

St James the Great Catholic Primary School Religious Education (RE) Policy



Mission Statement: 'To do our best for God, for other people and for ourselves'.

St James the Great Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a warm and welcoming environment where its pupils can receive an excellent Catholic education which both reflects the Gospel values of Jesus Christ and supports Parents/Carers in their role as first educators of their children in the ways of faith, culture, life, attitudes, values and interpersonal relationships. We aim to achieve this by:

- Recognising and promoting the skills, attitudes and values of each member of our school community.
- Fostering a sense of individual worth and spiritual growth.
- Allowing each child to reach their full potential through the provision of a quality education which is broad, balanced, challenging and interlinked.
- Promoting awareness, respect and tolerance of different cultures that reflect cultural diversity of the same.
- Encouraging Parents/Carers to take full and active responsibility in educating their children to become independent learners.
- Developing harmonious relationships between all members of our school community and all who enter our school which fosters mutual respect, trust, forgiveness and love.
- Forming links within the Parish community and the wider community.
- To share our devotion in praise, prayer and practice.

Rationale of RE:

- We believe Religious Education to be 'the core of the core curriculum.'
- We believe Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the Church.
- We are aware that evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school for our pupils, we are clear that the specific contribution Religious Education makes to the Catholic life of the school is primarily educational and will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other subjects.
- We understand RE to be the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ.

'At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in RE. Therefore, RE is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic RE inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school. All pupils have the right to receive an overall education which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope which is within them. RE is, then, the core subject in a Catholic school.'

(Statement on RE in Catholic Schools – Bishops' Conference 2000)

'RE...is a rigorous academic discipline, and as such it is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.' (Curriculum Directory – Bishops' Conference 1996. p10)

'The outcome of RE is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.' (Curriculum Directory p10)

Objectives:

Through our teaching of Religious Education we aim:

- To provide opportunities for children to explore and express their own Catholic education experience, beliefs, interpersonal relationships and ways of life.
- To develop in children a sincere love of God.
- To help our children develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and thus become more like Christ.
- To offer a committed presentation of the Catholic Faith.
- To develop an understanding of the Sacraments, particularly Baptism, Reconciliation and Eucharist.
- To assist the Parents/Carers and the Parish in the Religious Education of our children.
- To support and encourage Parents/Carers to take a full and active responsibility in educating their children for life.
- To develop a Catholic Christian Community between all members of our School Community through the experience of prayer and liturgy.
- To introduce children to the journey of acquiring knowledge and understanding of the Good News of the Gospel.
- To enable our children to develop their personal faith.
- To develop in our children an appreciation of the major faiths of others.
- To develop attitudes, skills, concepts that will help children to reflect on their lives and on society in the light of the Gospel.

Time allocation: In line with the expectation of the Bishops of England and Wales, 10% of the taught week is given over to specific religious education at each key stage and in the Early Years.

Prayer and Collective Worship: Prayer and worship are at the heart of our Catholic school. Many opportunities are given to all children to participate fully in daily collective acts of worship. (See Prayer and Collective Worship Policy)

Spiritual Development: Spiritual development is about responding to God's call and accepting what it implies for our lives. To do this, we need to become familiar with the life, words and actions of Jesus Christ – God in our midst. We help our pupils become aware of God and respond to his call by providing varied opportunities for them to reflect, for instance assemblies, displays, art, music, drama, poetry, use of ICT, Liturgical dance, Religious Art and use of the school grounds/woodlands. The importance of discussion in helping children to grow spiritually is reflected by the allocation of time during lessons, with children's comments being captured and recorded in RE 'Big Books'.

Moral Development: Morality is concerned with the ethics of right and wrong and the practical implications of these for the way we live our life. Therefore, in the educational context, we have a clear code of practice towards acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Children need to be taught the difference between right and wrong.

In a Catholic school community, we are fortunate in looking to the teachings of Christ, which are of as much value in today's climate as they were in the time when they were written. Our Behaviour Policy is a reflection of the spirit of forgiveness, healing and reconciliation found in the teachings of the Gospel.

Pupil Leadership

Each year, children in KS2 are given the opportunity to apply to become members of the Catholic Life Committee (CLC). Once elected, they are responsible for setting up for assemblies and special Acts of Worship, leading Rosary Week for families and pupils, carrying out Pupil Voice interviews, organising fund raising for charities locally, nationally and abroad, meeting with RE visitors to discuss the work they have been involved in.

