

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Working together in Christ

“Over 170 years ago, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales insisted that the newly restored Catholic communities of these islands should ‘prefer the establishment of good schools to every other kind of good work’ (First Provincial Synod of Westminster, 1852). In this, they recognised the crucial role that good Catholic schools play in the educational mission of the Church to make ‘Christ known to all people’ (Christ at the Centre, 2012, p.7). Good Catholic schools play their part in this mission by supporting parents in the formation of their children as disciples of the One who calls them to life in all its fulness (Jn 10:10).

The importance of ‘good Catholic schools’ has not diminished over time. Whilst their educational and structural forms have had to adapt to political and social changes, the mission of Catholic schools remains unchanged. At the heart of that mission is good religious education. Similarly, while changes in culture and society have presented new challenges for Catholic school leaders and teachers, their role as religious educators remains as vital today as ever to the mission of Catholic schools.

In a Catholic school, all pupils are invited to encounter Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as the living person at the heart of their study in a way that respects their individual religious identity. As well as seeking to assist parents with the education and religious formation of their children, Catholic schools strive also to be of service to society. Religious education plays its part in this endeavour by enabling all pupils ‘to be confident and secure in their religious faith and knowledgeable and respectful of other religions,’ and so play ‘a crucial role in building a cohesive society’ (Christ at the Centre, 2012, p.9). In these aspects of a Catholic school’s mission, dialogue plays a key part. Indeed, Pope St John Paul II had affirmed that ‘the need for the Catholic school becomes evidently clear when we consider what it contributes to the development of the mission of the People of God, to the dialogue between Church and the human community, and to the safeguarding of freedom of conscience.’ (Address to Catholic schools, 9 March, 1985).

Just at the time this Directory was coming to completion, the Congregation for Catholic Education published its Instruction: The Identity of the Catholic school for a culture of dialogue (CCE, 2022). The Instruction emphasises that authentic dialogue requires the partners in that dialogue to have a thorough understanding of their own identity, since all we can present to the other in dialogue is ourselves. Therefore, Catholic religious education must ensure that Catholic pupils are ‘initiated into the knowledge of the mystery of salvation’ (Ibid., CCE, 2022, §13) and become ever more aware of the faith into which they have been baptised. At the same time, fidelity to its mission requires a Catholic school, and the religious education it provides, to form its pupils in the virtues that will foster their life in Christ and assist them to serve the Church and society; and, to lead ‘its pupils to promote efficaciously the good of the earthly city and also prepare them for service in the spread of the Kingdom of God, so that by leading an exemplary apostolic life they become, as it were, a saving leaven in the human community’ (Gravissimum Educationis, Declaration on Christian Education, Second Vatican Council, 1965, §8).”

Rt Rev Marcus Stock Bishop of Leeds Chairman of the Department of Education and Formation of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (exert from the Preface of the New Religious Education Directory 2022)

The INTENT of Religious Education at English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

The intent of Religious Education at English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School is to explore and enrich our understanding of Christianity by putting into practice our Mission Statement and providing a Religious Education programme related to the scriptures and the life of Jesus. Through our teaching and example, we aim to enhance the Spiritual and Moral development of our children as young Catholic Christians. Furthermore, we aim to include objectives/learning intentions which take into account the religious and educational needs of children who:

- ◆ Come from supportive Catholic homes.
- ◆ Have school as their first and perhaps only experience of Church.
- ◆ Come from other Christian faiths.
- ◆ Come from other faith backgrounds.
- ◆ Have no faith background

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to achieve our intentions we will utilise a Religious Education Programme which:

- ◆ Will provide opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection in implicit and explicit ways.
- ◆ Will provide children with the language of religious experience- a 'literacy' in religious activities, places, stories, symbols and rituals, people and objects.
- ◆ Will present a 'systematic' presentation of the Christian event, message and way of life, in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child.
- ◆ Will require that the adults involved understand the underlying theological as well as educational principles.
- ◆ Is as academically rigorous as other curricular areas and utilises appropriate strategies from the National Curriculum.
- ◆ Respects the need for support for Religious Education Subject Leaders and training for all staff.
- ◆ Respects the different pastoral needs and practices within our Parish

