ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Reviewed November 2025
Next Review November 2026

This policy should be read in light of our Mission Statement:
'Aim High, Shine Bright'

The Mission

Our aim here at St Francis of Assisi School is to provide a high quality education founded on Christian principles, recognising the needs of individual pupils and valuing the contribution of our school community.

Vision

"At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person."

This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education and worship, which plays a central and vital part in the life of faith of the Catholic school. At St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, Religious Education is the core subject and the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in it inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of the College. As a result, 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 (1 Peter 3:15).

Introduction

Christ is the centre and foundation of our Catholic School. All members of our school community share the responsibility of supporting the Catholic identity of the school. Families, staff, governors enable our children to live full lives in Christ and help them to participate in the building up of the Kingdom of God. At the heart of the understanding of life lies God, its creator. Indeed, without acknowledgement of God as the source and destiny of human life, efforts at education will always fail to reach beyond the pragmatic.
Archbishop of Westminster Vincent Nicholas (2005)

It is recognised that '…the first educators in the faith are parents. By their example in the home and the participation in the Mass and other sacraments, the foundations of life-long faith and discipleship in their children are laid down.'
(Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000)

1 Intent

The Religious Education curriculum will:

- Seek to help each person to live and grow in community in a way that reflects human dignity and purpose;
- Make a significant contribution to the child's self-understanding as a human being, capable of responding in integrity and freedom to the invitation of God and the challenges of life;
- Enable pupils to be religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence, they are particularly aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Promote a gradual opening of mind and heart in the search for truth about God, respect for people of other faiths and a willingness to recognise goodness wherever it exists.

The Religious Education programme will provide a comprehensive and systematic study of Christianity and the traditions/teachings of the Catholic Church so that the children will be enabled to:

- Grow in knowledge of and openness to the mystery of God;
- Clearly understand that the school community is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus as expressed in the Gospels, and the social teaching of the Church;
- Grow in experience, knowledge and understanding of the Church, her life and teachings, her significance in the world today, and her concerns for peace and justice;
- Prepare for, participate in and appreciate personal and liturgical Prayer and Worship;
- Show a deep respect for their own personal dignity and that of others, who are made in the image and likeness of God. They demonstrate a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths, religions and none;
- Clearly express an understanding that they are valued and cared for as unique persons,made in the image and likeness of God;
- Avail of opportunities to foster their spiritual development.

Through sound teaching which reflects children and young people's capacity for learning and growing the Religious Education at St. Francis' will:

- Be delivered by teachers with authentic subject knowledge and teaching expertise who
- demonstrate a deep commitment and high expectations for Religious Education, which they communicate highly effectively to their pupils;
- Affirm all pupils value and worth, build on their own experiences of living relationships and contribute to the development of positive self-esteem;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to recognise, appreciate and develop their own talents and skills;
- Develop metacognitive knowledge and skills in pupils;
- Promote the development of independence and autonomy in children and young people so that they are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own learning and are enabled to make ever more full and informed responses and choices in relation to God, faith and service of others. Teachers regularly provide pupils with space and time for purposeful reflection in lessons.

2 Implementation

Senior Leaders and governors at St Francis ensure that the school curriculum for Religious Education is a faithful expression of the Religious Education Directory (RED). To fulfil our aims and objectives we incorporate materials from a variety of sources with particular reference to Dr Carswell's units along with resources from a range of Catholic organisations including Caritas, CAFOD, and Mission Together. Teachers then devise own units which are faithful to the RED.

These materials are followed throughout the school. It provides the core of the spiritual and doctrinal teaching of the Church. It is carefully structured and carefully balanced. The content and teaching methods take into consideration the children's age and capacity to learn the doctrine throughout, stressing the central truths of the Catholic Faith.

In Foundation Stage and Key Stage1 the programme commences by aiming to develop self awareness leading the child, through their own experiences and environment to God our Loving Father. As the child moves to Key Stage 2, that self-awareness is developed into an awareness of others and the community in which the child lives. Involvement in the Parish community and having a worldview is emphasised; this is further supported by various resources.

Towards the end of Upper Key Stage 2, this same awareness of being a responsible member of the Community of God -the Church- encapsulates a more living and personal Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It promotes an appreciation of human dignity and the acquisition of values such as truth, beauty, justice and love. It fosters respect for other traditions, values and beliefs within the context of mutual understanding. It raises pupil's awareness of the Gospel values of justice in economic, political, cultural, racial and religious systems. It raises an awareness of God's presence in all of his creation.

The RE units incorporate clear guidelines on how to communicate the doctrine outlined in the text. It suggests activities, provides teaching on how to pray, lead penitential services etc. and enables the teacher to approach the main feasts of the Church with meaning and joy. Planning is linked to pupils' current assessment and their knowledge of the individual, such that lessons consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they learn well.

