

# St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery



*‘Learning and growing with God by our side.’*

## Religious Education Policy

Approved by: Governing Body

Date: April 2024

Next review due by: March 2026

### 1. Intent:

**“The duty of a good teacher, all the more for a Christian teacher, is to love his or her more difficult, weaker, more disadvantaged students with greater intensity. Jesus would say, if you love only those who study, who are well educated, what merit do you have?”**

***Pope Francis, Address, 2015***

Our Mission Statement is:

**Learning and Growing with God by our Side.**

Our school community is on a journey of faith as we learn and grow with God as our constant companion every day. In every aspect of our lives, we actively follow in Jesus’ footsteps and live out our faith as a Catholic community by demonstrating our core school values in our everyday lives:

**Faith, Friendship, Determination, Unity and Respect.**

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is a central part of our curriculum. The purpose of Religious Education at St Alban and St Stephen’s is to nurture the development of the Catholic faith and its teachings for our pupils. Through the Religious Education curriculum and our school ethos, we aspire to encourage all children to develop a better relationship with God and others around them.

Our aims in teaching Religious Education are to enable children:

To develop their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith by:

- Building a loving relationship with God Our Father through their understanding of Scripture.
- Learning about the life and work of key figures in the history of the people of God.
- Discovering the teachings and actions of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament.
- Understanding the symbols and steps involved in religious worship, including the celebration of the Sacraments.

To make links and connections between the Scriptures and life by:

- Making links between Scripture, Catholic beliefs, life and worship.
- Developing the children’s awareness of their own and other’s responsibility in the local, national and universal Church.
- Encouraging the children to develop self-respect, respect for others and God’s creation.

To use a religious and specialist vocabulary by:

- Applying religious vocabulary widely, accurately and appropriately.

To analyse and evaluate by:

- Giving and supporting a point of view.
- Arriving at judgements.
- Recognising differences, comparing and contrasting.

To continue to nurture, guide and spiritually enrich our children on their faith journey by:

- Fostering a living commitment to the Catholic faith and its teachings.
- Imbuing the children with a sense of responsibility for their actions and enable them to develop a spiritually informed conscience and sound moral judgements.
- To encourage the children to develop self-respect, respect for others and God's creation.
- Celebrating other faiths to enrich and enhance the children's understanding of the world around them.

Whilst Religious Education is delivered through the 'Come and See' scheme, we recognise that learning about the Catholic faith and its teachings is not confined to the classroom, but it is a consistent presence throughout school life. Religious Education is enhanced through links with home, the local parish Church, the local community and other subjects, particularly RHSE and PSHE. The combination of Religious Education, alongside our RHSE and PSHE curriculum continues to promote the children's cultural, mental, emotional, spiritual and physical development.

## 2. Implementation:

### Organisation of Curriculum

**'Jesus turned, saw them following him, and asked, "What are you looking for?" They answered, "Where do you live, Rabbi?" (This words means 'Teacher'). "Come and see," he answered. (It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon). So they went with him and saw where he lived, and spent the rest of that day with him.'** John 1:38-40

Classroom Religious Education is a dynamic encounter between the child, the teacher and the authentic teaching material, in context of the living Catholic Faith of the whole school community. It demands excellence in the teaching and the materials used for teaching Religious Education.

Our Religious Education scheme, 'Come and See' follows on from successful implementation in schools in England and Wales, and is based on the theological foundations of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Catechism, and the revised Religious Education Curriculum Directory and includes the Catholic attainment levels.



The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the search for meaning in life. God's initiative in Revelation who comes to meet us and our response of faith (cf. CCC26). This pattern guides the structure of the programme and informs the process of each topic, opened up through; Explore, Reveal and Respond.

