all education as revealing the mystery of God, we recognise two aspects of Religious Education in the school:

- Implicit, or unstructured Religious Education – those opportunities which arise in the course of a school day to lead pupils through curriculum content or through relationships to a religious understanding of their implications. It is the policy of this school to use such opportunities as they arise.
- Explicit, or Curriculum Religious Education – those timetabled or planned periods of time given to an explicit consideration of Religious Education in the classroom. It is the policy of this school to give at least 10% of the timetable at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to engage pupils in:
 - ❖ Knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose;
 - ❖ The skills required to engage in examination and reflection upon religious belief and practice.

Programmes of Study:

To fulfil our aims and objectives and the requirements of the Curriculum Directory, the ‘*Come and See*’ scheme is delivered in school, from EYFS to Year 6.

The aim of this programme is to explore the religious dimension of questions about life and dignity and purpose within the Catholic tradition. Links are made with the pupils’ own experience and with universal experience. Links are also made with other faith traditions.

The ‘*Caritas in Action*’ scheme is used to promote a better knowledge and understanding of the social teaching of the Catholic Church. It is the school’s policy to study a different theme each half term on a designated ‘*Caritas in Action*’ day, when the entire timetable is devoted to the exploration of one of the seven themes. The day culminates in a special celebration assembly, in which the children share their work and reflect on their learning.

The school uses the ‘*Journey in Love*’ scheme as the basis for its Sex and Relationships Education programme. The scheme has its foundations in the belief that we are all made in the image and likeness of God and, as a consequence, gender and sexuality are God’s gift and reflect God’s beauty. The programme is delivered during our designated SRE week in the Summer term. **(See SRE Policy)**

St. Ethelbert's recognises that Religious Education is the core of the core curriculum; as such, there is an expectation that standards in RE should be as least as good as in other subjects. Teachers are also expected to mark children's work to the same standard as in other areas. Teachers are encouraged to teach through a range of creative approaches, so that the children can apply their skills and talents in literacy, art, music, dance, computing and drama through RE.

RE displays should also be present around the school so that learning can be shared and celebrated with the whole community.

The school is committed to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of scripture and the message that it has for our lives today; for example, through class parables; reading the Bible; displays etc.

Equality of All and the Teaching of Other Faiths:

"There is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Jesus Christ." (Galatians 3:28)

The aim of Religious Education in this area is to help children to become aware that people are equal in the sight of God because God made us all. Care will be taken to ensure that girls and boys are given equal opportunities in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with Special Educational Needs will have full access to the curriculum, with activities differentiated where appropriate.

We aim to help children realise that the Catholic Church is part of a universal world-wide church; that they share a common faith with millions of people from different cultures.

Children are encouraged to have respect for all faiths and people who hold differing beliefs than their own. We aim to prepare them for life in a pluralistic society where positive attitudes and values concerning different race, gender, age or ability will be fostered.

In Early Years and KS1, children learn about other faiths through the study of Festivals & Celebrations over the year. In KS2, pupils are taught about world faiths – visits to the local mosque, Hindu Temple and the Jewish Museum, as well as parents and other visitors sharing their beliefs and traditions in school, bring this aspect of our curriculum to life, engaging learners and fostering understanding.

Pupils of other faiths are involved in all aspects of our religious provision, including Catholic liturgy.

Staff Development:

The school is committed to providing all our staff and governors with high quality training so outcomes in RE are at least good. In-house training (e.g. in staff meetings or on Schoenstatt training days) as well as Diocesan training helps all staff to develop their knowledge and understanding. Staff can also access additional developmental opportunities through our BOSCEP network, including groups for Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, RE subject leaders and Business/Office Managers.

Monitoring

Monitoring of standards in RE is an integral part of the whole school monitoring programme. Activities such as lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutiny and pupil interviews provide evidence that coverage of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory is met and that teaching and learning standards are at least in line with those in Literacy. Monitoring is usually carried out by the Headteacher, RE subject leader and by governors.

Assessment:

In light of the latest Diocesan guidelines (*Salford Diocese 'Assessment in Religious Education', October 2015*), the school's assessment procedures for RE have recently been reviewed.

The following arrangements are currently in place:

In EYFS, assessment of children's understanding is done through observation and discussions with the children. Individual trackers are completed as objectives are taught.

Y1-Y6

Formal assessment of pupil's work, based on a three year cycle, is carried out **once per term for one** of the three topics covered in the '*Come and See*' scheme; the focussed tasks are used for formal assessment; overall attainment is judged through assessment of work over time, using the 'driver words' of:

- Recognise
- Describe
- Give reasons
- Show understanding
- Make links

Assessments is moderated by the class teachers, RE leader and the governors each term, and recorded on a class tracker so that progress can be monitored.

