



ST MARY'S SCHOOL HAMPSTEAD

Religious Education POLICY

September 2024

***Together we journey with Jesus our Lord,
as one family, one spirit, one school.***

MISSION STATEMENT

St Mary's School seeks to provide an outstanding education firmly founded on the Catholic Faith.

Spiritual and moral principles are nurtured in a way that is reflected in daily life. Within a happy and caring environment and based on the recognition of the dignity and worth of each child, where each child is valued and high standards are expected. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence to achieve individual potential and spiritual development.

St Mary's values the unique contribution of every child within the school community.

St Mary's is inclusive and welcomes girls from all communities and faith backgrounds, or none, and believes that all benefit from the school's values.

St Mary's aims to encourage an active partnership between home, school, parish and the wider community.

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of Religious Education taught and learnt at St Mary's School, Hampstead. This policy has been drawn up as a result of staff discussion and has the full agreement of the governing body. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff. This policy includes all the children in our school including the children in the EYFS.

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).

Rationale

We believe religious growth and development have a central place and significance in each human life and must not only be confined to timetabled Religious Education lessons but be the core of the whole school experience.

Aims

Our main aims are to ensure that:

- We provide a Catholic education for our children by promoting knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith with the person of Christ at its centre and heart.
- All children are taught the study of R.E. as specified in the Westminster Diocese *Come and See*, and the RECD.
- The children are religiously literate in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith.
- The children grow in love and service of God and each other.
- The children develop a deeper commitment and understanding to the Catholic faith and Christian living.

When teaching R.E. we aim to:

- Encourage the growth and development of children's personal and spiritual lives.
- Enable the children to reflect on their own and other people's experiences and to relate the religious teachings encountered to issues and choices in their own lives.
- Give the children a knowledge and understanding of what it is to be a Christian as expressed in the Catholic tradition.
- Foster and nurture each child's God-given potential irrespective of their abilities.
- Develop in each child a sense of an honest, reflective, open and enquiring attitude.
- Promote friendship, respect and goodwill both within the school and also in the wider community.
- Foster awareness and understanding of the Catholic faith for every child through prayer, study and liturgy.

- Offer an education to the highest possible standard, with a curriculum which meets the needs and aptitudes of each child.
- Develop the skills and attitudes necessary to engage in religious thinking.
- Develop their awareness of the wider community and to value and respect the wide diversity of other faith traditions and to be able to recognise common religious themes such as the significance of water, light, oil etc. sympathetic to all faiths.
- To develop the children’s experience of being part of the universal Church.
- Help the children to know and understand that the love and compassion of God is constant and unconditional as revealed in His son, Jesus Christ.
- To ensure that there is a real sense of progression through the different stages of education.

These aims will be met as we teach children to:

- Make prayer, worship and liturgy positive and real spiritual experiences through class prayer, Praying Together Services, Gospel Assemblies, Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Services and their developing knowledge of the Catholic faith.
- Respect the opinions and beliefs of all world faiths, whilst upholding our Catholic identity.
- Analyse, study, investigate and reflect.
- Listen and think critically, spiritually and ethically, to acquire knowledge and to make informed judgements.

These aims are achieved through:

- The formal “Come and See” units from Nursery to Year 6.
- The liturgical life of the school.
- The permeation of our faith through the whole school curriculum.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to learning. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, social/family background, culture or disability. The religious education of our pupils works towards addressing the needs of each pupil. It considers that for some, school may be their most profound experience of the Church, whilst for others it will deepen and enrich the understanding and living of their faith.

Catering for pupils with particular needs

The R.E. lesson should meet the learning needs and potential of all pupils. This will be achieved through good planning and teaching and a whole school policy that values each child as an individual with potential and something to offer school and the community.

We believe that teaching R.E. to pupils with a specific learning difficulty is an extension of existing good practice. Any pupil whose difficulties are severe or complex may need to be supported with an individualised programme in the main

part of the lesson. This may involve breaking down an activity into a series of small achievable steps. The “Come and See” online resources provides a section with activities to help with the development of those children with extra needs. We also try to ensure that progression and extension activities are used where appropriate, enabling pupils who are more able in the subject to progress towards their maximum potential, extending their knowledge and experiences in R.E.

As each child is on a personal journey of faith and may be at different stages of that journey, we should ensure that every child is achieving at their own personal level. Parental help should be encouraged in achieving this.

Prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school

The children are encouraged to support the Church overseas by fundraising for the school’s charities, chosen at the beginning of every year.

All classes have an image of the Virgin Mary and set aside a display board that is used as a focus for worship through either the display of religious books and artefacts, key vocabulary, prayers and the children’s own work.

Children and staff in Years 1-6 celebrate together each week on a rotation of Services, Mass or the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, led by our School Chaplain, Fr Chris Connor. Mass is also celebrated on Holy days, Feast days and at the beginning and end of term. All staff, parents and governors are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Praying Together Services are held every week for Early Years, Lower School and Upper School, with each class taking it in turns to prepare and to lead the weekly service to their peers and parents.