Our curriculum is developed through three topics, three distinctive starting points which are based on the reforms Second Vatican Council. The content is structured so that there is cohesion and progression in what children do and learn. For each topic, there are clearly stated learning outcomes, achievable learning objectives and a variety of

experiences and activities for each of the learning objectives. In addition to this, each lesson is linked into the Curriculum Directory and it is delivered through a process recognised in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

- **Explore:** by exploring their life experience to discover value and significance
- **Reveal:** by hearing, understanding and reflecting on the Christian message
- **Respond:** by bringing it to mind, by celebrating and by applying it

The scheme must also be supplemented to ensure coverage of current events such as the Year of Prayer, the inauguration of the Pope and other liturgical celebrations within the Catholic Church. The supplementary materials provided by the Diocese of Westminster are recommended for this purpose.

Central to the curriculum are three basic human questions and the three Christian beliefs that are the Church's response in faith:

**Where do I come from?** Life ↔ Creation

**Who am I?** Dignity ↔ Incarnation

**Why am I here?** Purpose ↔ Redemption

The basic question/belief for each term is explored through three kinds of themes:

**Community of Faith ↔ Church**

**Celebration in Ritual ↔ Sacraments**

**Way of Life ↔ Christian living**

**The Community of Faith ↔ Church themes are:**

**Autumn:** Family ↔ Domestic Church

**Spring:** Community ↔ Local Church

**Summer:** World ↔ Universal Church

**The Celebration in Ritual ↔ Sacraments themes are:**

**Autumn:** Belonging ↔ Baptism / Confirmation

**Spring:** Relating ↔ Eucharist

**Summer:** Inter-Relating ↔ Reconciliation

**The Way of Life ↔ Christian Living themes are:**

**Autumn:** Loving ↔ Advent / Christmas

**Spring:** Giving ↔ Lent / Easter

**Summer:** Serving ↔ Pentecost

### **Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD)**

The content of the Religious Education curriculum meets all the requirements of the RECD.

Religious Education planning will make reference to the Curriculum Directory links. Teachers will also include children friendly RECD links where necessary to support teaching and learning.

### **Catholic Social Teaching**

**'Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.' 1 John 3:18.**

Formed by the wisdom of Church leaders and shaped by the daily experience of Catholics everywhere, Catholic Social Teaching (CST) provides a moral compass to live out our faith. CST is based on a tradition of episcopal and papal writings on political, economic and social issues facing our time. CST provides Catholics with a structure on how to encompass and apply these reflections to our daily lives. More importantly, it guides us on how we should respond to our faith as individuals, and actively respond to God's call to work towards a common good.

CST at St Alban & St Stephen's is delivered using Caritas Westminster materials, 'Rooted in Love'. The Caritas programme aims to equip pupils with a strong understanding of CST and how they can put their faith into action in their daily lives. CST enables the children to think about social justice issues across the globe and in their local community

An essential part of the Catholic faith, the key values of Catholic Social Teaching are found at the core of the Gospel. The Caritas Westminster programme is based on core principles of Catholic Social Teaching of:

**-Human Dignity**

**-Community and Participation**

**-Care for Creation**

**-Dignity of the worker**

**-Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

**-Solidarity and Peace**

**-Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Curriculum Time**

In line with the recommendations of the Diocese, we devote 10% of the teaching week to Religious Education. (Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1-2 ¼ hours per week, Key Stage 2-2 ½ hours per week). This excludes whole school and key stage assemblies, daily prayer, Mass and other forms of collective worship.

Time is set aside to plan Religious Education lessons. Staff meetings are used for joint planning sessions between teachers in year groups to ensure that there is sufficient consistency across the year groups, and a range of creative activities are used to record learning.

### **Planning**

- Religious Education should be planned in line with the yearly overview, which outlines timeframe for each topic and theme.
- Planning for every topic is recorded on the relevant Come and See Planner. All Religious Education Planning is saved on the school network in the relevant and easily accessible folder. Guidelines are stored on the network in the Planning and Guidance folder.
- Planning must match the appropriate Come and See objectives and the New Standards Framework for Primary Religious Education using the driver words which are phase-appropriate.
- When planning Come and See Reveal objectives, pupils' activities should include adaptive teaching. Support and challenge should be evident through religious vocabulary and independence, as well as deeper thinking.

