

# St Patrick's Catholic Primary School



## Religious Education Policy

Date: October 2021

Review Date: October 2024

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## Religious Education Policy

*We strive for excellence within a caring and diverse community, nurturing the Catholic faith, respecting each other, living, working and growing together as part of God's family.*

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### Introduction

The purpose of Religious Education at St Patrick's 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 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. In this we are well supported by our parish priests (from Our Lady and the Rosary and St Patricks Walthamstow) and our parents who have chosen a Catholic education for their children, and have committed to supporting the Catholic ethos of the school.

Children of other faiths and none, who attend the school are warmly welcomed and nurtured as part of our school learning community. Attendance and respect at acts of collective worship is expected, and seen as support of the Catholic ethos in action.

Our diocese (Brentwood) describes the role of RE in its Catholic schools thus:

Religious Education in schools sows the dynamic seed of the Gospel and seeks to 'keep in touch with the other elements of the pupil's knowledge and education; thus the Gospel will impregnate the mentality of the students in the field of their learning, and the harmonization of their culture will be achieved in the light of faith.' It is necessary, therefore, that Religious Education in schools be regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge. <sup>1</sup>

R.E is central to the curriculum at St Patrick's School. It is delivered mainly through the religious education programme '**Come and See**' and is fully supported by Brentwood diocese, who provide in-service training to support teachers delivering the programme. However R.E. is also encouraged through links with home, the Parish Church, the local community and other subject areas, for instance, PSHE. We believe that all aspects of R.E should be woven into the fabric of school life. For example, Pope Francis has released his Encyclical, *Laudato Si*,<sup>2</sup> focusing on the need for each of us to act as better custodians of God's creation and we will be ensuring even more environmental

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<sup>1</sup> Policy for Religious Education in Primary Schools February 2015

<sup>2</sup> *Laudato Si* [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_encicicalaudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encicicalaudato-si.html)

education to enable our children to fulfil their role as thoughtful and considerate citizens in the future.

We recognize that each person who is a part of the St Patrick's School community, staff, children and parents is on their own personal journey of faith, and are all at different stages. As well as the work we do with the children we will provide opportunities to support the whole community on their journey through regular staff formation and whole community events.

### **Aims**

- To provide staff, children and their families with the knowledge, understanding and awareness of the Catholic faith and its beliefs
- To enable staff, children and their families to communicate with God through prayer and scripture
- To enable staff, children and their families to develop their spirituality
- To help staff, children and their families to explore and express their sense of awe and wonder at the world God has created
- To encourage staff, children and their families to respect those holding different beliefs
- To help staff, children and their families grow in awareness of themselves and to develop a positive attitude to their own emotions, life, and learning
- To enable staff, children and their families to grow in their awareness of others and to develop relationships in a secure and supportive environment allowing us to live God's law of Love (Love one another as I have loved you) as a community
- To encourage awareness of issues involving social justice and the rights of the individual, particularly through awareness of the Universal church

### **Approach**

R.E is a core subject and at St Patricks we meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference that it should be 10% of the curriculum. This can be carried out in several shorter sessions throughout the week or in two longer sessions. This time does not include time spent in collective worship. The '***Come and See***' programme is used to deliver the curriculum. This programme uses up to date teaching and learning techniques and is exciting and engaging for the children. The programme follows an annual cycle and themes for the cycle for each term and year group are given at the end of this document.

One of the scheme's goals is to improve the children's knowledge of Scripture and each year group and topic has a specific Scripture focus, which builds progressively from year to year, ensuring that the children leave with a good grounding in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

Each topic follows the Explore, Reveal, Respond process. In Explore the children discuss similar issues in situations of which they have experience. In Reveal the children are introduced to the new knowledge in the unit. While in Respond they engage with the new knowledge and reflect on what it means to them and to their lives and actions as Christians. Each unit ends with a celebration of the new knowledge which contributes to their appreciation of the love God has for them.

