Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Date policy reviewed: September 2024

OUR LADY OF HARTLEY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY SEPTEMBER 2024

Philippians 4:9 'Whatever you have learnt, or received, or heard from me, or seen from me – put into practice.

Informed by the teachings of the Gospel, Our Lady of Hartley offers a rich, varied and inspiring curriculum that allows all children to reach their full potential. Community links are built into the curriculum to provide opportunities for broader educational skills that enhance children's understanding of real life experiences. Our engaging and purposeful curriculum means all learners are nurtured in God's love.

Our Lady of Hartley. Statement of Curriculum Intent September 2019.

1.0 Policy Introduction

The purpose of Religious Education at Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School is to nurture the Catholic Faith, and its teachings, in our children. By helping them to live this faith, we hope to encourage our children to develop a better relationship with God and others around them. Central to our ethos are the opportunities for prayer and worship which lie at the heart of our faith. We will endeavour to promote and encourage these at every level, together with the skills and attitudes necessary to live out the Christian message in the modern world. Religious Education (R.E) should promote pupils' cultural, mental, emotional, spiritual and physical development and prepare children for the opportunities and responsibilities that are to come. This should be in the context of a moral and ethical Christian framework. This policy sets out our school's agenda and the way in which we will nurture our pupil's faith.

1.1 Introduction

At Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School our Religious Education Policy encompasses our mission statement and our School Aims. We believe that the whole of the educational provision in a Catholic Primary School is rooted in a religious understanding of life based on the Gospel. Worship and Religious Education in the classroom constitute the specific, but not exclusive, Religious Education provision. For the purposes of this document, Religious Education is considered as the professional area of the curriculum flowing to and from the life and values that the school seeks to proclaim and celebrate. As a Catholic school we offer Religious Education as an important contribution to the faith development of pupils. It may also be received, in our classrooms, by some pupils, as catechesis, deepening and enhancing their personal faith, or for some as evangelisation, this being the first time they have been presented with, personally, with the truths of living faith.

1.2 Rationale

At Our Lady of Hartley we believe that Religious Education is at the heart of our curriculum as we strive to proclaim and live the Gospel Values. We see our role as supporting parents in leading their children to a greater understanding of who God is and to celebrating, with deeper faith and more understanding, the liturgy of the Church. We believe that Religious Education provides children with opportunities to recognise, affirm and celebrate the gifts and talents they and others have been given and to develop the skills which will enable them to think and question more deeply and lead, ultimately to a greater understanding and appreciation of their faith. The Gospel Values are at the core of all we do as a school community, not only are they displayed throughout the classrooms but can be found in the actions, thoughts and behaviours of all members of our school family.

Our School Values

Love
Honesty
Kindness
Fairness
Understanding
Respect
Faith
Trust
Forgiveness

Vision Statement
Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School seeks to be an inspirational, progressive community, where each individual feels safe, truly valued, and empowered by innovative learning experiences, allowing all to develop fully in the compassion of God's love.

In proclaiming the Gospel message, we endeavour to share the Gospel spirit of love in all that we do and say by providing a warm, family atmosphere reflecting the fact that all children need to feel respected, trusted and loved. We believe that Religious Education is about the meaning and the need to discover answers about human existence. Love and security are the most basic human/religious needs. We teach that God is love and faithfulness, but understanding of this concept can only grow from our own experiences of kindness and love. Therefore every effort is made to create, in our school and in our classrooms, a community where the children know they are loved and feel confident and secure. Through our teaching of Religious Education we endeavour to enrich the lives of the individuals in our school.

2.0 Religious Education Curriculum

2.1 Aims for the Teaching of Religious Education

Our subject specific aims for the teaching of Religious Education, complementing our general curricular aims, are to enable children to:

• gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church and the ways in which it seeks to express the significance of human life while respecting the rights of people to hold beliefs which are different from their own.
• examine their own feelings views and responses in the light of their knowledge and understanding.
• be helped towards an awareness of who they are – a unique person endowed with the gifts of the spirit.

Towards the realisation of these aims we have regard to the guidance provided by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisors.