Curriculum and Assessment:

RE is at the heart of the taught and hidden curriculum through our mission statement of 'To do our best for God, for other people and for ourselves'. Through our daily prayers, services, assemblies, hymn practice, moral values, attitudes and example we continue to live and share Christ's love. 10% of curriculum time is set aside for the study of RE. Creative and cross curricular links are made with other subjects and we place particular value on Learning Outside the Classroom and encourage teachers to plan opportunities for this in terms of trips, reflection time etc. Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic Virtues are incorporated into the curriculum. Children are asked to put their faith into action for themselves and others and for God. Acts of Worship reference Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic Virtues which helps make the worship relevant to stakeholders' lives today with the Virtues promoting personal development and Catholic Social Teaching providing the focus for serving others. Teachers are encouraged to make meaningful links with Religious Education across the curriculum. Links are especially encouraged through topic work, citizenship, circle time and RHSE.

Teachers plan using the 'Come and See' RE programme. Termly overviews are provided to the staff, and teachers complete mid-term and weekly plans. These include Learning Outcomes, Success Criteria, Key Lesson Vocabulary, Lesson Outline, Differentiation and Plenary/Reflection.

In the Early Years, teachers also follow the Come and See programme. Termly overviews are provided to the staff. This programme fits into the 'Understanding the World' element of the framework. Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and the lives of family members. They learn about similarities and differences among families, communities and traditions. Constant formative assessment informs RE planning to ensure learning is maximised. In the Foundation Stage links are made with the Early Learning Goals.

RE assessment tasks are recorded in the children's RE Books. RE is assessed throughout the term and an attainment level is awarded termly and recorded on the RE Class tracking sheet in the staff shared area. RE attainment levels are analysed by the subject leader. Work sampling and moderation meetings form an integral part of the assessment process. Progress in RE is reported to parents in the end of year report.

Three times a year the children have a focus week on a different world religion. Our diocesan guidance is that we should spend a week a year studying Judaism, as Christianity grew from the Jewish faith.

As a school we also recognise the importance of learning outside the classroom therefore visits to our Parish Church and other places of worship are encouraged.

Celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion: Pupils celebrate the first Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion in Year 3. At various times during the year special liturgical celebrations are held, including Mass, Holy Communion Assembly and Benediction, and these promote community links between home, school and parish.

Inclusion: We believe that all children should have equal access to RE so that they may have the opportunity to progress and demonstrate achievement irrespective of ability or special educational needs. Where special educational needs are identified, teachers will provide appropriate opportunities in line with the requirements of the SEND policy.

Community Cohesion: To support community cohesion Parents/Carers are provided with a termly RE Newsletter so that they can follow up at home what the children are learning in RE. To assist school in the spreading of the Sunday Gospel to families and enriching the Home, School and Parish partnership, each family is encouraged to set aside time to discuss The Wednesday Word. In accordance with our Mission Statement, we actively seek to be of practical and prayerful service to others, not only locally but also globally. We commit ourselves to raising money for charities

Health and Safety: Children need to be regularly reminded about the safe and respectful handling of artefacts. Battery operated candles are now used in the classrooms.

Display/focal areas: Each classroom has a prayer/focal area which reflects the liturgical year and RE displays are linked to the prescribed RE topic. There are key focal points throughout the school which highlight events in the liturgical year and provide focal points for meditation.

Resources and Staff training: St James the Great is fortunate to have established strong links with our parish church, the Catholic Church of St James the Great, Peckham Rye. Groups of children and classes regularly attend Mass, Visit the church and meet with Father Jack Dillon, the Priest of the Parish, to experience the community at worship, the school also benefits from numerous members of staff being actively involved in parish life.

RE teaching and learning resources, are stored in class with some resources held centrally for particular seasons and feastdays.

Members of the RE team attend local authority and diocesan RE meetings. Subject developments are shared with staff and staff training opportunities identified and made available to staff on a needs basis, including training opportunities for new staff. Inductions are held for new staff to help familiarise them with the 'Come and See' resources available on the school system and to support them with using this format to plan termly lessons.

An independent RE consultant, works alongside the RE team and staff at school. This is a means by which Governors of the school quality assure the provision of RE.. The Consultant observes RE lessons with a member of the RE team or member of SLT, supports staff training, facilitates planning sessions with class teachers and supports moderation.

Monitoring: The RE team monitors RE and this is quality assured by the Senior Leadership Team as well as an external RE Consultant. Teaching and learning is monitored through planning and exercise book scrutinies, lesson observations with feedback, sampling of pupils' work, pupil interviews, moderation meetings and analysis of pupils' levels of attainment. Moderation across the federation also contributes to this.

Summary: Our RE policy touches at the heart of what we believe and follow as a school. We aim to make St James the Great a school where children are nurtured and cared for, where they are aware of the importance of love and forgiveness. At St James the Great we do not only teach RE but put into prayerful practice what we teach through our motto of 'To do our best for God, for other people and for ourselves'.

Reviewed: December 2025

Next Review: December 2026

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education (RE)