Discussion and developing the children's skills in thinking and justifying their arguments is a crucial part of the Come and See process and is supported by the use of Big Questions, and driver words, to stimulate discussion. These are also given at the end of this document.

### **Planning**

Each teacher has a book copy of the Come and See programme for their year group, which provides lesson plans for each element of every topic and a rich and varied selection of possible pupil activities, including trips to our parish church. All teachers' books are also available on the school staff drive. In addition each year group has hard copies of the God Story and Church Story books for their age group which have been especially written to accompany the scheme. These books are also available in electronic format for use on the interactive whiteboard.

The scheme is well-supported by the Come and See website and, for the Universal Church Summer term modules, by a special section of the CAFOD website. These have a wealth of multi-media resources which are being added to all the time.

Assessment records for RE at St Patricks are:

- Electronic records on the School Pupil Tracker system. Children are given a level for AT1: and AT2: at the end of each term. These records enable analysis of trends across the school to be made more easily to inform improvements in Teaching and Learning. This gives the information that enables RE learning to be as rigorously monitored as any other core subject.
- Portfolio of assessed work. This is used for internal moderation but also for external moderation with other schools. The assessment tasks are on a three year cycle and ensure that inter-school moderation is possible. St Patricks have piloted a few assessment approaches since the introduction of the scheme in 2013-2014 and this is the chosen approach in light of these pilots. Where a child is unable to explain their understanding sufficiently in writing other recording methods such as pictures, scribes and recordings are encouraged. It is important that children are encouraged to show their RE learning and are not assessed inadvertently by their capacity in writing and reading.

### **Monitoring**

The R.E subject leader monitors work through regular observations (including drop-ins), book scrutinies and by collecting samples of work for the school portfolio in order to track pupils' progress over the years. At least two staff meetings each year are devoted to RE and include a focus on assessment and moderating of levels. Daily collective worship is also monitored, as is the children's participation and engagement in parish mass.

At St Patrick's, whilst we believe that academic rigour is as vital in RE as in any subject, this should not negate spiritual and emotional development and learning which are not always possible to assess using formal methods, but are an integral part of Religious Education.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We believe that all children are entitled to equal access to the R.E Curriculum. Children with learning disabilities and most able children should be allowed to express themselves according to their ability,

for example by using art to record ideas and thoughts where writing skills are less developed. All work is valued. We are aware of children's various cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds and are sensitive in our approach and the use of materials. Teachers are expected to differentiate learning experiences so that all children can meet their full potential.

### **Other Faiths**

We believe that learning about other faiths and cultures is essential for children to have a better understanding of their own faith and culture. It is also fundamental to encouraging tolerance and respect, vital British values to which St Patricks adheres.

The Come and See programme integrates the teaching of Other Faiths, and allows for learning with progression across the year groups. All children study different aspects of Judaism and Islam each year ensuring a good accumulative knowledge by the time they leave primary school. Visits to places of worship of other faiths and visitors are carefully planned into the curriculum.

### **Collective Worship**

Prayer is an essential part of collective worship. It is an important way of expressing our faith and talking to God. Helping children to pray, to learn traditional Catholic prayers (for example, Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary), explore different styles of prayer and enable children to write their own prayers are all important parts of R.E. Children take an active part in leading Liturgies in class and at the weekly Headteacher assembly. They do so by writing their own prayers and intentions and reading them out to the rest of the school. Parents whose children are receiving merit awards are invited to attend this special weekly assembly.

Children are expected to pray with their class at the start of the day, before lunch and at the end of the day. Liturgy Leaders lead prayers in collective daily worship in class. New Liturgy Leaders are appointed by their peers at the beginning of every term. All children are expected to participate in Monday morning assemblies, Key Stage singing assemblies, Whole School assemblies, R.E Showcase assemblies, Tuesday Masses, Masses on Holy Days of Obligation, Sunday Family Masses and Masses for special occasions such as St Patrick's Day. This may include reading, drama, mime, bringing the Offertory, welcoming, distributing hymn books, dance, the use of instruments, singing and altar serving.