Reporting:

Achievement in RE is detailed on each child's school report which is sent home to parents at the end of the school year. At our Autumn and Spring Parents' evening, parents have the opportunity to look at their child's RE work and talk to the teacher about their progress.

The Headteacher's monthly newsletter and our very popular Facebook page also provide information to parents about current practice in Religious Education. In this way, the school aims to encourage understanding and increase the involvement of parents in the Catholic life of our school.

The Headteacher produces a detailed section about curriculum RE and the Catholic life of the school in her termly written report to governors. In addition, the work of BOSCEP is a standing item on each full Governing Board meeting agenda.

The RE subject leader also reports to governors on a regular basis.

Prayer & Worship

Integral to the life of St Ethelbert's RCP, prayer (fostering a personal and living relationship with God) and worship (adoration of God) have the potential to nourish the spiritual growth of all members of our school community. Prayer and worship help create a sense of purpose and identity within our community.

"The life of faith is expressed in acts of religion. The teacher will assist students to open their hearts in confidence to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through personal and liturgical prayer" (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, n.83)

Our prayer and worship programme draws on the richness of the Catholic tradition, the wider Christian tradition, Stewardship and our Mercy tradition.

Daily Prayer:

Opportunities for prayer are provided throughout the school day, including:

- Daily Morning Prayer
- Daily Grace
- Daily Afternoon Prayer
- Daily Evening Prayer

At St Ethelbert's, pupils experience a variety of formal and informal expressions of prayer, appropriate to their age and development. We endeavour to teach and learn all prayers as outlined in the prayer scope and sequence from the Religious Education Curriculum.

Each classroom has established and maintained a sacred, reflective space.

As well as saying the traditional prayers of the church, the school has developed a reflective approach to prayer called *'It's Great to Pray'* in which pupils and staff have the opportunity to express gratitude to God for all His gifts; reflect on how they have been the best version of themselves during the day; ask for forgiveness and explore how they can be better in the future and pray for others.

Children also have daily access to the chapel at lunchtimes so that they can have a quiet, personal time with God.

Liturgy and Sacraments:

Liturgy and Sacraments are the formal, public prayer and worship of the church. At St Ethelbert's, we familiarise pupils with words, actions and gestures, symbols and structures. Celebration of liturgy both reflects and influences what it is we proclaim, who we are proclaiming and what we do. At St Ethelbert's we celebrate Mass as a school and parish community on many occasions throughout the year, including at the beginning and end of each term, on holy days and for Harvest. Each year group celebrates a termly class mass in church, with themes based on their learning in curriculum RE or on special times in the liturgical year. All masses are planned by the children; parents, carers and parishioners are invited to attend.

Youth Masses are held within the parish each term.

Sacramental Preparation:

The Sacraments are the celebration of the presence of Christ permeating our lives. Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist is an integral part of our Religious Education syllabus. Year Three is the year of celebration in which children follow a more specific course of instruction provided by the Catechists of the Parish.

In the preparation programme, parents are seen as a vital part of the teaching and are asked to participate alongside their children. Responsibility is threefold, the parents, the school and the parish. In the Sacramental preparation we aim to allow parents, parish priest, catechists and teachers to work closely in unison.

Our Y3 pupils are supported by their Y6 prayer sponsor throughout the year.

Having completed the programme, our children have many opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist at whole school and class masses; the children also receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.

Paraliturgies & Classroom Collective Worship:

Weekly whole school *'Family Time'* assemblies include readings from scripture, reflection, silence and stillness; these draw on *'Statements of Belief'* which provide a whole school focus or mission for the following week.

Our GIFT team deliver whole school collective worship throughout the year; in particular, for Armistice Day; Las Posadas (Shelter-Seeking) during Advent; and Ash Wednesday. They also organise a before-school Rosary group for children and parents during October and May.

Each class participates in meditative prayer at least once a week during classroom collective worship.

Whole school and class paraliturgies are also celebrated; in particular, *'Stations of the Cross'* held in Holy Week and during retreat days to the Schoenstatt Shrine in July.

Staff Prayer and Spiritual Formation:

Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray. Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, n.2650).

At St Ethelbert's we acknowledge staff require ongoing support and formation in understanding prayer and worship, and in developing the knowledge and skills needed to deepen their own spirituality, to promote experiences of prayer and worship with students. All staff are encouraged to enter into prayer on a daily basis with their students. Staff come together regularly for staff prayer. Staff are encouraged to facilitate this prayer individually or in groups. Extended staff prayer is offered, in church, during the Lenten period.

Policy Monitoring and Review:

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher and Religious Education Leader, and is evaluated and reviewed by the governors and whole staff every two years, or where necessary.

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