


St Louis Catholic Academy, Newmarket
Part of Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi
Academy Trust



Christ at the Centre: Children at the Heart
Learning to Love: Loving to Learn

Religious Education Policy

Approved by the Committee/Governing Body	28-4-2021
Signature of Chair of Governors	Kathleen Das and Charles Dore
Signature of CEO OLOW	
Review date	April 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

As part of the Trust, the whole school community lives by the fact that the Trust is Catholic-based and child-centred; founded on shared Catholic values which underpin every social, academic and pastoral relationship which act as live witness to our Faith.

In our Catholic schools 'RE is regarded as the heart of the curriculum, enriching and informing all areas of learning with the light of the Gospel, teaching students to seek the truth which is of God, in the whole of creation, in themselves and in others.'

- Religious Education – Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools”, 1996 CES, p8

We therefore journey together as a whole school community, within the Trust, through a Catholic-based and child-centred curriculum. This is founded on shared Catholic values, which underpin every social, academic and pastoral relationship which in turn act as live witnesses to our Faith.

Religious Education in a Catholic School

Religious Education is the "core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school (**Pope St John Paul II**). Placing RE at the core of the curriculum in Catholic schools helps the school to fulfill its mission to educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of their existence, since "Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge but also includes emotional and affective learning. It is in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of what it is to be human truly becomes clear. Without religious education, pupils would be deprived of an essential element of their formation and personal development, which helps them attain a vital harmony between faith and culture." (**Religious Education curriculum Directory p4**). Furthermore, religiously literate children and young people are able to engage in a fully informed critique of all knowledge, "leading, for example, to an understanding of the relationship between science and religion or history, and between theology, sport and the human body." (**Religious Education Curriculum Directory p4**).

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 (**Religious Education Curriculum Directory p6**).

The primary purpose of Catholic Religious Education is to come to know and understand God's revelation which is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school is 'a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation.' In the person of Christ, the deepest meaning of what it is to be human — that we are created by God and through the Holy Spirit united with Christ in his Incarnation — is discovered.

Religious Education helps the pupil to know and experience the meaning of this revelation in his or her own life and the life of the community which is the Church. Hence 'the promotion of the human person' is the goal of St Louis Catholic Academy.

Religious Education is part of and completed by other forms of the ministry of the word (catechesis, homilies, liturgical celebration, etc.). Participation in worship and prayer assists understanding of learning, as does engagement with ecclesial life and the outreach of the school in works of charity and justice. Experience and knowledge continually interrelate to deepen a pupil's learning.

Adapted from Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19)

AIMS

St Louis Catholic Academy aims to draw pupils into a systematic study of the teaching of the Church through a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material. As a core subject, RE is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other core subject and requires 10% of the length of the taught week for each Key Stage of education.

- To continue developing in the children a knowledge and love of God and Jesus Christ
- To encourage a love of others
- To give the children the opportunity to experience the love of God and Jesus Christ in their lives
- To develop an awareness of their uniqueness and value as individuals
- To encourage an appreciation of the wonders of creation
- To provide the children with occasions and opportunities to experience love, care, concern, co-operation, respect, trust, honesty and truthfulness
- To provide, as a school community, an example of Christian witness and, through this, reverence for God and respect for each other
- To develop opportunities for contemplation, reflection and the growth of a personal prayer life
- To help the children to explore the beliefs, values, way of life of the Catholic tradition - the origins of the Faith, most specifically Jesus Christ, the Bible, the Liturgical Year, the Mass, Sacraments, traditional prayers, the lives of the saints and other people who have made a difference in the world because of their faith
- To foster links with the children's families to encourage commitment to the Catholic faith
- To foster links with other faith groups to ensure the children have a full understanding of the similarities and differences between Catholicism and other religions in order to promote tolerance.

In January 2016, St Louis adopted the new revised diocesan RE Curriculum which is based on the "Come and See" and "The Way, The Truth, and The Life" programmes. These programmes integrate teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church as well as the areas of study from the Religious Education Curriculum Directory; they also provide opportunities for children to be challenged to think deeply in a spiritual, ethical and theological way. It encourages them to question what they see and hear so that they can be guided to higher order thoughts and form robust and meaningful values for everyday life. Children are encouraged to ask and explore questions that are difficult to answer and to accept that sometimes these questions do not have easy or explicable answers.

Curriculum

Teaching and Learning

Religious education is a rigorous academic discipline and as such it is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as other subjects. Planning allows for continuity, progression and assessment opportunities. In January 2016, school adopted the new revised diocesan RE Curriculum. This has been reviewed to ensure deeper challenge and coverage using the Come and See programme and the Way the Truth and the Life. In accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops' Conference 10% of the curriculum teaching time is dedicated to RE. The Diocesan RE Curriculum programme integrates the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Assessment criteria and the areas of study from the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Children explore the mystery of Faith through Scripture and Tradition.