Whilst Religious Education at St Francis is specifically of the Catholic Church, we welcome input from other faiths and denominations. We fully appreciate how the beliefs and values of other faith communities can enrich our own spiritual existence. Other faiths are studied each year: Judaism every year and another world faith on a three year cycle. We use the "Come and See" programme to identify year group themes and we often invite speakers of different faiths to talk to pupils, access quality resources and arrange visits to places of worship in the local area. Our pupils are encouraged to respect and be tolerant of people of different faiths and cultures. We ensure pupils develop a good understanding of other faiths, so that positive attitudes about the rich diversity in the world around them can be cultivated and enhanced.

3 Process

The process for delivering the taught RE curriculum is clearly expressed in the medium term planning. This process enables the development of knowledge, understanding of religion and reflection on meaning.

Time is set aside each half term for staff to reflect and to plan for each unit of work. Their subject knowledge and confidence is developed using the programme's videos and planning as well as phase planning sessions with the collaboration. The Programmes of Study offer a firm framework for teachers but also gives opportunities for discussion of various ways of presenting the units of work in the manner most suited to each class

The teaching of RE takes place in the classroom through a selection of differentiated activities including studying scripture and its context, storytelling, role-play, art, discussion, reading and independent research. The amount of time stated by the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales is a minimum of 10% of available curriculum time. Timetables are reviewed by the RE Subject Leader each half term to ensure that this minimum expectation is met, if not exceeded. RE is also taught in a cross curricular way in addition to explicit subject teaching, including the precepts of Catholic Social Teaching in other areas of the curriculum as appropriate.

4 Assessment/Record Keeping/ Evaluation

Recording of a pupil's work takes many forms -pictorial, written, wall displays, assemblies etc. There are displays in each classroom around the focus of the lessons and centred on the prayer area. All pupils have an RE book in line with other core subjects.

RE learning is assessed on an ongoing basis; children's progress and attainment are tracked at the end of each topic. RE assessment is decided over a number and range of activities; not just one assessment task. Attainment/progress is discussed at Pupil Progress meetings and closely monitored by the RE leader. Additionally, teachers constantly assess and evaluate their own children's work through discussions, questioning within lessons as well as evaluating written work in a variety of forms. There is currently no statutory RE assessment framework. The RE Leads have devised a tracking system in the interim to ensure we know how well children are doing.

Moderation is a vital component of the school's monitoring cycle and takes place within the school and across the collaboration as well as within the Deanery and Diocese to ensure assessments are consistent.

Families receive a weekly link for The Wednesday Word in the school newsletter which explains the Sunday Gospel taught and how they can support this in the home.

Families also attend termly consultation evenings to discuss core subject progress and receive a written report annually where there are clear indications of what the child's next steps in RE are.

Staff endeavour to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the RE Curriculum and plan so that support and challenge are differentiated to meet the needs of the class. In Religious Education we recognise the need for resourcing, as well as careful planning and differentiation to cater for children of all abilities ranging from those working below the expected level to those exceeding expectations. Staff are reminded to clearly identify

pupils who are achieving at a high level in RE in their planning and adjust their teaching and pupil learning accordingly.

At St Francis RE is considered as the 'core of the core' and as such, we expect and encourage the same high standards and expectations in RE as we do for all our curriculum subjects

Marking of children's learning in RE should be positive and supportive to encourage the child in their faith journey. Marking will focus upon religious content and comments, feedback and next steps given will look to enhance religious skills, knowledge and understanding rather than literacy skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Key religious vocabulary, which is introduced in any lesson, is corrected in children's work if spelt incorrectly.

5 Resources

Staff and pupils alike have easy access to a wide selection of resources to ensure that the taught RE curriculum is delivered to the highest possible standard and fully engages our pupils. The library has an excellent supply of RE books and computer software to support the children's individual learning. There are Bibles for Foundation Stage and for both Key Stages and a collection of prayer books, posters, crucifixes, rosary beads and other religious symbols and artefacts, which we use to enrich teaching in Religious Education.

Our resources are continually reviewed and updated.

We recognise that people are our greatest resource and that teachers "take the place of Christ" in relation to the children's education in the Catholic Faith. Therefore, we work to promote respect, love, understanding, compassion, kindness, dedication and personal growth.

6 Staff training and Development

Staff meetings are held to discuss the teaching of religion and support/provide opportunities for spiritual development in school. The RE subject leaders regularly attend Deanery meetings and other relevant courses e.g. on Prayer and Liturgy, Catholic Social Teaching, Catholic Life and Mission etc. They communicate to staff the content of the courses and whatever is relevant to the teaching of RE.

Bespoke sessions are planned half termly for teachers to spend time with the new unit and to identify how they will teach the next topic.

