

‘A joyful union of Catholic Schools’

Religious Education Policy

2026 – 2027



With Jesus in our hearts, we welcome, we learn, we laugh, we flourish.



Together we love, care, learn and thrive under the umbrella of God.

Aim of the Policy

The Catholic school is a community of faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and Religious Education is where that faith seeks understanding. The primary aim of Religious Education in our Catholic schools is to engage in a comprehensive and systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life.

Religious Education is integrated into the whole life of the two individual schools and it is academically respected as a core curriculum area which presents the same demand for rigor as any other subject, and which informs every aspect of the curriculum.

The Religious Education classroom is a place of respectful dialogue. The Church calls us to engage in dialogue with others, so as to promote peaceful societies where various cultural expressions can coexist. It is a curriculum that includes a study of other religious traditions and worldviews, which prepares pupils for the world they will encounter. In addition, this curriculum that opens for pupils the opportunity to engage in meaningful interreligious and intercultural dialogue gives a rationale for the subject that explains its relevance to all pupils, not just to those who are Catholic. (RED, 2023)

Compliance with the Religious Education Directory and Catholic School Inspection

Our schools fully comply with the 2023 Religious Education Directory including how much of the curriculum time is to be dedicated to Religious Education teaching. *'In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.'* (RED, 2023 page 6) This equates to 2 hours 15 minutes in EYFS and KS1 and 2 hours 30 minutes in KS2. This curriculum time of 10% does not include Collective Worship or Catholic Social Teaching.

The Importance of the Religious Educator

Teachers who are Catholic bear witness to their belief and bring the lived dimension of a life of Christ into our school communities. Whether our teachers are Catholic or not, all are committed to teach Religious Education in a spirit of dialogue to the next generation. Every teacher of Religious Education requires a genuine expertise in the subject. Therefore, our schools ensure that professional development opportunities are given to develop the skill set and appropriate levels of theological literacy of all teachers. As well as being competent in subject knowledge, they must be agile conductors of classroom debate, resilient custodians of religious wisdom, and sensitive mentors to enquiring pupils and students. (RED, 2023)

Curriculum Implementation

Within our mixed-age classes at St Mary's and Thorneyholme, we have connected together as teachers and implemented a curriculum which ensures progression in knowledge, skills and understanding, and which allows every child to learn, taking into account their age, individual needs and ability.

At both schools, there is an annual cycle in EYFS, a two-year cycle in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, there is a two-year cycle within both the lower and upper junior classes. The schools are using the resources recommended by the Diocese of Salford: **Lighting the Path: Source to Summit**. This academic year in our mixed age infant classes, the Reception children are taught using the EYFS resources, Year 1 & Year 2 are being taught using the Year 2 resources, Year 3 & Year 4 are being taught using the Year 4 resources and Year 5 & Year 6 are using the Year 6 resources. The Engagement Model is being used to enable children with SEND to access and experience a rich and ambitious Religious Education curriculum. This Engagement Model is outlined in the Religious Education Directory Guidance for Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities provided by the Catholic Education Service.

The Religious Education planning and resources used across the schools are structured around six "branches," each covering a half-term, with all year groups following the same branch. These branches are:

1. Creation and Covenant
2. Prophecy and Promise
3. Galilee to Jerusalem
4. Desert to Garden
5. Ends of the Earth
6. Dialogue and Encounter. They emphasise the importance of Scripture and encourage exploration of faith through curiosity and introspection.

Knowledge lenses:

The first five curriculum branches are divided into four sub-sections called knowledge lenses that set out the object of study for pupils/students. These four sections are:

Hear: focuses on the Word of God which we hear: the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, a person in whom God is fully revealed, whom we know by faith and who is revealed to us through the Sacred Scriptures and the living tradition of the Church.

Believe: focuses on the content of the Church's own profession of faith, what she believes, professes, defines, and teaches. In this lens we look at those doctrines that constitute the

Catholic faith: trinity, incarnation, the Holy Spirit, the communion of saints, the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and salvation and eternal life.