### **Teaching**

- The class teacher must teach all Religious Education lessons. Religious Education lessons must not be taught by a PPA/supply teacher cover except in exceptional circumstances approved by the Head Teacher.
- Teachers should adapt to the needs of the pupils and address misconceptions both during and after the lesson.
- Teachers should respond to difficult questions and topics appropriately, seeking guidance from the Senior Leadership Team and Religious Education Co-ordinators, as well as the Parish priest, when required.
- As a Catholic school, it should be consistently emphasised that Religious Education lessons are our most special lessons.
- Time for reflection and prayer is an integral part of Religious Education lessons. Dedicated time for this should be provided for the children to contemplate their knowledge, understanding and ideas about the Catholic faith revealed to them through their learning. This can take the form of a collective or silent prayer, listening to and pondering big questions or a quiet activity praising or thanking God.
- Teachers should ensure that lessons and teaching materials are inclusive and reflect our diverse school family and the different cultures and ethnicities which exist in the Universal Church, including the Saints and representations of Christ.

### **Recording**

- The first lessons in the R.E. books at the start of the school year will focus on the School Mission Statement and House Saints.
- Each child will have a picture of their House Saint in the front of their R.E. books.
- Each topic will begin with a Knowledge Organiser page. Knowledge Organiser pages will be completed and updated by the class teacher as necessary, using the Come and See scheme plans.
- All work must begin with the long date and learning objective and be presented using neatest handwriting.
- Children should constantly be reminded how special their Religious Education books are and as a result work and presentation within them should be of a high standard.

- All work must be completed, any absences must be recorded with the date and title of the lesson(s) missed. Where possible, children should be enabled to catch up on work missed from the Reveal lessons.
- The quantity of work in each book must reflect the coverage of 10% of the curriculum time.
- At least two pieces of individual or whole class work must be recorded for each unit (EYFS).
  - Explore: At least 1 piece of recorded work. (KS1 & 2)
  - Reveal: 3 pieces of recorded work (KS1) 4 pieces of recorded work (KS2)
  - Reflect: At least 1 piece of recorded work which shows the child's response to the 'big question'.
  - Every unit must include at least one piece of extended writing and one creative response eg art/ music /drama /dance. There should be evidence every half term of the use of IT to support children's RE in RE books. All creative work and photographs must be annotated by an adult or the child.
- Religious Education books should contain a range of recording such as extended writing, art, poetry, song, with at least 1 creative recorded activity per topic.
- Other creative activities such as dance, drama and music should be recorded with a news post on the school website.

### **Marking and Assessment**

- When marking pupils' work it must be recorded whether the learning objective has been achieved by highlighting it in pink, in accordance with the school marking policy.
- If a pupil has not achieved their learning objective, a target or verbal feedback must be provided and recorded on their work.
- At least once in each unit, R.E. will be focus-marked in detail. The focus marking piece will usually be the response to the 'Big Question'. Focus marking will include a brief comment explaining what the child has done well, and a target. Targets should be linked to the learning objective and be positive, helping children to progress to the next level. The target should be addressed with the child verbally, or a clear and specific next step, target for improvement or challenge question for the child to complete can be added in green pen for the child to respond to using the code T underneath the writing
- Children from year 2 onwards will always be given the opportunity to respond to any feedback and act upon it, improving their work using purple pen.
- If work is illegible it needs to be annotated.
- Key religious vocabulary should be corrected where necessary, in line with the St Alban and St Stephen's marking policy. Up to three misspellings should be addressed. The correction of misspellings should be focussed on subject-specific spellings. In Religious Education, misspellings or lack of capital letters for any important religious vocabulary must be addressed, especially 'Jesus', 'God', 'Mary', 'Holy Spirit'
- Throughout the year, teachers will add to each child's Religious Education Learning Journey Assessment Grid.
- A Teacher Assessment judgement of Working Towards (WTS), Expected (EXS) or Greater Depth (GDS) will be made for each child in KS1 & KS2 at the end of the year. 'Expected' refers to what is expected within the year group objectives and signifies the child will also be 'expected' by the end of the phase (Phase: Year 2, Year 4 or Year 6). Children in EYFS are assessed in keeping with all the other areas of learning and are reported as on track or off track at the end of the year. The Teacher Assessment judgement made in February will be reported to parents in the child's mid-year report.