‘To educate is to take a risk and to hold out to the present a hope that can shatter the determinism and fatalism that the selfishness of the strong, the conformism of the weak and the ideology of the utopians would convince us is the only way forward.’³ Only a strong and united action by the Church in the field of education in an increasingly fragmented and conflict-ridden world can contribute both to the evangelising mission entrusted to her by Jesus and to the construction of a world in which human persons feel they are brothers and sisters, because ‘Only with this awareness of being children, that we are not orphans, can we live in peace among ourselves’ Pope Francis, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, March 2022

The Aims of Religious Education in schools:

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.
-
- ◆ To present, engagingly, a comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
 - ◆ To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
 - ◆ To present an authentic vision of the Church’s moral and social teaching so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society;
 - ◆ To raise pupils’ awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
 - ◆ To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;

- ◆ To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
- ◆ To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;
- ◆ To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.

INTENT

The above aims underpin the effective delivery of Religious Education in English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School.

- ◆ Religious education will be taught discretely and developmentally. It will include the deepening of knowledge and understanding of key theological ideas and their application to life.
- ◆ Many opportunities will be offered for children to apply and use their knowledge and skills in cross-curricular studies to deepen their understanding of religious truths and think creatively.
- ◆ Engagement with their own and others' beliefs and values will help to develop good attitudes and dispositions so that children are instilled with a love of learning and a desire to go on learning.
- ◆ Engagement with difficult questions of meaning and purpose which everyone has to face will enable them to think critically about their own questions of meaning and purpose.
- ◆ Offer the children a sense of self-worth through their experience of belonging to a caring community and an awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- ◆ To provide all children with a bespoke and tailored curriculum to meet their individual needs, including in Blended Learning.

Religious education IS as the heart of our curriculum

- ◆ Religious education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
- ◆ Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.
- ◆ Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.
- ◆ 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Religious Education Programme

To fulfil our aims and objectives we follow and implement the [New Religious Education Directory](#) recommended by Lancaster Diocese and which are appropriate to the needs and lives of our children.

The primary purpose of Catholic Religious Education is to come to know and understand God's revelation which is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school is 'a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation.'

10% of Curriculum Time is dedicated to Curriculum RE.

Overview of the Religious Education Programmes:

Our children have a wide range of learning opportunities to learn about the Life of Christ, sharing opinions, beliefs and religious knowledge as they do so.

See Appendix 1 for a full overview of topics, themes and resources

Each Key Stage at English Martyr's Catholic Primary School has specific approaches to their learning, in-line with other subjects and curriculum areas:

Foundation stage approach

In the foundation phase Religious Education drives the whole curriculum. Through engaging, practical, integrated activities, children can learn more about themselves, other people and the world around them and develop their religious knowledge, skills and understanding. Religious Education makes an active contribution to the areas of learning outlined in the curriculum but has a particular and important contribution to:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Literacy
- Understanding the world
- Art and design
- Creative development

Children will:

- 🌀 *Hear*
- 🌀 *Believe*
- 🌀 *Celebrate*
- 🌀 *Live*

What they are taught through CRE

Throughout the programme the EYFS process will be divided as:

- Whole class core Input: (teacher led).
- Adult directed group activities: (teacher or assistants work with groups of children).
- Continuous provision (child centred learning across the areas of learning in the foundation stage).

Religious Education in Years 1 to 6

Thorough, detailed, exciting and inviting planning indicates:

- Learning objectives: the overall focus of the session.
- Content: some suggestions for input to develop the focus.
- Some key questions follow the input, these are suggested questions which will encourage the children to wonder and reflect on what they have heard or seen; other questions may also arise.
- Some suggested activities: the third section offers some activities, as guidelines. Some are differentiated but can of course be adapted to the ability and interests of the children. There are some links for special needs children using symbol-supported text.
- Children will be prompted by a variety of means to demonstrate:
 - Ⓢ What they *Understand*
 - Ⓢ What they *Discern*
 - Ⓢ How they will *Respond*To what they have heard, read and learnt
- There will be chance to celebrate the children's new knowledge and understanding of the topic. The children will contribute to the celebration by recalling and suggesting readings, songs and prayers which have been significant.
- Children can make an individual response to what they have learnt and experienced and consider how they might apply it to their daily lives.
- Each topic and theme will be assessed alongside the Religious Education Standards of Attainment using 'Driver Words' to gain further insight. This assessment takes the form of written, creative and verbal forms, not solely relying on the literary skills of individuals.
- Each topic and unit has its own 'I Can' statements linked to the Standards of Attainment with Driver Words identified and linked specifically to the topic to be used as Learning Objectives and as AfL.