2.2 Content

The content of the Religious Education curriculum is provided in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (RECD).
At Our Lady of Hartley, the requirements of the curriculum are delivered through, '*The Way, the Truth and the Life'* series. This series, written by educators, caters for children of all abilities and ages from Reception to Year 6 and beyond, and compliments the catechesis which may take place in the parish and at home. Class teachers have the obligation to utilise this resource, whilst also adapting the styles of lessons, yet always remembering that the curriculum is at the heart of what we do.

As far as possible it matches the abilities, attainments, interests and experiences of the children and helps them to develop their knowledge and understanding in a structured way. As well as factual scripture based on knowledge it develops concepts, skills and attitudes with the children experiencing learning in a variety of ways. *The Way, the Truth and the Light* series has a teacher's book for each year group from Year 1 to Year 6 which provides theological notes drawn from the Catechism of the Catholic Church for each topic together with a scheme of work, photocopiable worksheets and specific guidance for assessment. There are pupil books for years 2 to 6 and pupil workbooks for Year 1. The scheme of work for the Reception Class is contained on a CD and includes power point presentations and assessment materials.

2.3 Curriculum Organisation

'The Way, the Truth and the Life' series incorporates two Attainment Targets: learning *about* the Catholic faith (AT1) and learning *from* the Catholic faith (AT2), and in each topic pupils will cover elements from both AT1 and AT2. Due to the use of New Assessment Framework, these targets are underpinned by the Revised Level Descriptors that have been provided by the Education Commission for the Diocese of Southwark. There is an opportunity for children to work in a manner that can be assessed at their age level, with greater depth work being deemed to recognise those children whose spiritual and religious understanding is at a deeper level. This framework helps teachers and children to explore wider aspects of their faith:

- Knowledge and Understanding (Learning about)
- Engagement and Response (Learning from)
- Provide opportunities for (Spiritual Reflection)

These are set out in the form of specific key learning objectives and are available so they can be used as a guide in curriculum planning. Teachers are also aware of the national curriculum as determined by the Bishops' Conference.

Our Primary focus in Religious Education should be REVELATION. God is always the initiator in the history of our creation and redemption; it is his revealing of himself that makes classroom Religious Education possible. However, it is essential that we set the scene by giving an overall picture of what we are to study, so that pupils will be able to make the connection between religious beliefs and their own lives, thus giving relevance what is being studied.

The Way, the Truth and the Life series proposes that each of the following areas should, as far as possible, be covered in each book of the primary series.
REVELATION
LIFE IN JESUS
CHURCH CELEBRATION

Through the programme of study the children are given opportunities to search and question using strategies to help them to focus on the development of ways of thinking, feeling and acting, enabling the children to become more reflective, open and enquiring. This will begin a process that will hopefully lead to a genuine understanding and the basis of a mature faith commitment in adult life.

2.4 Other Faiths

Throughout the school year, the children participate in three Other Faith Weeks, whereby religions are taught from EYFS to Year 6 following a self-created programme of study. Due to their monotheistic roots, we explore as a school community: Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. All scheme of works look at different aspects of each religion including places of worship, holy books, rules and home life. Each religion is given a separate week in each academic session, and learning from each year group is shared as part of a whole school assembly.

"As Catholics we are committed to respecting other faiths as arenas in which God is at work. This requires of us not only an absence of prejudice, so often based on stereotypes and ignorance, but also evident reverence for the beliefs and practices of that faith. In fact, through our study of other faiths, it is hoped we will gather understanding and enlightenment for our spiritual journeys." Cardinal Vincent Nichols

The Catholic Church is a worldwide community representing different cultural traditions and Christianity is a worldwide faith. It is important to draw upon these common traditions to promote a multi-cultural perspective. Each year we look at other faiths, fostering a respect of other people's beliefs and traditions. We reflect upon our practice and teaching style in order that we can explore Other Faiths, with an evaluation of our own religious faith at its core.

2.5 Teaching Styles

As in other curricular areas the range of teaching styles may vary and are used as appropriate. These may include whole class teaching, co-operative group work, or individual tasks. There is no specialist teaching in RE. Each class teacher is responsible for the planning, (under our new format), teaching (with an emphasis on our class teachers inspiring and delivering thought provoking lessons) and assessment (with opportunities across lessons) of RE in their own class.