Celebrate: deals with the liturgy in which the Church celebrates the Paschal mystery of Christ which accomplished the work of salvation. In this lens we look at prayer, liturgy, and sacrament, sacraments of initiation, the Eucharist, sacraments of healing, sacraments at the service of communion, and other liturgies and sacramentals.

Live: focuses on the impact of faith on how Christians live. In this lens we look at the dignity of the human person; freedom, conscience, and virtue; law, grace, and sin; Catholic Social Teaching; and the relationship between faith and life as expressed in art, in culture, and in the lives of those who are exemplars of Christian living: the saints.

Two other knowledge lenses constitute the sixth and final curriculum branch: Dialogue and Encounter.

Dialogue: is an exemplification of the Church's teaching on the relationship between Catholicism and other Christian traditions, between Catholicism and Judaism, between Catholicism and other religions, and between Catholicism and non-religious or atheistic worldviews. It is called 'dialogue' because it focuses on the importance of dialogue as the only authentic way of living faithfully in a pluralistic world.

Encounter: pupils are expected to engage in a discrete study of other faiths, religions, and worldviews. As they progress, pupils will study:

- Other Christian denominations
- Judaism
- Islam
- Dharmic religions and pathways

To further enhance the teaching of Other Faiths, Hinduism is taught across the school in the autumn term and Sikhism in the spring term using resources primarily from the Come & See scheme. This year the school is using the Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 resources.

Ways of knowing:

There are three ways of knowing: Understand, Discern and Respond, that set out the skills that pupils should develop as they progress through the Religious Education curriculum. They are called ways of knowing since they describe the holistic ways human beings experience education: as a growth in understanding, as a creative and critical assimilation, and as a recognition of the application of learning to one's own life. Each age phase has its own exemplification of the ways of knowing.

Children are taught in as creative a way as possible using for example: drama, art, music, writing and reflection.

Within each class across the two schools, there is a focal point where key words and work are displayed. Key words are displayed within every lesson for children to use and refer to. Each class uses Catholic Bibles to develop an understanding of the Word of God and its importance within our lives.

Parents are encouraged to appreciate and support the religious education of their child and at the start of each term a parent letter details the units being taught. Parents are also informed of their child's progress and next steps at parent meetings throughout the year.

Our RSE curriculum is delivered through Jigsaw and Ten:Ten, which nurture spiritual growth, personal and social development through a Catholic approach/lens. Please see the RSE Policy for further details.

Catholic Social Teaching is taught within the resources provided Religious Education (Source to Summit: Lighting the Path and Salford Diocese). It is also being taught cross-curricular, as well as using the resources and animal mascots provided by CAFOD.

The main CST principles are:

Dignity
Solidarity
The common good
The option for the poor
Peace
Creation and Environment
The dignity of work and participation



Assessment

Formative assessments inform the teacher of the child's progress and next step learning in Religious Education. Lessons often begin with a 'Tune in' task and end with a 'Wrap up' task to monitor progress and for children to be able to self-assess, by reflecting on their own knowledge and understanding and next steps.

Religious Education adopts the same assessment procedures as other subjects and the knowledge lens used in each year groups 'understand' expected outcomes as outlined in

To Know You More Clearly is used to record judgements in progress. Teachers make their formative judgement based upon evidence they have seen, heard or read.

Recording of children's learning takes many forms - artwork, written, digital, displays, assemblies and more.

Curriculum Impact

The impact of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and consciously 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 recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. (RED, 2023)

Monitoring

As the planning and resources provided by Source to Summit: Lighting the Path and Salford Diocese are new to our schools, half termly meetings are being held with SLT and class teachers to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of these in the teaching and learning of Religious Education.

The Senior Leadership Team and Religious Education subject leaders across the two schools monitor the teaching and learning throughout the year. The subject leaders move Religious Education forward through regular CPD (including joint CPD of the two schools), keeping Religious Education central, and a real strength of our curriculum.

Right to Withdraw

Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of Religious Education. The law provides parents with a conscience clause; this should not be understood as a general opt out of Religious Education. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher in writing following the school's policy. However, before granting such a request it is good practice for the Headteacher to discuss this request with parents and if appropriate with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of Religious Education. The school must ensure a record is kept of requests to withdraw from Religious Education.