



# ST MARY'S SCHOOL HAMPSTEAD

Religious Education POLICY

September 2025

***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, worth and wellbeing of each child, high standards are expected. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence.

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.

## About the Religious Education Policy

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.

## Religious Education Directory 'To Know You More Clearly' (2023)

As a Catholic school within the Diocese of Westminster, we are required to comply with the Religious Education Directory (RED) entitled *To Know You More Clearly* (released September 2023).

The RED (2023) makes the aims of Religious Education explicit:

- '1. to engage in a 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;
2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.'

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' (RED 2023, page 6).

## Rationale

As stated by Pope St. John Paul II, Religious Education is the "core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school. At St Mary's School, Hampstead, 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.

Our Religious Education curriculum is designed to provide a Catholic education for our children by promoting knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith with Jesus Christ at its centre and heart. We are committed to ensuring that children are religiously literate in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith, enabling them to grow in love and service of God and each other.

Through our comprehensive approach to Religious Education, we seek to develop in our pupils a deeper commitment and understanding of the Catholic faith and Christian living, fostering both intellectual understanding and spiritual development that permeates all aspects of their educational journey.

This integrated approach reflects our belief that religious education is not merely an academic subject, but a transformative experience that shapes character, values, and the whole person within our school community.

## **Aims**

When teaching Religious Education, we aim to:

- Encourage the growth and moral 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.
- Instil in each child a sense of an honest, reflective, open and enquiring attitude.
- Promote friendship, respect and goodwill both within the school and in the wider community.
- Foster awareness and understanding of the Catholic faith for every child through prayer, study and liturgy.
- Cultivate a sense of spirituality, awe and wonder in God's creation and presence.
- Offer an education to the highest possible standard, with a curriculum which meets the needs and aptitudes of each child.
- Ensure that there is a real sense of progression through the different stages of education, from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Upper Key Stage 2.
- Develop the skills and attitudes necessary to engage in religious thinking, such as analysis, study, investigation and reflection.
- Teach pupils to listen and think critically, spiritually and ethically, to acquire knowledge and to make informed judgements.
- Build their awareness of the wider community and to value and respect the wide diversity of other faith traditions, opinions and beliefs, whilst upholding our Catholic identity.
- Enable pupils to recognise common religious themes such as the significance of water, light, oil etc. sympathetic to all faiths.
- 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.
- Foster values and morals based on Christian teaching, which are also shared by the major world faiths.
- Make prayer, worship and liturgy positive and real spiritual experiences for pupils through class prayer, Praying Together Services, Gospel Assemblies, Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Services and their developing knowledge of the Catholic faith.

#### **These aims are achieved through:**

- Religious Education lessons from Pre-Nursery to Year 6, based on the former Religious Education Curriculum Directory units from *Come and See*, transitioning to the new Religious Education Directory curriculum *To Know You More Clearly* by September 2026.
- Drawing links to Catholic Social Teaching through assemblies, Religious Education and Growth lessons.
- Putting faith into action through charitable events and community participation.
- Prayer and Collective Worship opportunities and the Catholic 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.

#### **Planning and Resources**

In the academic year 2025-26, 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.

To assist their planning, all the teachers use the *Come and See* resources available on the School's G: Drive and T: Drive (T:\RE Leader of Learning\Come and See).

Within the Come and See programme, we seek to cover the following skills:

- Explore: This is an introduction to the topic in which the children's life experience is explored, the question(s) it raises are wondered at, shared, investigated and their significance reflected upon.
- Reveal: This is the heart of the programme in which knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faiths revealed through the Word, in Scripture, tradition, doctrine, prayers, rites and Christian living.
- Respond: At the end of the topic, the learning is assimilated, celebrated and responded to in daily life.

As we prepare for the transition to the new Religious Education Directory curriculum *To Know You More Clearly* (2023), staff are in the process of receiving training from the Diocese of Westminster's Education Service. They will be making

use of the model curriculum resources, alongside the Arundel and Brighton resources available online (see: <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/education/catholic-diocese/arundel-brighton.aspx>) to create new material based on the six Branches, also listed on the Curriculum Map for 2025-26.

