

St. John the
Baptist
RC Primary
School



Religious Education Policy

Mission Statement

As a school, we are committed to the welfare and development of the individual child - spiritually, morally, socially, psychologically and physically as well as academically. As a Catholic school, we are responsible for teaching the whole child in the word of Christ as told in the Gospels.

Rationale

Welcome to our school. St John's is a small, friendly Catholic school of about 80 children educated in three mixed aged classes. We are proud to be a small school and we are fully committed in providing our children with many learning opportunities. Our school community is a happy family whose members care for and value each other. We believe that this provides the ideal environment for children to learn and grow. We form a partnership with St Joseph's Catholic Primary school in Newton abbot, sharing a head teacher and Governing Body. We also form part of CAST, a multi academy trust made up of 35 schools.

We believe that as a school community - home, school and parish - we should be living according to our Mission Statement, its aims and values. "Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject amongst many, but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life."(Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1988.) We recognise that our children come from a range of backgrounds and abilities and that our teaching of Religious Education will reflect this (cf Curriculum Directory, p9).

Aims and Objectives

- That we provide the children with learning opportunities and experiences that allow them to experience the awe and beauty of God's world through their everyday living.
- To ensure that our liturgies, prayers and gatherings are appropriate to the age and understanding of the child and that they foster an understanding of our Christian principles and values.
- To encompass the whole faith community - home - school and community - into the life of the school.
- To enable our children to appreciate and understand the significance of our beliefs and practices in everyday life.
- To fulfill the mission statement through co-operation and mutual support, ensuring that the children, home and parish are served and supported.
- To understand the individual needs of the child.

- To teach and encourage the children to use and develop their gifts and talents to the benefit of the whole community.
- To provide opportunities for reflections, prayer and worship.

Religious Education in the Classroom

Our school curriculum is based on the values of the Gospel. We see all education as revealing the mystery of God, we recognise two aspects of RE in the school:-

- Implicit - or unstructured Religious Education - those opportunities that arise in the course of a school day to lead pupils through curriculum content or through relationships to a religious understanding of their implications. It is our school policy to use such opportunities as they arise.
- Explicit - or Curriculum Religious Education - those timetabled or planned periods of time given to an explicit consideration of Religious Education in the classroom. It is the policy of this school to give 10% of the timetable at KS1 and KS2. We plan our annual RE programme as agreed by Plymouth CAST and the Bishop of Plymouth.

RE Curriculum

To fulfill our aims and objectives we use the 'God Matters' programme as agreed by Plymouth CAST. As part of the CAST we plan our assessment together and as a school we use the assessments at the end of each topic to help us with forward planning. 'God Matters' encourages the children to think more widely about their learning and to apply the scriptures to their lives. God Matters is designed to ensure that pupils make progress in RE from Foundation to year 6. It is supported by a clear approach to teaching and learning. This clear approach is characterised by the 3 E's: Engage, Explore, Express. It is structured in a way which allows for deep learning and real engagement with the RE content. Through these three elements pupils gain a balance of knowledge of the scriptural messages and a deeper understanding of how these relate to Christians and to their own lives. Pupils are encouraged to reflect deeply what it means to them.

The layout of the units

The front sheet for each unit summarises the aims and purpose of the unit. It defines what prior learning in RE is necessary, the skills and knowledge that the children will require to carry out the exercises and activities and the vocabulary that they will come across. It also gives an explanation of the theology behind the topics in the unit.

Bible references

It is recommended that teachers use the Good News Bible or a Children's Bible in conjunction with God Matters.

Bible stories

Care must be taken with the use of the word 'story', which does not necessarily imply fiction. For example, 'the story of Jesus' birth' could more accurately be described as 'the Gospel account of Jesus' birth'.

Explanation of the theology

The explanations of the theology on the front sheets are based on the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The theological language has been adapted slightly in some cases, so that it can be more easily understood. The original words can be found in the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church at:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html

We commence each unit of work by initially looking at the learning outcome and sharing this with pupils. By using art, role-play, or devising questions for themselves, pupils are enabled to visualise the story. They can identify who is involved, what is happening and can speculate what might happen. Initial activities seek to identify an answer to the question: "What is the story?"

There are many other approaches to engaging pupils, other than those identified in the scheme, which could be used. At St John's creativity is an implicit part of our delivery of RE. We engage pupils through an interactive, hands on, exciting approach through:

- Music
- Role play
- Hot seating
- Art
- Drama
- See, think, wonder and other approaches that promote deeper thinking and personal reflection

All of the activities should be characterised by:

- Plenty of talk and use of talk partners;
- Probing and open-ended questioning;
- Opportunities for pupils to devise their own questions;
- Clear links between the stimuli and the learning intentions.