7 Impact

As a result of the Religious Education curriculum delivered at St Francis Catholic Primary School, you will see:

- Engaged pupils who are challenged;
- Lessons that use a variety of resources to support learning;
- Learning that is tracked and monitored to ensure all pupils make progress;
- Pupils have achieved the expectations for their phase. Some pupils will have progressed further and achieved greater depth. When necessary, pupils receive appropriate support and intervention;
- Confident pupils who can talk about their Religious understanding and the links between topics;
- Skills of enquiry and response through the use of religious vocabulary, questioning and empathy;
- Pupils understand the relevance and importance of what they are learning in relation to real world concepts (Catholic Social Teaching);
- Pupils know that Religious Education is a vital life skill that they will rely on in many areas of their life.
- Pupils have a positive view of Religious Education due to learning in an environment where it is promoted as being the core of the core and an exciting and enjoyable subject;
- Pupils show a high level of pride in the presentation and understanding of their work;
- Pupils develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own;
- Pupils understand the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures;
- Pupils learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring questions of meaning and their own beliefs;
- Pupils develop their sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in a plural, global society;
- Pupils appreciate opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development.

8 Role of the RE subject leader

The monitoring of Religious Education at St Francis is the responsibility of the RE Subject leader. Their role is to monitor and assess the RE curriculum throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression. They also ensure that the aims and learning outcomes in the Religious Education Directory (RED) are identified and fulfilled; and that standards are high. There is a rigorous monitoring schedule for RE which includes learning walks and book monitoring for which pupil voice takes priority.

The RE subject leader leads the staff in developing their teaching of Religious Education by example through modelling excellent practice; by support and advice offered at staff meetings and in informal conversations; by ensuring that the resources needed are available to staff and children; suggesting cross curricular links; involving staff insets with regard to planning, record keeping and assessment.

The RE subject leader is responsible for identifying/addressing resource needs for all aspects of RE. The subject leader, with the support of staff, develops and extends the Catholic ethos of the school in relation to worship, prayer, scripture, assemblies, the mission statement and general life of the school.

The RE Subject Leader plays a significant role in strengthening the links between home, school and parish and endeavouring to build up a truly Christian Community united in the love of God and the teachings of Christ.

The RE Subject Leader is pivotal in encouraging the involvement of families, governors, staff and parish community in the preparation of pupils for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

Together with all members of staff, the subject leader organises engaging displays and provides a wide variety of opportunities to celebrate children's achievements in Religious Education.

9 School and Community

Families and Parishioners are regularly invited to participate in school Masses and assemblies.

Staff embrace the mission statement and readily implement it across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They enthusiastically participate in and contribute to those activities which reflect the life and mission of the school and the service it offers to the

community. We do this by involving the children in charity fundraising events throughout the year, for example, Mary's Meals, Cancer Research UK, Calling London and The Passage.
Through these and other activities the children become aware of the needs of other people both near and far and develop sensitivity, generosity and a sense of responsibility towards their neighbours, actively living out the mission of the Church.

Children are encouraged to apply to become a member of the wider leadership team through joining the House Saint Captains, Stewards of St Francis, Healthy School team and the Pupil Chaplaincy Team. These children meet regularly and look at ways to promote Catholic Life and Mission, RE and Prayer and Liturgy across the school.

10 Preparation for the Sacraments

The Sacraments are a celebration of the presence of Christ permeating every moment of our lives. Growing in understanding of the Sacraments is a complex interaction of a variety of experiences and celebrations in which the children take part during the years they spend in school. At St Francis, senior leaders work hard to ensure that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered in the school at key times in the liturgical year, such as, Lent and Advent.

In preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, families have a very vital and important role in supporting their children. We aim to enable families, priests and teachers to work closely in unison. This is to ensure that they are fully informed and to enable the priest and families to share knowledge, experience and faith together appropriate to the sacramental experience of their children and their own lives. Parishioners support the preparation through prayer, support and interest. Families are asked to take their children to Mass on Sunday and those who do not do so are continually encouraged to begin again.

11 Citizenship

Conscious that Christ is at the heart of our school, there is a lived sense of community at St Francis which is evident in the quality of relationships and the strong culture of welcome. Providing an exceptionally supportive and joyful community for each of its members, valuing all without exception and acknowledging Christ's presence in the other. Pupils are encouraged to be kind, caring and responsible citizens in the school. We have a team of pupil leaders who raise money for a range of charities locally, nationally and internationally. These pupils have varied responsibilities around the school at different times of the year.

12 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Through the teaching of Religious Education in our school, opportunities for spiritual development are integrated into the whole process e.g. daily prayer, reflection, etc. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life and our eternal destiny. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions in the light of the teachings of Christ and of the church. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Pupils explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives. Chaplaincy provision is a central and celebrated aspect of the life and mission of the school. It witnesses to the school's commitment to the flourishing of every member of the school community, to the education of the whole person and to helping each discern their own unique vocation.

Review of Policy

The new Religious Education Directory (RED) has now been published although isn't statutory until September 2026. However, there is not yet any official assessment criteria. In the interim, our school will look at progress and attainment in line with other core subjects: working towards, working at and working above expected standards in relation to the RED phase outcomes.

The R.E. Lead will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy on an ongoing basis.