In addition we strive to reflect the liturgical year by special activities, throughout the year which are flagged up in the school newsletter:

- Early October 'Little Ways' Week – spreading the message of St. Theresa of Lisieux
- October – special focus on the Rosary with opportunities for families to meet together to pray the Rosary at the start of school
- November - Remembrance Book – for our beloved dead
- November - Remembrance liturgies in KS2 – to encourage the Catholic tradition of remembering our dead in our prayers, 'In November we remember.'
- December - Reconciliation for staff, Y5 and Y6 ahead of the Christmas season
- Christmas events: Advent candle, carol service at our parish church for KS2, traditional nativity

- February/ March - Ash Wednesday – Lenten promises
- March/April - Reconciliation for staff, Y5 and Y6 before Easter week
- Whole school Stations of the Cross
- March/April - Y4 Easter Production
- May is the month of Mary – another opportunity for families to say the Rosary together before school, Crowning of Mary for EYFS & KS1
- June - Feast of Corpus Christi and celebrating with the 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion children of Y4
- July – Leavers mass

### **Music**

St Augustine of Hippo said, “Bis orat qui bene cantat.” – who sings well prays twice. Children respond particularly well to expressing their feelings and emotions through singing. Weekly singing assemblies in KS1 and KS2 will ensure that children develop a good repertoire of religious songs to allow them to joyfully celebrate the mass.

Words and music for religious songs are stored on the staff network and are also available on CD.

Teachers are expected to sing in class, the hymn suggested on the staff noticeboard most mornings, and prepare the children to sing a varied repertoire of hymns at Tuesday parish mass. This should make use of the hymns taught in singing assemblies.

### **Parental Involvement**

An R.E Newsletter is posted on the school website, under Parents/ Religion in School, each term and informs parents of the topics for that term and provides a suggestion of home activities they can use to support their child’s spiritual growth, learning and understanding. It also lists important dates and celebrations. We recognize and value the vital role of parents as the first educators of their children and encourage their participation in school events, which are also included in the weekly School newsletters. Parents are encouraged to attend mass with their children when it is their turn and these dates are also given in the school newsletter at least three weeks ahead.

A section of the weekly whole school newsletter is dedicated to the Gospel - encouraging discussion at home. The weekly Headteacher assembly is posted on the school website along with any other events that might have taken place in school or enrichment activities outside of school.

### **Resources**

Artefacts have been purchased to support the teaching of RE, especially other faiths, and are stored outside the Management Office in the tall cupboard, and inside the

Management Office. Items for mass are also held in the Management Office and in the small cupboard outside the Hall. Each classroom also has a selection of Catholic religious artefacts and clothes in the colours of the liturgical seasons, to enable a beautiful and reflective prayer area to be created for the children.

Cloths of different Liturgical colours are stored in the Management Office and candles, water jugs, salvers and so on are kept in the cupboard outside the hall.

## Display

At Christmas year groups share responsibility for presenting the Christmas story on display boards around the school.

Throughout the year, classroom displays will change to reflect the current Come and See theme and will be interactive, growing as the children's ideas and knowledge grows. They will also include questions from the children which can form the basis for class discussion.

## Outcomes for children

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is:

*Religiously literate and 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 are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.* <sup>3</sup>RECD,2012

This famous prayer by Archbishop Oscar Romero puts into context our work in R.E. at St. Patrick's and our hopes for positive outcomes for our children:

*It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction  
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.  
Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement  
says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.*

*This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.*

*We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something,  
and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.*

*We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.*

*We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.  
Amen.*

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<sup>3</sup> Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012