Prayer takes place in the morning, before lunch, and at the end of the day. Some teachers perform meditations with their class.

At the start of the week, the Headteacher organises and leads Years 1-6 and EYFS assemblies to share the message of the week’s Gospel reading, or focus on the Caritas Catholic Social Teaching themes, such as ‘Care of Creation’ as explained by Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*. Assemblies end with pupils being invited to share spontaneous prayers.

Curriculum time allocation for teaching Religious Education

In line with the Bishop’s requirements, 10% of the timetable is set aside for R.E. In EYFS and Key Stage 1, this is 2 hours and 15 minutes, increasing to 2 hours and 30 minutes in Key Stage 2. This time allocation does not include collective worship, hymn practice or assemblies.

While we await the new curriculum in line with ‘To Know You More Clearly’ (Religious Education Directory 2025), we will continue to follow the *Come and See* framework as advised by the Diocese of Westminster. Nine topics are covered each year, three per term, each lasting roughly four weeks. The areas of study for each year group are outlined in the Curriculum Map on the next page.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Nursery and Reception follow the Diocesan *Come and See* framework, which links to EYFS curriculum and the seven areas of development, and learning; especially Personal, Social and Emotional development and Understanding of the World.

Nursery have time allocated for R.E. in their weekly timetable. Reception are timetabled to have 10% of the curriculum dedicated to R.E. teaching each week.

Through our planning, support and guidance our children will learn and develop through:

- Playing and exploring – Engagement
- Active Learning – Motivation
- Creating and thinking critically – Thinking

These characteristics of effective learning, along with the prime and specific areas of learning and development, are all interconnected which will enable our children to be effective, motivated learners in all their learning. Practitioners consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child and plan accordingly.

CURRICULUM MAP FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION *(Come and See)*

	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	Topic 8	Topic 9
	Domestic Church	Baptism/ Confirmation Belonging	Advent/ Christmas Loving	LOCAL CHURCH COMMUNITY	EUCARIST RELATING	LENT/ EASTER GIVING	PENTECOST SERVING	RECONCILIATION INTER-RELATING	UNIVERSAL CHURCH WORLD
Nursery	Myself	Welcome	Birthday	Celebrating	Gathering	Growing	Good News	Friends	Our World
Reception									
Year 1	Families	Belonging	Waiting	Special People	Meals	Change	Holidays and Holydays	Being Sorry	Neighbours
Year 2	Beginnings	Signs and Symbols	Preparations	Books	Thanksgiving	Opportunities	Spread the Word	Rules	Treasures
Year 3	Homes	Promises	Visitors	Journeys	Listening and Sharing	Giving All	Energy	Choices	Special Places
Year 4	People	Called	Gift	Community	Giving and Receiving	Self- Discipline	New Life	Building Bridges	God's People
Year 5	Ourselves	Life Choices	Hope	Mission	Memorial Sacrifice	Sacrifice	Transformation	Freedom and Responsibility	Stewardship
Year 6	Loving	Vocation and Commitment	Expectations	Sources	Unity	Death and New Life	Witnesses	Healing	Common Good

Planning

To assist their planning, all the teachers use the *Come and See* online resources which have been downloaded from the website (<http://www.comeandseere.co.uk/>) to the G: Drive and T: Drive (T:\RE Leader of Learning\Come and See). Differentiation is catered for usually by task or by outcome, ensuring that all pupils can achieve the learning objective. Spiritual opportunities are marked on the R.E. plans.

Other Faiths

We teach other faiths as recommended in the *Come and See* programme. As Catholics, we are called to be committed to respecting people of other faiths and to recognise that God is at work in them. We allocate time throughout the year to other faiths. For example, one week to Hinduism in the autumn term, Judaism in the spring term and Islam in the summer term.

Visitors and parents of children from other faiths and staff are welcomed and encouraged to come into school and share their beliefs and practices at an assembly or in their child's class. Workshops and educational visits are also organised to educate pupils on a deeper level and to enhance the enjoyment of this part of the R.E. curriculum.

Links between R.E. and other subjects

R.E. contributes to many subjects within the primary curriculum and opportunities will be sought to draw R.E. experiences out of a range of activities, such as Drama, Art, Music, ICT, Science, Literacy and PSHCEE. A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used from across the curriculum adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of all pupils.

Growth (PSHCEE)

In Growth lessons, the children are taught to deal with moral choices through the Ten:Ten scheme. The values of the Gospels are taught through the St. Mary's Way and the school's Catholic ethos. The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy specifies how this area is covered.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT is used in various ways to support teaching and motivate children's learning. Online resources are common place when using the interactive whiteboards. iPads and Chromebooks are used within lessons, proving to be a valuable resource to engage the children. ICT could also involve the Global Learning Centre, such as the Green Screen, digital cameras and other audio visual aids. They will, however, be only used in R.E. when it is the most efficient and effective way of meeting the needs of the children.