Long-term Planning

- Appropriate content for each group is ensured.
- Continuity and progression are ensured.
- Communal celebrations are possible.
- Staff development and interaction is facilitated.
- A breadth and depth of understanding is ensured.

Medium-term Planning

Medium Term planning monitoring is the responsibility of the Holistic Curriculum Team. They will monitor and feedback on:

- the content and focus of each theme
- links to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church and Religious Education Curriculum Directory*
- key concepts, skill and attitude
- attainment targets.

Provide the staff with dates for each term's work, indicating:

- Christian doctrine for the term
- the three themes and topics through which these will be explored
- the allocated time required to ensure that the learning outcomes for each topic will be achieved
- the feast days and celebrations that occur during the term
- the chosen faith to be studied during the Multi Faith week; Year of Mercy weeks
- dates of CAFOD and other charity fundraising events.
- All the above are discussed and organised at a staff meeting at the start of each term.

Short-term Planning

Short-term planning is the responsibility of the class teacher. Teachers use the generic English Martyrs' Medium Term Planning Template. They ensure they:

- ◆ allocate time for each learning focus to be achieved
- ◆ plan the topic to ensure achievement of all learning focuses
- ◆ select appropriate activities for the whole class or groups of children to ensure they achieve their targeted levels.

Differentiation

The purpose of differentiation in Religious Education is:

- to enable children to succeed in the set task or activity
- to challenge beyond their comfort zone of knowledge, understanding and skills
- to enable children to recognise their achievements and celebrate these.

Differentiation is provided through a variety of teaching and learning strategies which meet the differing needs and abilities of children. Special educational needs and Able, Gifted and Talented are referred to, on annotated plans, where this is deemed appropriate.

SEND

Medium term plans show how planned lessons and activities in Religious Education are to be differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils in the class based on Religious Knowledge and understanding and also their literary ability, adapting and altering methods of recording

accordingly so that their full potential in Religious Education is met. Please refer to SEND policy for further information.

Homework

This can be given to enable children to reflect on the work done in class. It would normally be given out in line with the school Teaching and Learning Policy.

IMPACT

The outcome 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.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment

Assessment is related to the concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed through the exploration of the themes and the learning focuses for each topic. Assessment establishes what pupils know, understand and can do. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith. Assessment in *RE* emphasises a wide range of achievement.

At English Martyrs' it involves:

Informal assessment

- general observation of children engaged in classroom activities and tasks.
- observation of contributions made to classroom displays.
- review: end of task, activity, lesson and topic.
- marking of more formal work.

The children are encouraged to contemplate on their own learning at the end of each topic. They are given the opportunity to remember and celebrate what they have learnt by sharing their thoughts and what they wonder about in class discussions, creating displays and in quiet.

The children are helped to think about how they can apply their learning to their everyday lives and as with all discussions, prayer and work, the teacher will use this to make a judgement as to the level each child is working at and use this to inform future planning.

Formal assessment

Formal assessment in Religious Education is carried out in accordance with Lancaster Diocese Education Department. Each half term assessment influences next steps in learning.

Assessment for Learning is used to ascertain the Age Expected Standard at which children are working at. Key objectives are used to gain insight into how children are progressing.

Each child also has a concise version of the key objectives they are learning in the form of I Can statements forming part of their self-assessment which is supported by staff assessment.

Standards for each child are collected and collated on class assessment grids, shared on the password protected staff SharePoint. This information is passed up to their new teacher at the end of the school year. Systematic planning ensures that every pupil is to be assessed continuously each term. As in other subjects, progression in Religious Education is not always predictable and pupils of the same age will be at different standards.

Recording

Recording provides evidence of achievement. In our school it involves:

- notes from observations
- written comments on children's work
- visual evidence- for example, photographs of different classroom activities, displays, celebration assemblies
- pupils' self-assessment
- Formal assessments

Reporting

In our school reporting involves:

- feedback to pupils on their achievements and progress
- teachers informing their colleagues of the achievement of individual pupils. This may be done verbally and passing on children's self-assessment record.
- informing parents of the progress and achievement of their children. This is usually done when speaking to parents informally, at parents meetings and at the end of the year when teachers write reports.
- a half termly RE newsletter, which informs parents and governors of the topics, the learning objectives for each topic, how the programme is taught and how the family can help at home with the teaching and learning of the topic. A paper copy of this is sent home with children and also published on the school website.
- The school website which provides an invaluable form of communication between home, school and parish, not only to share the termly newsletter, as mentioned above, but also to share the many activities and celebrations that go on throughout the school year.