As a school community we aim to promote Promoting teaching styles which:

- value lines of enquiry and questioning, as much as the answers we seek;
- value pupils' thoughtful responses, imagination and reflection, through the provision of time for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns;
- enable pupils to make connections between aspects of their learning, the lives that they live and the world in which we inhabit;
- encourage pupils to reflect on their learning to a wider frame of reference – for example, asking 'why' 'how' and 'where' as well as 'what'; and
- enable children to explore feelings as well as ideas.

We encourage our teachers to plan a range of activities to help children meet their learning targets, including, but not confined to, writing, poetry, artwork, drama, photographs and lots of discussions with children's questions and responses/insights at the centre of our reflective practice. Our teaching staff have been equipped with the time, rationale and ability to move away from evidencing learning in class books for the sake of it-instead the evidence might be in the big class book or seen in our assessment. We must still ensure there are opportunities for high quality writing in each child's individual book but as this shall happen less regularly this will hopefully help with the marking load.

Our aim is to achieve a balance between writing based lesson and thoughtful meaningful discussion, all of which shall be for the purpose of cultivating children who possess the moral courage and faith as the explore our world today.

2.6 Resources

Classroom resources are the responsibility of the classroom teacher. These include copies of teacher and pupil books for *'The Way, the Truth and the Light'* together with frequently used resources of worship /liturgy. The Reception Class teacher has the foundation stage materials down loaded from the CD which is kept by the RE leader together with CDs containing clipart and power point presentations to compliment the scheme. As in other curricular areas class teachers often use their own resources dependent upon the needs of the specific topic and their own particular style of teaching. The school has a class set of Bibles which are kept centrally for use of Key Stage 2 classes and each of the Key Stage 1 classes has its own picture Bible. Class teachers are encouraged to, and avail of the opportunity for, cross

curricular links within their lessons so that they might inspire all of our pupils, respective of learning style or interest.

Resources and artefacts about other world faiths (Judaism, Islam, Sikh & Hindu) are also available.

A resource that is much appreciated and valued is the time and energy of the Parish Priest as well as the parishioners themselves who support and assist the school. The church is also visited regularly by all classes as part of the teaching of Religious Education as well as for Mass and other services throughout the year.

2.7 Time

As a Catholic School, in accordance with the Bishops' requirement we dedicate 10% of our curriculum time to the discrete teaching of Religious Education. Collective worship and hymn practise is timetabled separately. (See class timetables and Collective Worship Policy Statement). This equates to 1 ½ hours per week of teaching time at KS1 and 2 ½ hours per week teaching time at KS2 plus additional time allocation for Mass, Hymn Practice, Assemblies etc.

2.8 Planning

There are six topics to be covered in each year group and each topic lasts for a half term. Medium term planning, taken from *'The Way, the Truth and the Life'* is the responsibility of each teacher and incorporates the learning objectives outlined in the scheme for each topic. Each topic is assessed in accordance with the level descriptors.

As in other curricular areas, Short- Term planning is also the responsibility of each class teacher who will:

- allocate time for each learning outcome, which has been taken from the New Assessment framework, to be achieved.
- select appropriate activities for the whole class or groups of children that reflect the different learning styles, needs and inquisitive minds of our pupils.
- indicate the focus and method of assessment, prayer life and culture of the lesson.
- Provide 'Big Questions' that challenge the understanding, knowledge and ultimately beliefs of our children so that they might grow in their faith journey.

Short-term plans are composed by our class teachers, drawing upon their own knowledge, the experience of the children and the curriculum, which is at the core of what we do. Supplementing our planning are ideas, tasks and sources from 'The way, The Truth and The Life' scheme of work. These are adapted by the class teacher and delivered in a means that aims to inspire each child in our care. Adaptations include relevant differentiation and alternative activities that can be planned for.

2.8 Differentiation

As with all other areas of the curriculum, the purpose of differentiation in Religious Education is:

• to enable children to succeed in the set task or activity;
• to challenge children beyond their comfort zone of knowledge, understanding and skills;
• to enable children to recognise their achievements and celebrate these.

Differentiation is planned into short-term plans by the class teacher.

