

RE Policy



Saint Augustine Webster Catholic Voluntary Academy



Mission Statement

The school will aim to:

- develop an awareness of *God's* love and presence in individual's lives and to elicit a response to that;
- help pupils to develop a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs allowing the individual to make sound and moral judgements in the light of personal commitment to the Lord, *Jesus Christ*;
- make prayer, worship and liturgy valued experiences;
- develop real links with home and parish;
- create caring relationships with all those children and adults who are involved in the school.

Statement of Philosophy

To provide a Christian environment rich in experience that enables children to grow and develop intellectually, emotionally, morally, socially and physically in order to become autonomous, useful and caring members of our society. To instil in children the desire to learn and to equip them with the necessary skills to do so.

Overview

St Augustine Webster's Mission Statement and Academy aims explain how our academy exists to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in a Catholic atmosphere where we focus on Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is the duty of the staff to guide the personal, moral and spiritual growth of the children, assuming a responsibility towards the children's eternal life and destiny. To this end, the Religious Education Programme of Study will be presented as an integral part of daily living and opportunities will be offered daily to guide and review the events of life and the experience of learning in the context of Christian belief.

The formal programme of study will reflect the faith through the teachings and traditions of the Church of Christ, complementing the catechesis which takes place in the home and parish. The materials which lead this work will come from *Come and See*, a religious programme for Primary Schools, published with the authority of the Department for Catholic Education and Formation.

Aims

Religious Education presents pupils with the same academic demands and challenges as any other curriculum area. The immediate aim of Religious Education is to promote knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, its relevance to the ultimate questions of life, and the skills required to engage in religious thinking. In teaching R.E. our point of reference is the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" (copies available in the R.E. resource cupboard). This provides us with a clear framework for the essential doctrines which should be either communicated or prepared for in the work of Religious Education.

Religious Education is presented to children of a wide range of commitment. It will be received in different ways and lead to different outcomes for different children.

The Place of Religious Education in the Academy

In a Catholic School the place of Religious Education in the curriculum is encapsulated in the Bishop's statement Catholic Education Conference 1991.....

"In a Catholic School, Religious Education should underpin the whole curriculum while at the same time what takes place in the Religious Education class should be as competently taught as any other subject by teachers properly trained for their tasks."

In line with the statement of the Bishops' of England and Wales we believe.....

“that Religious Education is not one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The belief and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life. It should provide the contents for and substantially shape the school curriculum and offer living experience of the life of faith in its practical expression”

Through implementing the Religious Education Policy we aim to:

- lead the children and adults to a deeper knowledge and of the Catholic Faith and traditions, recognising its importance in our daily life
- enable each child to develop his/her full potential in all areas of life, in an environment where he/she knows they are loved and he/she can love others
- help the children to recognise and appreciate the spiritual and religious dimensions of life
- enable children to search, question and examine their own personal life in the light of what they have learnt
- recognise and respect members of other religions and cultures especially those of children in the academy
- place Religious Education at the core of the whole curriculum and make it central to the children's lives
- celebrate our faith in a variety of Eucharistic and non Eucharistic liturgies
- grow as a community inspired through prayer
- enable a flexible teaching approach in R.E. which allows the children to recognise it as a central part of their life
- ensure that each child and member of staff will be respected as an individual and their needs recognised including those children with special needs
- provide opportunities for assessment and evaluation to take place
- implement all relevant aspects of the *Come and See* Religious Education scheme as approved by the Diocese

Planning for *Come and See*

Under Diocesan advice we have adopted the *Come and See* scheme of work in order to deliver the R.E. curriculum. Each class follows the same topic at their own level. Special attention is paid to teaching and differentiated learning when teachers are planning each four week topic.

Before each topic begins, a staff meeting is devoted to exploring the 'Before You Begin' materials in preparation for the planning of units.

The aim of the *Come and See* programme is to explore the religious dimension of questions about life, dignity and purpose within the Catholic tradition. Links are made with the teaching of the

Church, pupils' own experiences and universal experience. The children will explore the beliefs, values and way of life of the Catholic tradition and, where appropriate other faith traditions. Religious Education should introduce children to the background and beliefs of people of other faiths so that prejudice and misunderstanding can be overcome from an early age. Cultural background and faith differences within the school provide a rich source of learning material at many levels, for example, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual, and therefore should be highly prized. Each member of the academy community should examine the variety of ways and stages along which God accompanies individuals so that they may discover a fuller vision of Him. For those from committed families the programme will deepen and enrich their understanding and living of their faith.

