

ST MONICA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY (inc. Collective Worship) December 2022

"Strive to succeed in the presence of God"

MISSION STATEMENT

Together, as a Catholic Community, **Everyone** - children, parents, carers, staff & parish **Achieves** in their own unique way and strives to be **More** like Jesus.

RATIONALE

St Monica's Primary School is a Catholic Voluntary Aided School and exists, primarily, to provide a Catholic education to the children of the parish and surrounding area. Religious Education is therefore an integral, central and vital part of the life of the school.

- We believe that the beliefs and values studied in Catholic religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of the school. R.E. is not one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process.
- We believe that R.E. in a Catholic school is the comprehensive and systematic study of God, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, of his Church, of the central beliefs that Catholics hold and the basis for them, and the relationship between faith and life.
- We believe that Religious Education deepens and enriches children's understanding and living of their Catholic faith.
- We believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ invites all who follow its teaching to the fullness of life.
- We believe the Catholic school is a community where the Christian vision of the uniqueness of the human person is explored and expressed through R.E.

As a result, we aim:

- To support, develop and maintain the Catholic ethos of the school by living out Gospel values in a spirit of freedom and love.
- To develop a personal relationship with Jesus.
- To support the Christian life of the families of our children and maintain a family atmosphere where the children experience the love of God in the actions and attitudes of those around them.
- To help the children to understand that religion is not just for learning but for living.
- To foster an attitude of tolerance towards people of other faiths and beliefs and respect their religious practices.
- To work together with the clergy and the Parish team to support the children's religious development.

We strive to achieve these aims by:

Allocating 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education (excluding acts of collective worship). Through the programme, which we provide, we aim to lead children from the point in their spiritual development to which they have been brought by parents and others, when they begin at our school. We will do this through lessons which take account of the children's religious and educational needs and which have clearly set out learning intentions and objectives as set out in the 'Resource Framework for Religious Education in Catholic Schools in the Diocese of

Westminster'. This framework is an exemplar resource that models the linear teaching of content according to the Attainment Levels.

We provide opportunities for prayer, reflection and celebration, including those which lead from teaching the 'Resource Framework' units, those which are part of our daily routines and other forms of prayer, and also those which arise during the liturgical year.

Through the RE Programme children will learn the traditions, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith as an academic discipline, as well as about Christian living. The basis of this teaching comes directly from scripture, which is shared with and used by the children.

Children will be taught about the faiths of other groups in our community, from a Christian perspective, as links arise within the RE Programme. This will be taught in separate units, taking account of the recommendations about time set out in 'The framework for Religious Education in the Diocese of Westminster'.

Through the Resource Framework for Religious Education in Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Westminster we provide children with a systematic presentation of the Christian message and way of life at a level, which is appropriate to their stage of development.

In the daily life of our school, we want to show children and each other a way of living in the world according to the Christian 'Way'. We will try to share our vision of what it means in practice to live according to the Gospel values of love, respect, forgiveness and concern for others. Teachers and non-teaching staff, therefore and other adults who come to the school, including the Parish Priest, play a significant role in the way they support, extend and clarify the children's experience of faith and in their attitudes and reactions to situations and events.

There is a named RE Governor who visits the school termly to meet with the RE Subject Leader. They look at lessons, examples of children's work, displays and attainment data. This governor is then able to report back to the Governing Body. A report on the Catholic Life of the school - acts of worship and religious trips and visitors, is reported termly to the Governing Body.

Home, School, Parish Links

There are very close links between the school and St Monica's Parish. The parish clergy and youth worker are encouraged to visit the school and liaise closely with us and they are invited to participate in all celebrations and services. The Assistant priest visits weekly. Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion are parish based and the school supports the clergy with this.

Parents are of paramount importance in the education of their children in the faith. We inform the parents of the RE topics in the half-termly curriculum newsletter. Mrs Baptiste's weekly letter also includes information about this week's assemblies. They are also invited to class assemblies, and where appropriate to liturgies and celebrations. Every class has a Prayer Journal which is sent home with each child throughout the year. Families add their own prayers and this is shared with the rest of the class.

Collective Worship - Prayer, Celebration and Liturgy

St Monica's places great importance on the prayer life of the school. During their time here, children are introduced to many forms of prayer, including formal and spontaneous. The day is punctuated with prayers, with formal prayers e.g. beginning and end of the day and grace before meals, as well as informal prayers when children are encouraged to talk to God in their own way. The children are becoming more experienced at planning and leading their peers in class acts of worship.

All junior classes celebrate one class Mass each year. Year 3, 4 and 5 will attend Mass at St Monica's Church once during the year. There are also opportunities for children to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation or to be part of a Reconciliation Service (depending upon age) during Advent and Lent. Infant classes have a number of non-Eucharistic celebrations and will visit St Monica's Church once each year. There are whole school Masses on significant times of the year

and on Holy days of Obligation, and opportunities for processions and Benediction in school. In years 4, 5 and 6, children take part in a 'retreat' day of reflection and prayer. During October and May, the Rosary is said before school at the front entrance. Although led by a member of the school staff, the Chaplaincy Team are encouraged to lead the prayers. Parents and children are invited to take an active part in this prayer each morning. Foundation Stage (FS) children are given a gift of Rosary beads in October, to encourage them to join in the prayer life of the school. In May, each FS child is given a Miraculous Medal. When possible, the school takes part in larger Diocesan celebrations, such as the Advent Service at Westminster Cathedral.

Special celebrations are held regularly throughout the year for topics such as Harvest Festival, Mothering Sunday etc.

Daily assemblies, which all have a collective act of worship, are usually led by members of the management team. Each Class will lead one assembly each year, and the children will perform for the school and their parents. These assemblies include an act of collective worship. Other staff are required to lead an act of worship once during the course of the year.

Conclusion:

Through our R.E. programme, we aim to remain true to the aims of our Mission Statement in which we see the educational process not simply as a human activity, but as a genuine Christian journey on which we strive to be more like Jesus every day.

This policy is reviewed as part of the Governing Body Policy Review Cycle