Resources

Each class teacher is provided with:

- Access to planning on the G: Drive and the T: Drive (T:\RE Leader of Learning\Come and See)
- A copy of the RECD
- Assessment grids with specific learning objectives evidenced
- Prayers to be learnt by the children
- Key days and events in the Liturgical Calendar
- An icon of the Crucifix and the Virgin Mary

R.E. resources are situated in the R.E. Resource Room by the Sacristy and includes books on assemblies, Masses, multicultural traditions, prayers, sacraments and most aspects of religious study. Other resources include statues,

posters, pictures and objects of focus for prayer sessions. There is a selection of prepared Mass themes that may be used for class Masses.

Health and Safety

In their planning of activities, teachers will anticipate likely safety issues. They will also explain the reasons for safety measures and discuss any implications with the children. Children will always be encouraged to consider safety for themselves and others when undertaking RE activities. Teachers will also be aware of health and safety when placing crucifixes, statues, icons or using candles.

Assessment

Assessment of standards is carried out according to Diocesan guidelines using the criteria in the RECD agreed by Bishops' Conference. Teachers will make continuous judgements about pupils' performance and record them on the whole school assessment grid. These judgements will lead to a cumulative judgement about attainment. The children's work is levelled from Years 1 to 6 against the R.E. attainment targets. This also ensures the R.E. levels are in line with or above their Literacy level. Pupil outcomes are also tracked by the SENCo to ensure that support is in place for those who need it.

In the EYFS, staff use observations to record the children's understanding. This is recorded in the whole class big book and in staff planning folders.

Monitoring

The teaching of R.E. is monitored in the following ways:

- Regular lesson observations by the Leaders of Learning for R.E.
- Planning and work scrutiny carried out by the SLT and Leaders of Learning for R.E.
- Assemblies, Praying Together Services and classroom displays regularly observed.
- Regular contact and meetings with the school's advisor from the Westminster Diocese to keep abreast of developments in R.E. and to ensure the school is working in line with Diocesan and national expectations for Catholic Education.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Each class teacher takes responsibility for teaching R.E. However, the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Leaders of Learning for R.E. are on hand to help non-Catholic teachers, Early Career Teachers and those new to Catholic education.

All staff attend school-based training and are also encouraged to attend R.E. courses organised by the Diocese. CPD is identified through the school's performance management process. Class teachers can contact the Leaders of Learning for R.E. to organise these opportunities for CPD.

Management of RE

It is the role of the Leaders of Learning for R.E. to:

- Help to improve the quality of teaching and learning of R.E. in the school and to support other staff in the achievement of this aim, as well as in the collective responsibility for the spiritual and faith development of pupils.
- Ensure teachers are familiar with the policy and help them to plan lessons.

- Ensure that the Bishops' R.E. Curriculum Directory and upcoming Religious Education Directory (2025) is understood and followed.
- Lead by example in the way R.E. is taught and show enthusiasm for the subject.
- Oversee the process of assessment, recording and reporting in the subject.
- Monitor the quality of teaching and continuity of R.E. throughout the school.
- Monitor the quality of work across the school.
- Purchase, organise and lead INSET with the support of the SLT.
- Collect photographic evidence of R.E. around the school.
- Identify resource requirements.
- Purchase, catalogue and store new resources and encourage their use throughout the school.
- Write or update relevant documentation.
- Ensure that prayer and worship are given adequate time and resource allocation and reflect the age, stage and needs of the pupils concerned.
- Facilitate parental involvement.
- Work cooperatively with the Learning Support department where necessary.
- Observe colleagues regularly with a view to identifying the support they need.
- Contribute to the School Development Plan.
- Support and advise colleagues, giving details of INSET courses and CPD opportunities.
- Keep in touch with the Diocesan R.E. advisor, attend coordinator meetings and keep up to date with developments in the teaching of R.E.
- Ensure that new colleagues are aware of the R.E. programme and give help and guidance when required.
- Ensure non-Catholic colleagues receive the support and guidance they need, enabling them to teach the R.E. programme with confidence.
- Present or submit an annual written report to Governors, informing the governing body of progress towards targets in the School Development plan.

It is the role of the Head Teacher to:

- Promote the Catholic life of the school through effective leadership and management.

- Encourage commitment and contribution to Catholic Social Teaching and the Common Good.
- Ensure that R.E. retains a high profile in the School Development Plan.
- Lead, manage and monitor the implementation of this policy, including monitoring teaching plans and the quality of teaching in the classroom.
- Keep the governing body informed about the progress and profile of R.E. within the school.
- Deploy support staff to maximise support as appropriate.

Review date: September 2024

Katy Meyer & Lucy McManus

Leaders of Learning for R.E.