

St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy



Religious Education Policy

We grow and learn as a family in the footsteps of Jesus

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Diocesan Expectations

The Catholic school shares in every aspect of the Church's life, but in particular her duty to preach the Gospel by evangelisation and catechesis. Throughout the centuries, the Church has educated young people and adults as part of her life, handing on the Deposit of Faith and working for the common good of all people. The witness of faith in Jesus Christ lived in the Catholic way of life, by staff and pupils alike, is itself a teaching and learning experience.

In school, Religious Education is, in the first instance, formation in the Catholic faith:

Religious Education is central to the curriculum of the Catholic school and is at the heart of the philosophy of Catholic Education. Religious Education has developed in a way that reflects the particular identity of our Catholic schools in England and Wales. It teaches about the faith in the context of a school which proclaims the Gospel, and invites the individual to respond to the message of Christ. As the individual responds to this invitation, growth in faith and knowledge helps the pupil to respond to the call to holiness and understand the fullness of what it is to be human. For some, then, Religious Education will also be received as evangelisation and for some, catechesis.¹

Religious Education has its own content, methodology, assessment and culture. The broad areas it covers, which reflect the four constitutions of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and cover the teaching of the Church as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, are God's self-Revelation in Jesus Christ, the Church, celebration and worship, and life in Christ. As the core subject par excellence of the Catholic school, Religious Education should be accorded the same status and taught with the same rigour as the core subjects of the National Curriculum. It is open to inspection and assessment by public examination and at diocesan level. It is an important contributory factor to the passing on of the Deposit of Faith from one generation to the next.

Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Nottingham is required to teach, develop and resource Religious Education with the same commitment as any other core subject, because;

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and 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 are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.²

Accordingly, the following requirements apply to Religious Education in all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Nottingham:

- Whole school Religious Education is to provide for a lived faith experience through the celebration of Mass, other acts of worship, assemblies, retreats, charitable work and action for social justice. The Religious Education subject leader in primary schools and the Religious Education Department in secondary schools contribute to this whole school direction.

¹ | BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND & WALES, Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales, London 2012, p.3.

² 2 Ibid., p.6.

- Religious Education is to be resourced as a core subject and allocated 10% of teaching time in Key Stages 1-4 and at least 5% at Key Stage 5.
- The Religious Education curriculum is to be delivered in accordance with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales approved by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 2012 and any guidelines issued by the Apostolic See, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Diocese of Nottingham.
- The Come and See programme of study should be used in all primary schools.
- All primary schools are required to dedicate one week within the autumn term to the teaching of Judaism. In addition, primary schools are required to dedicate a further week in the summer term to the teaching of another religion, namely, Islam, Hinduism or Sikhism.

MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES

St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy were founded to pass on to the children the faith heritage of the local Catholic Community. Each child is valued as a unique individual, a child of God, made in the image of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In partnership with parents and parish and with God's grace, the school tries to discern and help the child to develop fully as a person with particular gifts and aptitudes. Guided and challenged by Gospel values, the school aims to provide a community in which the child will grow and experience the love of God, self and neighbour, fulfilling our school mission statement,

'We grow and learn as a family in the footsteps of Jesus.'

Our 4 school values are;

Trust
Compassion
Forgiveness
Peace

Our staff and pupils endeavour to live out our chosen values in all that we say and all that we do.

Aims of Religious Education

St. Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy acknowledges that Religious Education is a lifelong process and recognise that the primary years are significant in the lasting impression they make upon our children.

Religious Education in school is concerned with children understanding mankind's search for meaning, value and purpose in life. The religions of the World are classic expressions of this search and, for many people, provide the context within which the experience is to be understood. Through his or her understanding of this search, the child is helped towards a deeper awareness of their identity enabling him / her to grow and develop freely in a World of divergent beliefs and values.

Education is concerned with the development of understanding. Religious Education is concerned with the development of the understanding of religion as a significant area of human experience.

'Understanding' is used in a wide sense, being concerned with feeling and empathetic insight as well as an intellectual grasp of certain information. The child is not simply learning about religion, they are learning from it.

