

General Aims and Philosophy

Religious education and School Aims

At St. Joseph's our religion and faith permeates every aspect of the life of the school. While addressing curricular RE through timetabled sessions we also address the spiritual needs of the children in many other ways, such as through whole class discussion, through subjects such as PSHCE and Art and Liturgical prayer. As teachers and practitioners we aim to impart and nurture the Catholic faith, values and traditions to the children in our care. Our aims for the education of our children are expressed more fully in our mission statement, which says "Our School is a Family of Faith, Hope and Love".

Evangelisation, Catechesis and Religious Studies

We recognise that the faith backgrounds of our children vary and that they are at different stages of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. We therefore approach and deliver Religious Education in a way which meets the needs of every child.

School, Home, Parish

We aim to provide a secure, caring and positive community which values all children, staff, parents and parishioners:

- We foster a school environment which enables each child to grow in love for God, themselves and each other.
- We establish good relationships with home from the beginning of a child's life at the school and aim to strengthen this throughout the child's time with us. We involve parents in many events and projects and encourage them to participate in the religious life of the school.
- We recognise that our school is an integral part of the parish community and appreciate that priests and catechists must be involved in our R.E. programme. We are blessed to have our church building so close to our school and aim to incorporate ourselves into the life of the parish.

Religious Education and the Total Curriculum

We believe that cross curricular links are integral to a holistic and creative approach to Religious Education. Examples of this include:

Literacy	- speaking and listening: class discussions - drama: role-play and acting out events - poetry, prose: creating prayers
D&T	- making artefacts - making celebration cards
Art	- creating individual, group and whole class pieces - looking at art associated with other faiths
Music	- used for quiet reflection and celebration - looking at music from other faiths
History	- using timelines and collecting historic information - history of other faiths e.g. Judaism
Geography	- using maps to locate places in the Holy Land

- Science - studying nature and the world God made
- developing a sense of awe and wonder
- Philosophy - developing thinking and discussion skills
- LOtC / Forest School – working together, making artefacts,

Roles, functions and responsibilities

Responsibilities

The headteacher is ultimately responsible for the Religious Education of all our children in and the R.E. coordinator shares in this responsibility. Each teacher has the task of ensuring that the children in his or her class receive Religious Education appropriate to their age and ability levels. All teachers prepare their own class assemblies, whole school liturgical prayer and contribute to other services and celebrations throughout the year.

Communication

Staff members are provided with copies of the R.E. team's material for each terms' topics which are taken from The Way The Truth and The Life scheme. Staff meeting time is allocated to discussing planning and assessment, as and when necessary. We use Vines and Branches as our core scheme (some classes continue to use The Way, The Truth, The Life) with other resources to support, including CAFOD Universal Church Units, P4C resources, Lat Blaylock publications, Tenten etc.

Requisition

The R.E. coordinator has the responsibility of requisitioning and maintaining resources for Religious Education and for the religious life of the school.

Monitoring

As with other curriculum subjects, there is an assessment and monitoring process in place to include monitoring of planning, scrutiny of work in books and speaking with children. In addition to the Subject Leader, the governors take a proactive role in the monitoring of the subject delivery through the whole school monitoring and evaluation schedule.

Other Links

Parish Links

Sacramental preparation is a parish based programme that is supported by school.

Clergy, children, parents and other parishioners unite to celebrate the Mass together on feast days and various other occasions. They also meet together for various social functions throughout the year.

High School Liaison

Liaison with St. Nicholas is important throughout the primary years. The Chaplin, Mairie Gelling, supports our school with Retreat Day and sharing resources. To assist their transition to secondary education, Year 5 and 6 children visit St. Nicholas' High School for a variety of transition days where they experience different subjects. They are also invited to watch the school's drama productions and take part in a wide range of sporting events. There is also a comprehensive transition programme between the high school and ourselves that starts with links in Year 3 and includes retreat days and visits for Year 4 onwards.

Religious Education in the classroom

Religious Education Lessons

We take advantage of opportunities which arise during the normal school day to spread the Gospel message. The specific times for more structured religious teaching vary in accordance with the ages of our children. This is approximately one tenth of the weekly taught time for each class, from Nursery to Year 6.

Children are encouraged to value themselves as a unique beings, created and loved by God and showered with many different gifts.

We aim to develop in each child a knowledge and love of God and of His creation. Through this the children learn to care for and respect other people, animals and the environment.

Methodology

Religious Education is based on *Vines and Branches / The Way, The Truth and The Life* as our core scheme. The teaching styles employed in the classroom are varied and engaging, gaining depth and focus as the children grow in age and ability.

With their teachers and peer groups children explore various themes and relate them, through their own experience, to the Christian way of life. They may be engaged as a whole class, small group, or individually in discussion, drama, writings or artistic pursuits working at their own level of knowledge and understanding.

Extra-classroom activity

Community Links

The school is involved in the larger parish community in a number of ways – Masses and other liturgical celebrations, concerts, fairs, fireworks events, foodbank etc . During Lent and Advent and on family fast days the children are encouraged to make a small sacrifice in order to contribute to charities such as *CAFOD, The Catholic Children's Society and Mission Together*. Local charities such as *St. Luke's Hospice* also received financial support on occasions.

Mini-Vinnies

We have a well-established Mini-Vinnies group led by a teacher and teaching assistant team. The Mini-Vinnies co-ordinate a range of community projects including supporting the Parish Pensioner Christmas Lunch, carol singing, hamper making etc.