Evaluation of Implementation: IMPACT

The Headteacher and Holistic Curriculum Team (who have responsibility for RE, Prayer & Liturgy and RHSE) monitor the teaching of Religious Education, RHSE and Prayer & Liturgy and this is timetabled as part of our whole school monitoring process. This involves lesson observations, the scrutiny of planning, assessment files, children's books as well as talking to children. Displays and resources are monitored throughout the year to ensure they are up to date and are being used to enhance the children's learning and enjoyment of the subject.

Staff Development

The HT/Member of the Holistic Team attends RE Subject Leader meetings. Staff also attend in-service courses run by Lancaster Diocese, their Catholic Cluster and in-house training.

Staff Induction

The Headteacher ensures that all new staff are fully aware of the *RE* programme. Practical advice and support on implementing and assessing the programme is also provided. The teachers' planning also guides other classroom helpers.

Staff Communication

Time is given at staff meetings and during INSET days for those who have attended courses to communicate information received, to all staff. Feedback is given from Subject Leader Cluster meetings.

Relationship of RE to the whole Curriculum

Religious Education influences all that goes on within our school and does not stand alone as a separate subject. It is both implicit and explicit in many activities in the school. It has a strong influence on policies such as Equal Opportunities, Special Educational Needs, Behaviour, PSHE, Collective Worship, Spiritual and Moral development and links with parents and Parish.

Our Religious Education programme is not just about learning, but also about how we lead our lives each day; *'to live, love and learn in the light of the example set by Jesus and the teachings of the Catholic Church'*

Prayer and Liturgy (see separate policy)

Prayer and Liturgy in English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, while respecting diversity of belief and commitment, is Catholic in character, reflecting the tradition of the Church and with Christ at its heart.

Prayer and Liturgy is carried out daily as part of an assembly or within individual classrooms.

- Monday: Whole school Prayer and Liturgy.
- Tuesday: KS2 individual class Prayer and Liturgy /KS1 Prayer and Liturgy
- Wednesday: EYFS/KS1 class Prayer and Liturgy.
- Thursday: Whole school Celebration assembly ~ Shining Stars
- Friday: EYFS and KS1 individual class Prayer and Liturgy/KS2 Prayer and Liturgy

- Throughout the year different classes and Phases lead the celebrations.
- Whole School (including Nursery): Harvest Assembly
- KS2: Advent Service
- EYFS/KS1 : Christmas Nativity
- Whole School (including Nursery): Lenten Reflection/drama
- Year 4: Sacramental Preparation
- Year 6 : Leavers' Assembly and Mass
- Whole School (including Nursery): Class Masses/Liturgies

Catholic Life in School

Prayer Life is an integral part of English Martyrs' school life. It is planned, spontaneous, personal, individual, group, whole school, formal and informal. We believe that each and every one of our children have the right to pray and be reflective when they wish and provide ample opportunity for them to do so. Mass is celebrated throughout the school year, usually at the beginning and end of each term and on Feast days and Holydays. These are also led by all KS2 pupils, led by the Chaplaincy Team who serve the Mass, choose and sing the hymns, bring up the offertory gifts and choose and then read the appropriate scripture and bidding prayers. All family and friends are invited.

Prayer in the classroom

- Formal prayers, which are introduced throughout the programme, are said
- At the start of the day
- At mealtimes
- At the end of the day
- During timetabled acts of collective worship.
- There are also spontaneous opportunities for prayer and this is warmly welcomed
- There is also opportunity for silent prayer during assemblies, liturgies and circle time.

Opportunities provided for Spiritual and Moral Development

The Spiritual and Moral development of all our school family is influenced by our Religious Education programme and is enhanced through teaching all curriculum areas. We as a school family believe that having Christ at the centre of all that we say and do deepens our spiritual and moral development. Opportunities for children to develop their spiritual and moral development takes place through assemblies, prayer, worship, rules, mass, rewards and sanctions, dialogue, extra-curricular activities, fun, trust, reinforcement of values, awe and wonder.

Sacramental Preparation

The celebration of Sacraments is central to the Catholic faith tradition. Coming to understand Sacraments is a process, which involves a complex interaction of a variety of experiences and celebrations in which children take part during their primary school years.