### **Catering for pupils with particular needs**

Religious Education lessons should meet the learning needs and potential of all pupils. This will be achieved through effective, differentiated 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 Religious Education to pupils with a specific learning difficulty or English as an Additional Language is an extension of strong teaching practice. Any pupil whose needs 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 or providing pre-tutoring of vocabulary and meaning. As a core subject, teachers meet with the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCo) to discuss pupils' progress in Religious Education and how best to support them.

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 Religious Education. For example, teachers encourage pupils to explore at greater depth by writing challenge questions and allowing pupils ample time to respond.

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.

### **Curriculum time allocation for teaching Religious Education**

In line with the requirements of The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW), 10% of the timetable is set aside for Religious Education for pupils in Reception to Year 6. Pre-Nursery and Nursery also have time allocated for Religious Education in their weekly timetable. Across the school, this time allocation does not include collective worship, hymn practice or assemblies.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Nursery and Reception currently follow the Religious Education Curriculum Directory *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. Pre-Nursery also use the 'Big Question' for each *Come and See* topic as inspiration for their learning. Following DOWES training, EYFS staff will move towards implementing the new Religious Education Directory *To Know You More Clearly* (2023), using the model curriculum.

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.

## RE Curriculum Map 2025-26



	Autumn Term			Spring Term			Summer Term		
	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	EUCHARIST RELATING	LENT/ EASTER (GIVING)	PENTECOST (SERVING)	RECONCILIATION INTER-RELATING	UNIVERSAL CHURCH WORLD
<b>EYFS</b>	Myself	Welcome	Birthday	Celebrating	Gathering	Growing	Good News	Friends	Our World
<b>Reception</b>									
<b>Year 1</b>	Families	Belonging	Waiting	Special People	Meals	Change	Holidays and Holydays	Being Sorry	Neighbours
<b>Year 2</b>	Beginnings	Signs and Symbols	Preparations	Books	Thanksgiving	Opportunities	Spread the Word	Rules	Treasures
<b>Year 3</b>	Homes	Promises	Visitors	Journeys	Listening and Sharing	Giving All	Energy	Choices	Special Places
<b>Year 4</b>	People	Called	Gift	Community	Giving and Receiving	Self-Discipline	New Life	Building Bridges	God's People
<b>Year 5</b>	Ourselves	Life Choices	Hope	Mission	Memorial Sacrifice	Sacrifice	Transformation	Freedom and Responsibility	Stewardship
<b>Year 6</b>	Loving	Vocation and Commitment	Expectations	Sources	Unity	Death and New Life	Witnesses	Healing	Common Good
<b>Other Faiths</b>	Judaism			Hinduism			Islam		
<b>New RED curriculum*</b>	<b>Branch 1:</b> Creation and Covenant (Old Testament)	<b>Branch 2:</b> Prophecy and Promise (Advent)	<b>Branch 3:</b> Galilee to Jerusalem (Jesus' life and teachings)	<b>Branch 4:</b> Desert to Garden (Easter: Jesus' death and resurrection)	<b>Branch 5:</b> To the Ends of the Earth (Pentecost and the early Church)	<b>Branch 6:</b> Dialogue and Encounter (Other faiths)			

**\*NB.** This year, year groups will gradually begin to transition from *Come and See* to the new curriculum *To Know You More Clearly* in line with the new RE Directory. This will be staggered following staff formation at the DOWES training sessions and should be fully implemented by September 2026.

## **Other Faiths**

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) promotes "interreligious dialogue" with other faiths, viewing it as essential for fostering understanding, cooperation, and mutual respect within a diverse society. As Catholics, we are called to be committed to respecting people of other faiths and to recognise that God is at work in them. Therefore, we allocate time throughout the year to the teaching of other faiths including Hinduism, Judaism and Islam.

Staff, visitors and parents of children from other faiths are welcomed and encouraged to come into school and share their beliefs and practices at an assembly or in their child's class. A variety of in-school workshops and external educational visits are also organised to educate pupils on a deeper level and to enhance the enjoyment of this part of the curriculum.