The main activities are designed both to answer the 'what' and the 'why' questions and to enable pupils to organise their thinking. The tools in the Thinking Skills Pack help pupils to go beneath the surface of RE concepts and of Scripture. They help them to place their thoughts into different categories, which enables connections to be made, as well as allowing them to evaluate, analyse and explore different points of view, compare, contrast and reach conclusions. This promotes deeper thinking.

Again, explore activities should be characterised by dialogue and by examining ideas and content from different perspectives.

Teaching and learning ideas – see Thinking skills pack at back of book and online.

Planning

Planning should develop from the Rationale and show a clear learning outcome. Planning should show a sequence of lessons with key questions and differentiation. Planning should clearly demonstrate content from AT1- Knowledge and Understanding about Religion and AT2- Reflection about the meaning of Religion (and its application to themselves). Planning is a working document for the teacher and should be used as such with annotations and adapted and changed as a result of ongoing assessment. There is no expectation to cover a complete God Matters unit. Teachers should be selective on what is appropriate for their children based on their knowledge of their pupils and in order to achieve the learning outcome.

Timetable for teaching the units

The following timetable has been agreed by the CAST RE Adviser and coordinators across the diocese.

Topic Dates For 2014-2015

Other Faiths are included in planning within the context of the whole unit. Time at the end of the year is used to consider what needs to be covered, finished or repeated.

Teaching time

10% of the Curriculum time is given to teaching of RE (this does not include acts of worship, or any other liturgical event).

Class 1 (Foundation/ Year 1)	4 x 30mins
Class 2 (Years 2/3)	2 x 50mins 1x30mins
Class 3 (Years 4/5/6)	1 X 1hr 20mins

RE Topics

Assessment

Creation	Start of term	3 weeks
Revelation	21 st September	4 Weeks
Other Faith Week	19 th October	1 week
	Half term	
Prayer, Feasts and Saints Focus on all saints, All souls, Remembrance etc.	2 nd November	1-2 weeks
Advent	16 th November	3 weeks
Christmas	7 th December	2 weeks
Term Two		
Feasts of Christmas - Epiphany	5 th January	1 week
Sacraments	11 th January	4 weeks
Sacraments Assessment Week	18 th January	1 Week
	Half Term	
Other Faith	22 nd February	1 week
Lent	29 th February	3 weeks
Holy Week	Last Week of Term	
Term Three		
Easter	11 th April	4 Weeks
Pentecost and Mission	9 th May	4 Weeks
	Half Term	
Prayer Feasts and Saints	22 nd June	2 Weeks
Other Faiths/Retreat days/	4 th July	Until the end of term

Topics to be assessed during 2015/16 are:

1) Sacraments

2) Lent, Easter or Pentecost and Mission

3) Revelation, Creation or Prayer, Feasts and Saints

Assessment is to focus upon the key driver words.

Monitoring

The RE coordinator monitors planning folders; Focal points/prayer tables; Acts of Worship; conferences children in summer term; observe lessons with Headteacher.

RE is a core subject and lessons in RE should be observed in equal measure with Mathematics and Literacy. It is therefore understood that every teacher will be observed at some point during each academic year.

Work scrutiny

Work scrutiny is carried out termly and involves looking at and assessing the quality of evidence gathered by the teacher which demonstrates a child's learning. This may take a number of forms:

- RE books, class books and any other evidence

RE Displays

The quality of display work at St John's reflects the Gospel values and the Christian ethos of the school.

- displays should have a positive effect on pupils' interest and motivation by celebrating the achievements of others;
- pupils and others respect and look after an environment that has a pleasant, orderly and cared for appearance, and one that the whole school has contributed to;
- displays should be related to the current or impending learning of pupils;
- displays should be labelled with key questions, often posed by the children and with key vocabulary and should be interactive and used by the children;

Our classroom displays are based upon a working wall principle. RE working walls should allow children to access prior learning, make links to what they already know and apply this to future learning.

Involvement of Parents

Parents are invited to Liturgies on special occasions such as Harvest, Nativity, Advent and St John the Baptist Day and Leavers' Liturgy.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the staff and Governors annually. The RE Governor visits the school regularly to monitor progress and meet with the RE Co-Ordinator. Each year the RE Co-Ordinators in CAST get together to highlight any areas of concern or change, this is then discussed with the whole teaching staff and agreed relevant action is taken. This process is supported by CAST's RE Adviser. The RE Co-Ordinator undertakes an annual RE trail which includes monitoring a lesson. following

the planning of the lesson through to the topic planning sheets, discussing with the teacher relevant teaching and learning points that may be raised.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment is presently done using the teacher's professional knowledge of the child's understanding through their class participation (oral responses) and written work of which children's books are evidence. Other evidence may be collected through class books and photographs of displays.

Policy reviewed annually

Next Review Date - Summer 17