2.9 Pupils with Special Needs & Equal Opportunities.

The curriculum at Our Lady of Hartley is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. If a child is identified as having a special need we do all we can to meet these individual needs in accordance with current school policy which follows the guidance contained in the SEN Code of Practice. As a Catholic school, in the truest fulfilment

of Christ's message we ensure that all children are able to access our lessons and grow in their faith.

Within RE opportunities are provided for all children to gain knowledge and understanding regardless of academic ability or religious experience. Each child is valued for his/her uniqueness and is encouraged to fulfil his/her potential regardless of race, belief or sex. At Our Lady of Hartley we provide an atmosphere of mutual respect enabling all our members to share their experience willingly.

3.0 Assessment

3.1 Assessment

Assessment is focused by the overall aims and objectives of Religious Education.
"….The objective of Religious Education is to include analysis and reflection, critical appreciation of sources and examples, and a real sense of progression through the different stages of education". - Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, January 2000.

Assessment provides pupils and teachers with a clear understanding of pupils' attainment - that is their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do improve. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith.

Assessment of RE is both formal and informal. Assessment is ongoing throughout a topic, with a record of children's understanding Assessment of RE may take the form of:
• general observation of children engaged in classroom tasks and activities;
• observation of contributions made to classroom displays;
• review of end of task, activity or lesson;
• conversations with individuals or groups;
• marking of more formal written work.

A note is kept by the class teacher of those children who are achieving above or below expectations. These are held by the Subject Leader who engages with conversation with class teachers about what has informed their judgements and the next steps children shall need to take.

At Our Lady of Hartley, we have decided to use the language of assessment in other core subjects (emerging, expected and exceeding) to record children's progress against the Bishops Conference Levels in order to engage in the assessment/planning cycle.

3.2 Attainment Targets and Strands

In accordance with the Education Commission's (Catholic Diocese of Southwark) method of assessment, we are embarking of new level descriptors that help to assess children's Religious Education learning across the curriculum.

Revised Level Descriptors that help teachers and children to explore wider aspects of their faith:

- Knowledge and Understanding (Learning about)
- Engagement and Response (Learning from)
- Provide opportunities for (Spiritual Reflection)

3.3 Levels of Attainment

The Attainment Target levels correspond to those provided for in other subjects of the school curriculum. Each child's progress and attainment is recorded at the end of each term and the terms topics are evaluated to inform future planning. This summative information is entered onto the school's records and judgments are based upon teacher's ongoing formative assessments.

The purpose of the attainment levels is to support children's learning by offering an account of educational progression. They will help teachers to make accurate judgements on pupil's achievement, to sum up what pupils have learned so far and to identify how pupils can make the next step in learning. They will also contribute to the quality of Religious Education provision within the school.

4.0 Expectations

In line with national expectations the majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are anticipated to work at least an Expected level of attainment. Discussions shall be undertaken to explore children who are working below this level (Emerging) and what can be done to address this. Furthermore, those identified at Exceeding – greater depth-shall be challenged and supported in order that they are suitably educated as they deepen their spirituality and understating.

5.0 Recording

Recording provides evidence of achievement. This may take many forms:

- notes from observations;
- written comments on children's work;
- visual evidence – photographs, displays, videos or recording of drama or celebrations;
- class/school portfolios;
- pupils' self-assessment.

The class 'Big Books' provide an ongoing form of assessment that the help to inform the Subject leader, SLT and class members of where learning has taken place, the response of children and the direction of future planning.

6.0 Reporting

There are four dimensions to reporting in Religious Education. Reporting:

- provides feedback to pupils on their achievement and progress;
- informs colleagues of the achievement of individual pupils and the areas studied by a class and year group;
- informs parents of the progress and achievement of their children;
- informs parents, governors, parish and external agencies of the content and quality of Religious Education being provided and the achievements of the pupils.

7.0 Role of the Subject Leader

Each half-term, as for other core curricular subjects, the subject leader will collect evaluations of each topic from class teachers. These will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the planning and the teaching and learning strategies used in RE, throughout the school. The subject leader records any common issues and passes on information about these to the Headteacher. The subject leader also observes the teaching of RE in each class. This is followed by a discussion between the teacher and the subject leader, noting the strengths and areas for development.

8.0 The right of withdrawal from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship

Parents are permitted, by law, to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of religious education and/or collective worship. This request should be made in writing to the Headteacher.