The programme makes clear what we would like the children to learn and offers a variety of ways in which to learn.

Themes Covered in *Come and See*

Each term *Come and See* focuses on one of the basic questions about life, its dignity, its purpose and a central Christian belief which relates to and addresses this question.

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|-----------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Autumn | Where did I come from? | Life – Creation |
| 2. Spring | Who am I? | Dignity – Incarnation |
| 3. Summer | 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

Each topic is developed through five levels in the *Come and See* Programme. The levels are as follows:

Nursery/Reception	3 - 5 years
One	5 - 6 years
Two	6 - 7 years
Three	7 - 9 years
Four	9 – 11 years

The levels take into account the ages and stages of development and allow pupils to work according to their different abilities.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Teachers make use of 'Level of Attainment in Religious Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges' in order to assess the progress of pupils in each topic.

Planning for each four week topic must make an explicit reference to the LOs and must be matched to appropriate activities. The assessed activities should ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability, are able to be assessed.

The Academy follows the Diocesan 3 year assessment plan and ensures there is a balance of assessment opportunities from AT1 (learning *about* religion) and AT2 (learning *from* religion). Teachers collect examples of assessed work for children in their class covering all levels within their class and, all topics and all strands within the two attainment targets. They then make decisions on the levels achieved using the Levels of Attainment guidelines. The work collected over the year is placed in an assessment portfolio which is kept in the R.E. Resource area.

Tracking Pupil Progress

The R.E Subject Leader in conjunction with the Head teacher is responsible for tracking the progress of R.E. within the academy using the class teacher's levels based on the assessed activities. They monitor the assessment process to ensure progression within R.E. across all categories within the academy.

Staffing, Teaching and Support Responsibilities

The Governors have a special responsibility for ensuring that the statutory requirement of teaching Religious Education takes place within the academy.

The Head teacher has overall responsibility for R.E. in the academy and is assisted in her work by the R.E. Subject Leader.

The teachers and support staff have a particular responsibility to impart the knowledge and understanding of God's word and with the guidance of the leadership team. Staff ensure that the teachings, practices, traditions and values of the Catholic Church are upheld.

The whole academy community has a responsibility to live our Mission Statement.

R.E. Subject Leader

The R.E. Leader has a Teaching and Learning Responsibility for R.E. and is released from class each week for 90 minutes. This time is used to monitor and evaluate the quality and standards of R.E. throughout the academy.

The Subject Leader liaises with, supports and assists members of staff to promote effective R.E. teaching throughout the academy.

She will also:

- attend Diocesan and LEA courses and feedback relevant information to the staff
- be responsible for overseeing planning, review and development of the subject
- ensure that the Catholic School Self Evaluation documents remain current and useful
- evaluate and choose R.E. resources in consultation with the staff
- liaise with Diocesan and LA advisors
- lead staff meetings and discussions about R.E. matters
- initiate visits by outside agencies
- monitor charity work in the school with the Head teacher
- ensure the R.E. displays in communal areas are current and up to date
- monitor children's work to ensure progression and compliance with *Come and See*
- monitor the teaching of R.E. in order to ensure high standards of teaching and learning
- ensure appropriate induction for new staff
- produce reports as required by the Head teacher
- develop links with other local Catholic Schools
- lead by example
- report key issues to the Head teacher, Leadership team and Governing body
- keep resource areas up to date
- support staff in the teaching, planning and delivery of *Come and See*
- monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Collective Worship provision
- ensure the feasts of the Church's year are celebrated within school

Home, Academy and Parish

As a school we recognise that parents are the first and most important educators in the eyes of God and the Church. We aim to support them in this important role.

We maintain strong links with the Parish of Holy Souls' to which we belong. The Parish Priest comes into school to celebrate Masses at the beginning of each term. Key Stage 2 classes have regular class Masses in the chapel. Father also celebrates the Sacrament of Reconciliation with pupils in Key Stage 2 at key points throughout the year.

Parishioners and parents are invited to attend Masses and other celebrations which take place in the academy such as Class Assemblies, the Harvest Festival and Christmas and Easter celebrations. Parents are also invited to assist the children in school and a good number have offered their gifts and time.