The Religious Education Programme

To fulfil our aims we use the '*Come and See*' programme of Religious Education. In accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops' Conference. The receive 2.5 hours of Religious Education each week. It integrates the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Catholic End of Year Expectations and the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Children explore the mystery of Faith through Scripture and Tradition. Links are made explicitly in planning documents to the resources and plans are adapted to meet the needs of the unique cohort. Lessons are very well resourced with both interactive stimuli, a variety of artefacts and making cross curricular links. There are three topics taught each term and 2 other 'faith' units; Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism. *Come and See* meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory.

Planning

Taking a whole school approach in using *Come and See*, we are confident that the breadth of the curriculum is being taught and there is good progression from year to year. There is a planning template for staff to use each topic. Please refer to the *Come and See* materials for more detail about planning and curriculum coverage.

The advantages of this approach are:

- Appropriate content for each group is ensured
- Planning and recording are easy
- Continuity and progression across the school are assured
- Communal celebrations are possible

Assessment and Record Keeping

Each teacher has the responsibility for maintaining records on the children in their class. Teacher judgements on attainment are carried out through an Assessment task three times a year focusing on a rolling programme of Attainment Targets and strands.

Assessments are regularly moderated by the RE Coordinator and by all staff during timetabled staff meetings. In addition to this RE work is moderated at Trust meetings and at Diocesan level with other RE Coordinators in the Nottingham Diocese. Regular advice from the diocesan Education Advisor is sought to assist with moderation. Attainment is tracked on the school's assessment tool, 'O' Track. The subject leader then analyses attainment and progress at whole class and group level. This information is then used to

inform action planning. Pupils' attainment in RE is reported formally to parents in the annual reports.

Home, School, Parish Links

We recognise the importance of parents as the child's first teacher and their role in faith development. Parents and staff do everything possible to work in close partnership. There are many opportunities for parents to engage in school life. Both schools seek, in partnership with parents and parish, to develop and nurture the Catholic faith of our children. We strive to bring pupils to a fuller understanding and knowledge of the Roman Catholic tradition.

On Holy Days of Obligation (where circumstances permit) the staff and pupils at St Augustine's will celebrate mass in the Parish church. Children across the school in all classes prepare and lead class liturgical services to which parents and members of the parish are invited to attend.

Children are prepared for Holy Communion in the parish. Christmas and Easter celebrations take place in the church in consultation with the parish. Our friends of the school (FOSA) are a groups of parents and carers who give generously of their time and raise sums of money for the good of all our children.

Our Statements to Live By are shared with parents and with the parish through newsletters.

Parents are:

- Given a warm welcome when they visit our school
- Given termly curriculum overviews which inform them of the topics covered in class, as well as ways they can support with their child's learning.
- Given an opportunity to give support / input with their child's RE Homework.
- Given regular newsletters.
- Given a verbal report on their child's RE development during Parents' Evening.
- Given a written report on their child's RE development at the end of the year.
- Given opportunities to be involved in all charity activities during the year for school or for the wider community.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school's provision of worship will be evaluated regularly through observation, parents, pupil and staff surveys and feedback both written and verbal, to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

The Religious Education Subject Leader

The first purpose of the RE subject leader's role is to help improve the quality of the teaching and learning that the pupils receive in Religious Education.

The subject leader is responsible for:

- Promoting the catholic ethos, mission statement and identity of our Catholic School
- Writing and keeping relevant documentation up to date
- Coordinating the teaching throughout the school by encouraging collaboration between year groups or key stages
- Being involved in the process of assessment, recording and reporting
- Monitoring the quality of teaching, the progression and continuity of Religious Education throughout the school
- Offering support and advice to colleagues including opportunities for CPD
- Identify resource requirements
- Maintaining a strong relationship between the school and the Diocese, and with the school's Diocesan advisor
- Maintaining the high status of worship within the school
- Completing the Religious Education action plan and using it to inform the School Improvement Plan
- Keeping resources well stored, catalogues and available
- Ensuring the Curriculum Directory is understood and being followed
- Reporting to the Governing Body on RE and the Catholic Life of the school including attainment in R.E.

Environment and Display

From the moment you enter St Augustine's CVA, the school environment says loudly and clearly that we are a Catholic school. There is a special area devoted to prayer and worship in our entrance area. Our school mission statement is clearly displayed as well as the current Statement to Live By. Each classroom has a prayer area in a prominent place in the classroom and a display dedicated to current learning in Religious Education. Within the school, religious displays, statues of saints and the Holy Family are evident. We are also developing prayer areas inside and outside where anyone may visit and sit and pray or enjoy silent contemplation.