- These judgements will be based on evidence of progress as recorded on each child's Religious Education Learning Journey Grid and the work recorded in their Religious Education book.
- The summative judgement will also be recorded on Target tracker as Red (WTS), Yellow (EXS) or Green (GDS)
- Teacher assessment for Religious Education will be moderated both internally by SLT and during designated Staff meetings and externally in partnership with other schools.
- The teaching of Other Faiths will be evident and taught separately to any other faith (EYFS: it is incorporated into the wider curriculum).

### **Resources**

- Each classroom contains Bibles (at least 1 Bible between 2 children) which should be used to find and reference Scripture in Religious Education lessons as appropriate.
- Every teacher has access to the Come and See scheme and resources. These plans and resources are saved and can be accessed in the Planning Subject Guidance folder for each year group.
- Resources for Other Faiths weeks are distributed as required depending on the theme of each year group.
- EYFS have a variety of small world resources such as figurines of people from Biblical stories, religious artefacts and a variety of costumes and materials which can be used to support Religious Education lesson both in the classroom and the outdoor areas.
- Liturgical resources to support the teaching of Religious Education topics and special seasons throughout the year such as Advent wreaths and candles, Nativity set, prayer table cloths, Baptismal candles and Last Supper sets are purchased and shared with teachers by Religious Education Co-ordinators.

## **3. Staff Responsibilities:**

### **Subject Leaders**

- Take the lead in policy development.
- Support colleagues in their organisation of curriculum time and planning as well as teaching of the Come and See scheme of work.
- Attend regular Deanery and Westminster Religious Education Co-ordinator conferences, meetings and any other relevant CPD opportunities. Keep up to date with developments and disseminate to colleagues including during INSET days and information meetings.
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of resources for Religious Education.
- Organise masses and services including the Christmas and Easter Celebration with assistance from the Music teacher.
- Liaise with the Parish priest to arrange for Masses, celebrations, reconciliation and class visits.
- Liaise with the Senior Leadership Team to formulate Religious Education Action Plans and Reviews.
- Monitor books and plans in EYFS, KS1 and KS2, identifying strengths and areas for development with SLT.
- Organise annual moderation of Religious Education assessment.



- With the SLT, consult with stakeholders to annually update the Catholic Self Evaluation Document (CSED).
- Write an annual action plan to meet priorities identified in CSED and the School Improvement Plan.
- Lead staff meetings with updates from the Diocese, changes to the Religious Education Curriculum and share information regarding Diocesan Inspections.
- Lead Religious Education Open Mornings for parents and Governors.
- Encourage use of visitors and visits to develop religious understanding, including places of worship for other faiths

### **Class teachers**

- The Church has a responsibility to provide an intellectually rigorous Religious Education curriculum. As teachers we have an obligation to our pupils to ensure that what we offer in the Religious Education curriculum is enabling their achievement in knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Ensure a good understanding of the expectations at the end of each Come and See topic, so that the activities offered will provide pupils with opportunities to achieve at least the expected standard by the end of each age-related phase.
- Organise their timetable to allow for at least 10% of curriculum time to be given to the teaching of Religious Education (excluding prayer, Mass and other forms of collective worship).
- Be responsible for the planning and teaching of Religious Education in line with the RECD and adhering to the Come and See programme of study and the Religious Education yearly overview, ensuring all children are appropriately supported and challenged.
- Be responsible for the assessment of Religious Education work each year and completing the Religious Education Learning Journeys for each child per term with a summative teacher assessment based on the New Standards Framework at the end of each term.

### **4. Monitoring and Reporting:**

- The school Senior Leadership Team, alongside Religious Education Leaders, will monitor books and planning in each Key Stage each term. They will give individual and general feedback celebrating strengths and identifying areas for development.
- Attainment in R.E. will be reported termly to the Governors.