Home links are very important to us and all parents sign a Home-Academy Agreement on entry to the academy. All parents, grandparents and friends are invited to attend Masses and celebrations. Parents are informed through the Diocesan termly newsletter what their children are learning in R.E. that term.

Children are encouraged to share their prayer life at school with their parents at home through the use of such things as The Travelling Crib which is used during Advent and The Travelling Cross which is used during Lent. Children and parents regularly ask the academy for special prayers from the whole community.

Children preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion embark on a collaborative programme, usually in Year 3, involving home, academy and parish. Within school many areas of the programme are covered through the R.E. curriculum. Weekly sessions are held after school beginning after Christmas and are taken by the R.E. Subject Leader. Topics to be completed at home are set each time. The programme is initiated with a parents meeting held by the parish priest and attended by the Head teacher and R.E. Subject Leader. Members of staff attend the Sacramental Celebrations in Church.

Links with Other Catholic Schools

We feel it is very important to foster links with other Catholic Schools particularly our local Catholic schools.

The Head teacher and R.E. Subject Leader liaise with other staff from Catholic schools at Diocesan meetings and conferences.

We have regular shared inset with the primary schools in our Academy Trust.

Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have scheduled visits to the Catholic Secondary school prior to Secondary transfer.

The local Catholic Secondary school holds regular sporting events for our pupils and sends pupils to assist us on our Sports Days.

Developing links with other Catholic Schools is always an area of focus for all the Academy schools and is continually being developed.

Other Faiths

Other faiths are welcomed at our school according to the criteria laid out in the Admissions policy.

A large proportion, 57%, of our school community is from other faiths. Parents are expected to be supportive of the Catholic nature of our school life in our community.

We celebrate the diversity of our faiths, traditions and cultures. Children of other faiths are actively encouraged to share their faith. We have relevant books, artefact packs and images which are used throughout the school in our study of other faiths in accordance with the *Come and See* scheme. Our

children from other faiths take part in assemblies every year which outline the celebrations of their own faiths including Eid and Diwali.

We do not look at other faiths in comparison to Roman Catholicism, but rather in terms of what practising the other World Faiths looks like for believers.

Understanding, respect and tolerance are key elements to our programme of study.

Resources and Focal Points

There is an R.E. resource area in the main Key Stage 2 corridor which all staff have access to. The R.E. resources are managed and kept up to date by the R.E. Subject Leader.

Each classroom has a cross or crucifix and an area in their classroom dedicated to R.E. as well as a special display board with an R.E. theme.

There is always a display in the school relating to another World Faith.

Children and staff have access to The Retreat and staff and children of all faiths are actively encouraged to visit The Retreat to pray or simply spend time in quiet reflection or meditation.

The Academy as a Worshipping Community

Prayer, worship and liturgical celebration are central to our Catholic tradition. It is of prime importance, however, that sound educational and pastoral principles determine the ways in which these are experienced in the academy community.

It is not sufficient to provide opportunities for such experiences; it is our task to promote and develop an appreciation of and an active participation in prayer, worship and liturgy. This must be recognised as a gradual process which takes account of the age and stage of personal, social and religious development of the pupils. It is necessary also as we have some pupils from other Christian traditions and other Faiths, to be sensitive to their perspectives, respectful of their gifts and attentive to their needs.

The worshipping nature of our academy is expressed in a variety of ways.

a) **Prayer**

Children should be familiar with the following formal prayers and strong encouragement given to ensure they are known by heart:

End of Key Stage One

- Sign of the Cross
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be
- Grace Before and After Meals
- Morning Offering
- Loving Father Prayer

Simple Responses:

- The Lord be with you;
- And with your Spirit;
- Lord graciously hear us;
- Parts of Gloria
- Sign of Peace
- Eucharistic Prayers for Children

End of Key Stage Two

- Act of Sorrow
- Act of Faith, Hope and Charity
- Eternal Rest
- The Rosary
- The Stations of the Cross
- Apostles' Creed
- The Responses of the Mass

Where there are children of other faiths in the class, they will be invited to share prayers from their traditions.

b) **Liturgies**

The celebration of the Eucharist is the highpoint of Catholic worship.

c) **Daily Act of Worship**

An important experience for our academy community is the daily act of worship. This consists of full school or infant/junior assemblies or class groups in classrooms.

For prayer, worship and liturgy to be real educational experiences and for them to contribute successfully to the development of faith in each individual in the academy, participation in the preparation and the action of these events is of prime importance and evaluation must also be part of the process.