Teaching and learning in RE challenges children to think deeply, in a spiritual, ethical, and theological way. It encourages them to question what they see and hear so that they can be guided to higher order thoughts and form robust and meaningful values for everyday life.

Children are encouraged to explore questions that are difficult to answer and to accept that sometimes these questions do not have easy or explicable answers. In our teaching we focus on activities which evoke an active and meaningful response in the children's lives. Through a wide range of activities children can express their thoughts and feelings and consider the impact of their actions on others and their responsibilities as followers of Jesus.

We provide a balance between practical, investigative tasks and teacher-led activities, and between paired, small group and class sessions. Such activities could include

- Recorded work – writing, drawing
- Exploring the meaning of scripture
- Listening to or reading stories, poems, reports and accounts
- Music – singing, listening, composing
- Art and Photographs – investigation, appreciation, expression
- Meeting visitors, sharing personal experiences and asking questions
- Drama and role-play including Godly Play
- Investigating and debating topics

Teachers use a wide variety of resources available to them for the teaching of RE, including books (for example age appropriate Bibles), Godly Play resources and music as well as objects used in the faith lives of different religions (for example those used in the yearly UKS2 Sedar Meal).

Learning visits enrich children's understanding of their own faith and the faith of others.

Throughout their school life at St Louis, children also explore other faiths: the Autumn Term sees each key stage exploring Judaism (which is linked with their learning on Advent and also the roots of Easter later in the year), whilst the Summer Term sees KS1 exploring Sikhism, LKS2 Hinduism and UKS2 Islam, as well as their continued diocesan curriculum. This supports children's understanding of our wider local and global cultures and also provides the opportunity to develop true understanding, respect and tolerance towards others.

Work in RE is marked in accordance with our Marking and Feedback Policy. Children can identify what they have done well and what their next steps are in their learning. Marking and feedback, where appropriate, includes a challenging question to promote further thinking and the children are given time to respond appropriately. There are also opportunities for children to give and receive peer feedback to improve work and ideas further.

At the end of each unit, children's attainment is logged on a centralised school-based document by class teachers, which the RE Lead then uses to track whole school attainment and progress throughout the year. As part of this tracking, the RE Lead also provides a key focus strand per class for the following term with the aim of improving outcomes in this specific area; the assessment and evaluation of this is therefore key in subsequent teacher planning. Suggested activities and supported by the RE Lead for class teachers where appropriate. The strands covered are Knowledge and Understanding, Making Links and Connections, Historical Development, Specialist Vocabulary, Engagement and Response and Beliefs and Values.

Children's outcomes are provided formally in their end of year report to parents.

The Catholic Life of the School is reported to the Local Governing Body on a termly basis. Parents are informed about the RE Topics through a termly RE Newsletter updates and posted on the website. There is a comprehensive bank of resources including bibles, artefacts, pictures, statues and books to support the RE curriculum.

Celebrating Our Faith in School

These are followed in order that purpose and meaning may be experienced in prayer and worship as well as ensuring that the cherished religious traditions of the Catholic Church are upheld. These practices take the form of:

Collective Worship and Liturgy

At St Louis, everyone is expected to have regard for the unique nature of a Catholic School and be open to promoting a journey of faith embedded in tolerance, respect for others and an understanding that a deeper relationship with God is established through meaningful worship in many forms. Through our commitment to living the Gospels in our school lives, we can be supported and allowed to respond and grow in our relationship with God.

The whole school joins together for assemblies, prayer services, the Rosary and Mass wherever possible. Themes for assemblies can be taken from the relevant Sunday Gospel for the current Liturgical Year, significant world events and the Christian Values programme.

Prayer and Reflection includes:

Monday -Gospel Assembly

Tuesday to Thursday

- class assemblies relating to the Gospel message for the week

Friday whole school assembly

Weekly celebration assembly

Gathering during each week in phases and as a whole school for singing and praise.

Daily Prayer

All staff recognise the important role played by prayer as means of expressing and fostering faith. Children are taught daily prayers and also various prayers and responses of the Mass as appropriate to their age and stage of development as per St Louis Prayer Policy. Each classroom has an RE display and children pray together with their teacher at the beginning and end of the day. Music is used to help create a quiet reflective atmosphere. Prayer tables in every classroom act as a focus for their prayers. A prayer is always said before and after lunchtime.