### **5. Opportunities for Spiritual and Moral Development:**

- In Catholic education we are aware that all knowledge and understanding comes from God. We desire to seek opportunities and capitalise on moments of experience and understanding, which take pupils beyond themselves. The subject of Religious Education plays a central role in spiritual, moral and personal development: 'It is the foundation of the entire educational process' (Religious Education in Catholic Schools Bishop's Conference 2000) and 'promotes spiritual and ethical thinking' (Religious Education in Catholic Schools Bishop's Conference 1996). The Respect and Rejoice section of the Come and See scheme offers particular times when pupils may reflect prayerfully on the topics and issues they have discovered throughout their learning.

**6. Equal opportunities:**

- Inherent in our Religious Education policy is the importance of the contribution made by each child and member of staff towards a happy and caring environment in the school, by showing respect for the appreciation of each person as an individual, regardless of age, race, ethnic origin, culture, sex or disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- We aim for all children, including pupils of other faiths, to have equal opportunities regarding access to the Religious Education curriculum. This is to ensure that they are encouraged to strive for academic excellence and develop their full potential in recognition that we are all children of God and that everything we do is the greater glory of God.

**7. Health and Safety:**

- Staff are trained to care at all times and will ensure safe handling of materials and resources.
- Electric candles and light should be used for all times of prayer and reflection, not lit candles.
- When food is used during the teaching of particular Religious Education lessons, any food allergies will be carefully taken into account.

## Appendix

### Diocesan Policy on Religious Education (2012):

The whole Catholic school is part of the Church's ministry to evangelise and catechise. Through the centuries, the Church has educated young people and adults as part of its life. The witness, by the staff and pupils, to belief in Jesus Christ and the Catholic way of life, is itself a teaching and learning experience.

In school, religious education is, in the first instance, education in the Catholic faith; pupils learn about the Catholic tradition and from it.

'Religious Education is central to the curriculum of the Catholic school and is at the heart of the philosophy of Catholic education. Religious Education has developed in a way that reflects the particular identity of our Catholic schools in England and Wales. It teaches about the faith in the context of a school which proclaims the Gospel, and invites the individual to respond to the message of Christ. As the individual responds to this invitation, growth in faith and knowledge helps the pupil to respond to the call to holiness and understand the fullness of what it is to be human. For some, then, Religious Education will also be received as evangelisation and for some, catechesis.' (1)

Classroom religious education has its own content, methodology, assessment and culture. The broad areas it covers are God's self revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. It should be accorded the same status and taught with the same rigour as the core subjects of the national curriculum. It is open to inspection and assessment by public examination and at Diocesan level. It is an important contributory factor to the passing on of the community's faith from one generation to the next.

It will be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject and requires 10% of the length of the taught week at each stage of education.

Classroom religious education has as its outcome:

'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.' (2)

Accordingly, the following requirements apply to Religious Education in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Westminster:

1. Whole school religious education is to provide for a lived faith experience through worship, retreats, assemblies and action for social justice. The religious education department contributes to this whole school direction.
2. Classroom religious education is to be resourced as a core subject and allocated 10% of teaching time at each Key Stages 1-4 and 5% at Sixth Form.
3. The classroom religious education curriculum is to be delivered in accordance with the general norms laid down by the Bishops' Conference: Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19) (2012); Statement on Religious Education (2000) and any Diocesan guidelines.
4. Classroom religious education is to be assessed in accordance with the general norms laid down by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales: Age-related Standards in Religious Education (July 2018).
5. Classroom religious education is to be inspected according to the current Catholic Schools Inspection framework.

Useful curriculum resources can be found on the Diocesan website by following the respective links as follows:

- Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19) (2012)
- Bishops' Statement on Religious Education (2000)
- Age-related Standards in Religious Education (July 2018).
- In-service training
- Diocesan Inspection Framework and SEF
- Curriculum Support
- Our Catholic Schools: their Identity and Purpose (The 'Red Book') (2010)

(1) Religious Education Curriculum Directory (Bishops' Conference, 2012), p.3

(2) Religious Education Curriculum Directory (Bishops' Conference, 2012), p.6