Preparation of the Sacraments is an integral part of the school, home and parish. It begins in the Reception class and is built on and developed throughout the primary years through the Themes and topics of the 'Come and See' Programme. Following changes to the way the Sacraments are received, the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion now take place in Y4+.

Our parish priest and the schoolwork together to prepare the children for the Sacraments following the new Parish programme. Parents are actively encouraged to share in the responsibility for the preparation of their children and parishioners support the children through prayer.

Links with Parents and Parish

We are a member of the Parish of John XXIII which comprises of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, St Ignatius Catholic Primary School, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Christ the King Catholic High School.

Our Clergy support is through Fr Patrick Duffy from The Xaverian Mission in Preston. He regularly visit school working closely with the school Chaplaincy Team and in leading Mass, Liturgies, services, class based work and study and also to see and say 'hello' to the children; supporting our Spiritual development and support in school, working with the Headteacher, staff, children and families in formation.

Parents, guardians, families and parishioners are invited to school masses, functions, celebrations and assemblies. The school also encourages and wherever possible, provides altar servers for parish masses.

The half-termly RE Newsletter is distributed to each family, as well as being posted on the school website. All school information and photographs are also shared with parents through the school website including photographs of the work being carried out in Religious Education.

Away days and Retreats

Children in year 5 attend a spirituality retreat day at our partner Catholic high school, Corpus Christi. We have an annual Advent and Lenten spiritual reflection day held in school organised by the Headteacher/Subject Leader focusing on different themes.

Fr Paddy and Annalisa Howarth (HT) lead reflection days within school and within classes throughout the year.

Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE)

At present, the children's experience of education for personal relationships is led by the work involved in the Lancaster Diocese and to work on Health Education and the use of circle time. There is an emphasis on PSHE across the curriculum.

A very effective prefect system operates in school, which enables all children to feel safe and nurtured.

Staff follow the guidelines set out by Lancaster Diocese to ensure appropriate content is covered.

Display

Classroom displays and prayer tables provide a focus for reflection and prayer. Each class has a display related to their topic, which is built up as their work progresses. The display provides the children with the opportunity to reflect.

Education of other Faiths

Why?

- Understanding and respecting each other.
- Appreciating the ray of truth and holiness in other faiths, which gives us all hope.
- A desire to search together for meaning.
- Sharing a common humanity.
- Learning to live with our neighbours.

Which?

- Judaism every year and a choice of Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam.

When?

- Following Branch 6 'Dialogue & Encounter' in the new RED
- We also celebrate the feast days and special days of those with other faiths in our school.

How?

The teaching of other religions for primary-aged children is about how the members of that faith community live as a family and how they worship. It begins from the faith community's own understanding of itself and what it is to be a member of a particular community.

Each religion is taught separately in order to avoid confusion.

Teaching of Judaism has special attention because of the intrinsic relationships between Judaism and Christianity – our very roots lie in Judaism.

However, while it is important to teach about Jesus' Jewish background this is taught separately from modern Judaism as a world faith.

When handling ritual objects, which are important to people of other religions, we do so with reverence and respect.

Evaluation of Religious Education Policy

This RE Policy was written by the Headteacher in agreement with the staff and Governors of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School September 2024.

It will be reviewed annually and updated when new information has been received and when the school makes changes to the teaching and learning of Religious Education.

Appendix 1 Overview of Curriculum RE at English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Term	Focus/Theme
Autumn 1	Creation & Covenant
Autumn 2	Prophecy & Promise
Spring 1	Galilee to Jerusalem
Spring 2	Desert to Garden
Summer 1	To the ends of the Earth
Summer 2	Dialogue & Encounter

Appendix 2 ~ Moderation Sheets by Year Group and Branch:

[EYFS 1 Moderation Sheets by branch.pdf](#)

[Moderation Sheets for RE\EYFS 2 Moderation by branch.pdf](#)

[Moderation Sheets for RE\Moderation Sheets Y1.pdf](#)

[Moderation Sheets for RE\Moderation sheets Y2.pdf](#)

[Moderation Sheets for RE\Moderation Sheets Y3.pdf](#)

[Moderation Sheets for RE\Moderation Sheets Y4.pdf](#)

[Moderation Sheets for RE\Moderation Sheets Y5.pdf](#)

[Moderation Sheets for RE\Moderation Sheets Y6.pdf](#)