As teachers we can make its distinctiveness real by:

- praying with pupils
- helping children to reflect on their prayer
- encouraging children to create their own prayer
- enabling pupils to participate in liturgy
- fostering a quiet and prayerful environment
- celebrating prayer and learning through assemblies
- participating in staff prayer
- praying and reflecting on your work
- working with the parish priest
- sharing with pupils in Eucharistic and other liturgical celebrations

General Skills to be Taught

Religious Education involves pupils not only in the attainment of knowledge and understanding, but also in the acquisition and deployment of skills. The acquisition of skills is essential as a means to increasing knowledge and understanding.

A skill is an ability or aptitude developed through training and practice. The development of a skill depends on attitudes of self-respect and respect for others.

The skills required in our Religious Education course could be broadly defined as:

Investigation skills
Interpretation skills
Communication skills
Critical skills
Affective and social skills
Evaluation skills

These skills should be common across the Key Stages.

1 Investigation skills

These skills are basic to the acquisition of knowledge in all subjects. They can only be developed by the use of primary resources and discovery methods of learning. They are of limited value unless employed with other categories of skills.

Pupils should be taught to:

- identify and ask relevant questions;
- observe accurately;
- listen carefully;
- follow procedures
- know where to look for evidence;
- gather relevant data from a variety of sources: texts, artefacts, art, symbols, customs;
- read a variety of prose and poetry;
- find references in texts: Scripture, etc.;
- recognise sequence;

2 Interpretation skills

These skills are employed to understand the meaning or significance of information and data. They are difficult for some pupils to acquire, yet they are essential in Religious Education for religions and other world views are in fact interpretations of life and experience.

Pupils should be taught to:

- categorise and classify;
- interpret the language of religion, signs and symbols;
- develop hypotheses;
- reflect on and interpret one's own experience;
- reflect on and interpret one's own experience;
- see life from another person's point of view.

3 **Communication skills**

These skills are dependent on the above. They enable pupils to clarify and order their own thinking. They enable them to express clearly and, therefore, make evident what they feel, know and understand.

Pupils should be taught to:

- make a sensible and ordered presentation of information;
- use a variety of media to express ideas;
- express themselves through factual and creative writing;
- express themselves through drawing and painting;
- design diagrams, charts or models;
- express themselves orally;
- know religious language and use it appropriately;
- exercise imagination through role play.

Critical skills

Pupils should be taught to:

- question their own point of view;
- form reasoned opinions based on evidence;
- express these opinions in debate;
- weigh evidence;
- assess arguments;
- make connections between life and faith;
- differentiate between objective and subjective judgements.

5 **Affective and social skills**

Pupils should be taught to:

- relate well with others;
- work in a group;
- exercise empathy;
- participate in community prayer and celebration;
- accommodate social, cultural and faith differences;
- be aware of national and global issues.

6 **Evaluation skills**

Pupils should be taught to:

- distinguish between rules and principles, opinions and beliefs;
- make reasoned value judgement;
- make responsible choices.

ATTITUDES TO BE FOSTERED IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Through programmes of study, and the skills developed, it is the intention to help pupils to develop attitudes which may be grouped under the headings of:

WISDOM

an ability to look critically at the beliefs, values and morality of society; a thirst for meaning and willingness to learn.

UNDERSTANDING

a receptivity to the gift of being able to look beyond the immediate to seek for a meaning and purpose in one's personal life and experience of others.

KNOWLEDGE

an openness which engenders the confidence necessary to integrate religious knowledge into a way of life. It requires a respect for truth and an openness to search for meaning.

RIGHT JUDGEMENT

an awareness of the complexity of making choices and a willingness to discern the appropriateness of moral decisions in reference to personal experience and the experience of others. It requires a sense of self esteem and self-knowledge, a sense of community responsibility and a correct respect for authority.

COURAGE

a willingness to struggle with the challenges of religious thinking and of Christian living. It requires a sense of personal dignity, a sense of personal responsibility and a clear sense of right and wrong.

REVERENCE

a respect for self; a respect for others and awareness of obligations in justice and charity towards them. It requires empathy, openness and sensitivity in relating to others, their views, opinions and beliefs.

AWE AND WONDER

a sense of the transcendent and the holy, springing from an awareness of the presence of God in self, others and in the world. It requires respect for mystery and the gift of imagination.

Kirsty Matthews
R.E. Subject Leader