Set daily prayers throughout the school include:

- Start of the day prayer
- Grace before lunch
- Prayer of thankfulness after lunch
- End of the day prayer
- During May and October, decades of the rosary are said weekly together as a school community with the Parish Priest, who also leads weekly Advent and Lenten reflections for the whole school community.

Music is often used to help create a quiet, reflective atmosphere.

The teachers will:

- Help the children discover a variety of methods of prayer, both formal and informal, private and communal.
- To help the children to develop their understanding of reverence, intercession and reflection as the children progress up the school.
- To give the children the experience of a variety of structured prayer services suitably adapted for the age of the children.
- To encourage the children to share their own prayers and thoughts giving them time to meditate and think. This makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral growth of the pupils.
- To lead quiet and thoughtful prayer times.
- Develop and nurture children's skills in developing and leading their own prayers and services.

As an important part of our religious syllabus, each term all classes, including the Nursery, have the privilege of preparing for their own Mass celebrated by the parish priest and other priests associated with the school, to which parents and friends are invited.

One of the main ways we express our faith is through our school Masses to which parents and family are invited. The children take a full part in preparation for these liturgies in readings and prayers, singing, offertory processions, and as altar servers.

As part of the parish family the school joins with the Church community in celebrating feast days with Mass in the Church. We encourage parents to try to support their children in participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each year the children participate in their own Easter Liturgy at school.

We recognise that the faith life of the school is ever developing and we seek to find new ways to welcome the Parish community to join in school prayers and services.

All children take part in all the religious activities in the school. Any special religious event in the life of a child is also celebrated. At St Louis we value the richness offered to us by children and staff of other Christian denominations and other faiths.

We subscribe to Ten:Ten resources that support teachers and children in leading class based prayers and responding to Gospel values.

Recording Faith Life of the School

Children record thoughts and prayers in response to the events in school in their class Faith Life Books. These include Masses they have led, prayer services they have shared outdoors, response to family events in their lives, fundraising for charity and significant events throughout the liturgical calendar.

The celebration of our Catholic faith is also evident outside individual classrooms, for example in the Prayer Garden and other common shared areas.

Roles and Responsibilities

The RE Leader will work in close consultation with the Head of School, Phase Leaders, and the Parish Priest to enrich the Catholic life of the school.

The RE Leader will:

- be familiar with the Diocesan curriculum and monitor its use in school;
- be available to individual teachers for guidance and support and keep staff informed of current thinking in RE and any new materials / publications;
- oversee reporting of assessment.
- Support delivery of RE CPD to teaching staff.
- monitor the progress of the diocesan RE programme and assessment in line with the second edition of “Levels of Attainment in Religious Education” (Bishop’s Conference 2007) throughout the school through evaluating planning, assessments and where possible classroom observations. This is to be undertaken on an annual basis with the wider support of SLT;
- maintain and share resources for wider use of the school;
- provide information and support Sacramental preparation and meetings with parents in collaboration with the Parish;
- Facilitate opportunities to meet and visit other faith communities.
- Support whole school peer reviews,

The Class teacher will:

- be responsible for daily collective acts of worship within the classroom;
- assess the children’s knowledge and understanding of their RE learning;
- attend CPD to develop their skills and knowledge.
- deliver the programme of study.

Other Sacraments

First Holy Communion

This is led by the Parish and preparation takes place at the church. Staff in school are fully supportive of the children’s sacramental journey and provide support where necessary. The LKS2 RE curriculum also supports the programme used by the parish and links within school to consolidate the children’s knowledge and understanding.

Reconciliation / Confession

The opportunity for reconciliation within school with our own parish priest and visiting local priests occurs once a year, either within Advent or Lent. Parents and carers are encouraged to support this sacrament both within and outside outside school.

All children take part in the religious activities in the school. Any special religious event in the life of a child is also celebrated. At St Louis we value the richness offered to us by children and staff of other Christian denominations and other faiths.

Development of RE Teaching

St Louis Academy aims to recruit, educate and support good teaching of religious education and encourages a lively exchange of good practice. The school recognises the importance of developing all staff in the teaching of RE and promoting the Catholic life of the school.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT for SCHOOL POLICIES

		Yes / No	Comments
1.	Does the Policy/Guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Age (for policies affecting staff)	N/A	
	Disability	N	
	Sex	N	
	Gender reassignment	N	
	Pregnancy/maternity	N	
	Race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)	N	
	Sexual orientation	N	
	Religion or belief	N	
	Marriage / civil partnership	N	
2.	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	N	
3.	If we have identified potential discrimination are any exceptions reasonable, legal and justifiable?	N	
4.	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	N	
5.	If so, can the impact be avoided?	N	
6.	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N	
7.	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N	