## **Links between Religious Education and other subjects**

Religious Education can be closely linked to many subjects within the primary curriculum and opportunities will be sought to draw experiences through a range of activities including drama, music, art and literature. Teachers take inspiration from a variety of teaching and learning strategies from across the curriculum, adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of all pupils.

## **Spiritual and Moral Development Across the Curriculum**

At St Mary's School, Hampstead, we also believe that pupils' spiritual and moral development can be enhanced through the wider curriculum. Links to other subjects include the following:

- **English:** Pupils encounter opportunities to recognise, reflect upon and connect with the experiences of others, fostering empathy and understanding. Pupils develop awareness of moral questions and ethical choices while exploring how literature reflects God's call to love and serve one another. Through engaging with diverse texts, pupils grow in their understanding of human dignity and Gospel values.
- **Mathematics:** Mathematics reveals the divine order and beauty inherent in God's creation. Students discover truth through logical reasoning and collaborative learning, reflecting the harmony found in God's design. Through mathematical investigation, discussion and reflection, students develop appreciation for the precision and elegance that mirrors God's perfect creation, leading to wonder and praise.
- **Science (STEAM):** Science education nurtures respect for ourselves, others, and God's creation. Through environmental studies and field experiences, pupils can witness firsthand the magnificence of God's handiwork, fostering reflection on our role as stewards of creation. They can also engage with moral questions surrounding scientific advancement while growing in appreciation of their responsibility to care for the world God has entrusted to us.
- **Technology and Engineering (STEAM):** Technology and Engineering teaches pupils the importance of planning, organisation and creative problem-solving as reflections of participating in God's ongoing creative work. Pupils learn to appreciate the gifts of inventors and designers who contribute to humankind flourishing. Pupils also consider how technology can serve the common good and reflect on the moral implications of human innovation in light of Catholic social teaching.
- **Art (STEAM):** Art education encourages pupils to express their innermost thoughts and feelings, reflecting the creativity that flows from being made in God's image. Through developing artistic skills, pupils learn to appreciate beauty and contribute to God's ongoing creation. Studying various artistic traditions helps pupils respond to God's gifts while bringing joy and meaning to others through creative expression.



- **Music (STEAM):** Music education opens pupils' eyes and ears to the beauty and wonder of God's creation through sound and harmony. Learning musical skills develops perseverance while providing opportunities for contemplation, spiritual renewal, and prayer. Music facilitates community building and worship, connecting pupils to the rich tradition of Catholic sacred music while appreciating how music can lift hearts and minds to God.
- **Geography:** Geography connects pupils with their local environment and God's wider creation. They explore the magnificence and wonder of the universe, seeking to understand how God works in the world and in their lives. Geographic study raises awareness of our interdependence and responsibilities to one another, reflecting Christ's call to love our global neighbours and care for our common home.
- **History:** Historical study enables pupils to understand and empathise with people across time and cultures, recognising the dignity of every human person. Pupils learn about heroic deeds, moral dilemmas, and the ongoing search for peace and harmony that reflects God's desire for justice and love. Through studying the use and abuse of power, the children also develop critical thinking skills while learning to respond to moral challenges with Gospel values.
- **Physical Education:** P.E. promotes care for the bodies that God has created, fostering appreciation for the wonder of human physical capabilities. Pupils express themselves through movement while learning teamwork, perseverance, dedication and respect for others' God-given talents.
- **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** ICT is integrated across all curriculum areas, through the use of iPads, Chromebook and access to the Global Learning Centre. We recognise technology as part of God's gift of human creativity and intelligence. Pupils learn to use technology responsibly while considering how digital communication can serve the Gospel mission of building community and spreading God's love. We promote the importance of engaging with questions about digital ethics and the responsible use of technology for human dignity and the common good.

### **Growth (PSHCEE and RSE)**

Growth lessons encompass PSHCEE (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education) and Relationships and Sex education (RSE). Teachers provide age-appropriate guidance and discussion opportunities on moral choices and human dignity, rooted in Scripture and Church teaching through the Ten:Ten scheme. This helps pupils to understand their identity as beloved children of God and their calling to live lives of virtue, service and authentic love. The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy specifies how this area is covered in more detail.