Resources

Each class has an R.E. Prayer box with objects and fabrics suitable for all seasons of the liturgical year. Each class has a set of resources to support child led worship – Let Us Pray.

Each class has 'Come and See' planning resources and access to the bank of interactive resources. Missions Together resources are ordered and distributed during Lent and Advent each year. Travelling Nativity bags are used by all key stages in Advent and Lenten Journeys.

Holy Areas

Each class has a holy area for prayer focus, which should be in an area where all children can see it when they pray. The theme of the prayer focus should relate to the season of the liturgical year.

The holy area should feature a cloth reflecting the liturgical year or a feast day and some ritual objects. Cloths for the holy areas in each class reflecting the liturgical year are kept in each class.

Ritual objects may include pictures, icons, stones, bibles, flowers, bark, holy water, rosary, seashells or candles. Cloths and ritual objects are stored in each classroom in the Prayer box and are the responsibility of the class teacher and the children

Wider Community

We value and encourage involvement with the community. At the heart of a vibrant and caring community, St Augustine's close network of local partners help to drive exceptional outcomes for children. Parents are also invited to our special events such as masses, the Christmas Nativity, the Carol service and other performances. We hold special celebrations and assemblies annually to thank our partners.

Across the curriculum, we aim to deliver full engagement and learning for each child. As well as promoting cohesion, community and partner engagement enhances our children's progress, resilience and resourcefulness by facilitating:

- A curriculum that is constantly challenging and innovative
- A richer school environment
- Direct mentoring support
- A range of encounters with possible professions
- A learning culture giving the freedom to experience, experiment and discover

Spiritual, moral and Social Education

The Come and See programme encourages the children to think about their relationships and act responsibly. Children in all year groups have the opportunity to take on specific roles and leadership responsibilities within our school to develop their sense of community including helping with younger children at play times, Chaplaincy Team, library leaders, sports ambassadors and the school council.

Equal Opportunities

Religious Education cannot proceed in the assumption that all pupils will, or should, have positive religious convictions or commitments. St. Augustine's should however, foster the search for meaning, value and purpose since these are implied by the very concern to educate the whole person. It is therefore a legitimate part of the pupil's education that he / she should be encouraged to consider his / her own response to such issues. We give due regard to the Equality Act 2010 within our R.E. curriculum.

Feedback and Marking

Children should be given feedback and written work should be marked in accordance with the school's Feedback and Marking Policy. Teachers' written comments should be made in relation to the learning intentions. Key words must be corrected. Comments should encourage children to reflect, analyse and should be interactive.

Please also see

- Collective Worship Policy

APPENDIX I

Prayer Areas

Green, Red, White, Purple Table Cloths

Small Crucifix

Purple Candles

Blue Candles

White Candles

Glass Candle Holder

Matches

Large Battery operated Candle

Advent Wreath with 3 purple and 1 pink candle

Glass Beads

Book of Traditional prayers for Key Stage 1 and 3 including regular morning, lunchtime and home time prayers.

APPENDIX 2

Non Negotiables

Aspiring to excellent practice within RE

Classroom Environment

- Current Come and See display
- Driver words displayed and referred to
- The Big Questions displayed within the Classroom
- Updated Prayer focus area with reference to the liturgical year

RE Books

- Attractive front cover using 'footsteps' template.
- Mission statement on inside front cover
- KS1 – at least four pieces of work per topic
- KS2 – at least four to six pieces of work per topic
- Use of Learning Objectives / success criteria where appropriate
- Use of 'I can' statements within books
- EYFS – Class Learning Journal (record of coverage)

or individual R.E. books

- Use of AT2 to facilitate marking – reflect / wonder
- Examples of task which have been differentiated using levels of attainment
- Variety of tasks – writing styles, pictorial, cross topic, prayer etc

Assessment

- Termly Assessment Task
- Use of 'I can' statements and / or learning logs
- Targets / Big Questions within the books

Lessons

- Structure – prayer, main teach and reflection
- Evidence of pace and variety of activities
- Clear differentiation shown on planning and in delivery of lessons (refer to lesson observation sheet)
- Use of prayer and music
- Challenge and support