<b>Come &amp; See Themes</b>	<b>EARLY YEARS</b>	<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>YEAR 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4</b>	<b>YEAR 5</b>	<b>YEAR 6</b>
<b>Domestic church family</b>	<b>Myself</b> God knows and loves each one	<b>Families</b> God's love and care for every family	<b>Beginnings</b> God at every beginning	<b>Homes</b> God's dream for every family	<b>People</b> The family of God in Scripture	<b>Ourselves</b> Created in the image & likeness of God	<b>Loving</b> God who never stops loving
<b>Baptism/confirmation belonging</b>	<b>Welcome</b> Baptism; a welcome to God's family	<b>Belonging</b> Baptism an invitation to belong to God's family	<b>Signs &amp; symbols</b> Signs & symbols in Baptism	<b>Promises</b> Promises made at Baptism	<b>Called</b> Confirmation: a call to witness	<b>Life choices</b> Marriage commitment and service	<b>Vocation &amp; commitment</b> The vocation of priesthood and religious life
<b>Advent/Christmas loving</b>	<b>Birthday</b> Looking forward to Jesus' birthday	<b>Waiting</b> Advent a time to look forward to Christmas	<b>Preparations</b> Advent; preparing to celebrate Christmas	<b>Visitors</b> Advent: waiting for the coming of Jesus	<b>Gift</b> God's gift of love & friendship in Jesus	<b>Hope</b> Advent; waiting in joyful hope for Jesus; the promised one	<b>Expectations</b> Jesus born to show God to the world
<b>Local church community</b>	<b>Celebrating</b> People celebrate in Church	<b>Special people</b> People in the parish family	<b>Books</b> The books used in Church	<b>Journeys</b> Christian family's journey with Jesus	<b>Community</b> life in the local Christian community: ministries in the parish	<b>Mission</b> Continuing Jesus' mission in diocese [ecumenism]	<b>Sources</b> The Bible, the special book for the Church
<b>Eucharist relating</b>	<b>Gathering</b> The parish family gathers to celebrate Eucharist	<b>Meals</b> Mass; Jesus' special meal	<b>Thanksgiving</b> Mass a special time for saying thank you to God for everything, especially Jesus	<b>Listening &amp; sharing</b> Jesus gives himself to us in a special way	<b>Giving &amp; receiving</b> Living in communion	<b>Memorial sacrifice</b> The Eucharist the living memorial of Jesus' sacrifice	<b>Unity</b> Eucharist enables people to live in communion.
<b>Lent/Easter giving</b>	<b>Growing</b> Looking forward to Easter	<b>Change</b> Lent a time for change	<b>Opportunities</b> Lent, an opportunity to start anew in order to celebrate Jesus' new life	<b>Giving all</b> Lent a time to remember Jesus' total giving	<b>Self discipline</b> Celebrating growth to new life	<b>Sacrifice</b> Lent a time of aligning with the sacrifice already made by Jesus	<b>Death &amp; new life</b> Celebrating Jesus' death & resurrection
<b>Pentecost serving</b>	<b>Good News</b> Passing on the Good news of Jesus	<b>Holidays &amp; holydays</b> Pentecost: feast of the Holy Spirit	<b>Spread the word</b> Pentecost a time to spread the Good News	<b>Energy</b> Gifts of the Holy Spirit	<b>New life</b> To hear & live the Easter message	<b>Transformation</b> Celebration of the Spirit's transforming power	<b>Witnesses</b> The Holy Spirit enables people to become witnesses
<b>Reconciliation Inter-relating</b>	<b>Friends</b> Friends of Jesus	<b>Being sorry</b> God helps us to choose well Sacrament of Reconciliation	<b>Rules</b> Reasons for rules in the Christian family Sacrament of Reconciliation	<b>Choices</b> The importance of examination of conscience Sacrament of Reconciliation	<b>Building bridges</b> Admitting wrong, being reconciled with God and each other Sacrament of Reconciliation	<b>Freedom &amp; responsibility</b> Commandments enable Christians to be free & responsible	<b>Healing</b> Sacrament of the Sick
<b>Universal Church world</b>	<b>Our world</b> God's wonderful world	<b>Neighbours</b> Neighbours share God's world	<b>Treasures</b> God's treasure; the world	<b>Special places</b> Holy places for Jesus & the Christian	<b>God's people</b> Different saints show people what God is like	<b>Stewardship</b> The Church is called to the stewardship of Creation	<b>Common good</b> Work of the worldwide Christian family