### **Use of ICT in Religious Education lessons**

ICT is used in various ways to support teaching and motivate children's learning. Online resources are commonplace 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 Religious Education lessons when it is the most efficient and effective way of meeting the needs of the children and does not detract from the spirituality and depth of the content being covered.

### **Resources**

Each class teacher is provided with:

- Access to planning for *Come and See* (to be used until July 2026) and *To Know You More Clearly* (to be implemented by September 2026) on the G: Drive and the T: Drive
- A copy of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2023)
- Assessment grid topic covers with key vocabulary, the 'Big Question' and specific learning objectives ('I Can' statements)
- The APOP (Annual Plan of Provision) listing key days and events in the Liturgical Calendar
- Examples of challenge questions
- Catholic Social Teaching resources, such as stickers and display banners, to draw links in all subjects
- Prayers to be learnt by the children
- A folder for Pupil Chaplains and teachers to evidence class worship sessions, known as 'Celebration of the Word'
- An icon of the Crucifix and the Virgin Mary
- A designated worship area (or prayer table) with coloured cloth for the Liturgical season, a Bible, a Rosary, a candle and other resources for pupils to access at any time, as well as those that are relevant to Religious Education lessons and Collective Worship sessions
- Opportunities to meet with our School Chaplain, Father Chris Connor, for training and class visits to support the teaching of Religious Education.

Other Religious Education resources are situated in the Resource Room by the Sacristy and includes books on assemblies, Masses, multicultural traditions, prayers, sacraments and most aspects of religious study. These 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 is carried out according to Diocesan guidelines using the criteria in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (to be used until July 2026) and/or the new Religious Education Directory (to be implemented by September 2026) as agreed by the CBCEW's Department for Catholic Education and Formation.

In Years 1 to 6, teachers 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 using the following grades: Working Towards (WTO), Working At (WAT) or Working Above (WAB) the expected level in Religious Education. 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. These observations are recorded in the whole class Big Book and staff planning folders. Additionally, for each topic, the children have an individual page in their own personal Big Book. For Nursery and Reception, teachers use this page to evidence the topic standards, highlighting to show whether the pupil has met the requirements. Teachers also assess the pupils with an overall grade of 'Emerging', 'Expected' or 'Exceeding' in Religious Education and input this into the whole school assessment grid.

## **Monitoring**

The teaching of Religious Education is monitored in the following ways:

- Regular lesson observations by the Leaders of Learning for Religious Education
- Planning and work scrutiny carried out by the SLT and Leaders of Learning for Religious Education.
- Classroom displays and prayer tables regularly observed and updated.
- Regular contact and meetings with the school's advisor from the Diocese of Westminster and local schools in the Camden Deanery to keep abreast of developments in Religious Education and to ensure the school is working in line with Diocesan and national expectations for Catholic teaching.

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Formation**

Each class teacher takes responsibility for teaching Religious Education. However, the Headteacher, Deputy Head (Academic) and Leaders of Learning for Religious Education 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 Religious Education courses organised by the Diocese of Westminster. CPD (also known as Formation) is identified through the school's performance management process. Class teachers can contact the Leaders of Learning for Religious Education to organise these opportunities at any time.

### **Prayer and Liturgy and the Catholic life of the school**

The children are encouraged to support those in need in our local and global communities by fundraising for the school's charities, chosen by parents, pupils and staff at the beginning of every academic year. The School also encourages pupils to support the Church overseas by participating in annual events such as the CAFOD Family Fast Day for Harvest and the Big Lent Walk for Easter.

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. Prayer bags and books are sent home to encourage pupils to share spiritual experiences at home.

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, important events in the Liturgical calendar 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.

For a more comprehensive explanation, please see further detail in the separate Prayer and Liturgy Policy (updated September 2025).

### **Management of Religious Education (R.E.)**

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.

**Reviewed:** September 2025

**Next Review Date:** July 2026

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*Leaders of Learning for Religious Education 2025-26*