



St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

At the core of our Policy for Religious Education is our School Mission Statement



***WE** are a Catholic School and all our teaching reflects our Christian faith.*

***WE** recognise the needs and value the contribution of each member of our school community.*

***WE** encourage children to grow spiritually, socially and academically and to show respect for each other and the world in which we live.*

***WE** seek to provide a high standard of education within a caring, family environment.*

***WE** aim to develop good habits of work within a disciplined atmosphere.*

***WE** welcome the active involvement of parents, Governors and friends in the daily life of the school.*

The R.E. Policy at St. Thomas More School drives the content of the PSHE policies including Sex Education.

1. Aims of Religious Education

The primary purpose of Religious Education is to come to know and understand God's revelation which is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school is 'a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation.' In the person of Christ, the deepest meaning of what it is to be human — that we are created by God and through the Holy Spirit united with Christ in his Incarnation — is discovered. This revelation is known through the scriptures and the tradition of the Church as taught by the Magisterium. Religious Education helps the pupil to know and experience the meaning of this revelation in his or her own life and the life of the community which is the Church. Hence 'the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.'

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.

The relationship between Religious Education and Catechesis is one of distinction and complementarity. What confers on Religious Education in schools its proper evangelizing character is the fact that it is called to penetrate a particular area of culture and to relate to other areas of knowledge. Religious Education in schools sows the dynamic seed of the Gospel and seeks to 'keep in touch with the other elements of the pupil's knowledge and education; thus the Gospel will impregnate the mentality of the students in the field of their learning, and the harmonization of their culture will be achieved in the light of faith.'

It is necessary, therefore, that Religious Education in schools be regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge. However, it should not simply be regarded as one subject among many, but should be the key element in an inter-disciplinary dialogue.

At St Thomas More School we believe that our aims in RE should:

- Take into account the Catholic nature of the school
- Be in line with Diocesan policy and guidelines
- Be realistic and achievable
- Be known and supported by all
- Be suited to the age and development of the pupils
- Be sensitive to the religious background and experience of pupils and families and to other faith traditions
- Encompass and include all pupils in the school and class
- Reflect cross-curricular links where possible
- Be reviewed and evaluated regularly by all concerned

More specifically our aims are:

- To continue developing in the children a knowledge and love of God and Jesus Christ
- To encourage a love of others
- To give the children the opportunity to experience the love of God and Jesus Christ in their lives
- To develop an awareness of their uniqueness and value as individuals
- To encourage an appreciation of the wonders of creation
- To provide the children with occasions and opportunities to experience love, care, concern, co-operation, respect, trust, honesty and truthfulness
- To provide, as a school community, an example of Christian witness and, through this, reverence for God and respect for each other
- To develop opportunities for contemplation, reflection and the growth of a personal prayer life
- To help the children to explore the beliefs, values, way of life of the Catholic tradition - the origins of the Faith, most specifically Jesus Christ, the Bible, the Liturgical Year, the Mass, Sacraments, traditional prayers, the lives of the saints and other people who have made a difference in the world because of their faith
- To foster links with the children's families to encourage commitment to the Catholic faith

Children should be able to:

- Work within a variety of learning situations - individual, group, class

- Develop ways of thinking, feeling, acting which will lead them to be reflective, open, enquiring

In this way they begin a process which will lead to a genuine lasting understanding and provide a basis in childhood for the mature commitment of faith in adult life.

2. Content of the Religious Education Curriculum

The content for RE is provided in the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools (2012) which is itself based on the Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The Curriculum Directory distinguishes four principal Areas for Study:

Area of Study	Content
Revelation	God's Self-Revelation
Church	Communion of life in Christ
Celebration	Living the Christian Mystery in worship and prayer
Life in Christ	The search for holiness and truth

The scheme used to deliver the content of the Curriculum Directory is 'Come and See.' Christ is at the heart of the programme. 'Come and See' is an invitation to exploration and a promise of life for everyone. The invitation is open to all. In response to the question; 'where do you live?' which was asked by the disciples, Jesus invited them to; 'Come and See.' (John 1:39) The disciples went with Jesus 'and spent the rest of that day with him.'

The children are helped to understand all that He means to us and how we live as his followers. 'Come and See' is supplemented, however, by other materials. The resources in the school are continually up-dated and extended.

Come and See is planned in themes:

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Domestic Church	Local Church	Universal Church
Baptism/Confirmation	Eucharist	Reconciliation
Advent / Christmas	Lent / Easter	Pentecost

These themes are explored through topics across the school. Three topics, one from each theme are planned each term.

The topics are:

THEMES & TOPICS	EARLY YEARS 1 & 2	YEAR 1 & FS 1	YEAR 2 & FS 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
Domestic church family	Myself God knows and loves each one	Families God's love and care for every family	Beginnings God at every beginning	Homes God's dream for every family	People The family of God in Scripture	Ourselves Created in the image & likeness of God	Loving God who never stops loving
Baptism/confirmation belonging	Welcome Baptism; a welcome to God's family	Belonging Baptism an invitation to belong to God's family	Signs & symbols Signs & symbols in Baptism	Promises Promises made at Baptism	Called Confirmation: a call to witness	Life choices Marriage commitment and service	Vocation & commitment The vocation of priesthood and religious life
Advent/Christmas loving	Birthday Looking forward to Jesus' birthday	Waiting Advent a time to look forward to Christmas	Preparations Advent; preparing to celebrate Christmas	Visitors Advent: waiting for the coming of Jesus	Gift God's gift of love & friendship in Jesus	Hope Advent; waiting in joyful hope for Jesus; the promised one	Expectations Jesus born to show God to the world
Local church community	Celebrating People celebrate in Church	Special people People in the parish family	Books The books used in Church	Journeys Christian family's journey with Jesus	Community Life in the local Christian community: ministries in the parish	Mission Continuing Jesus' mission in diocese [ecumenism]	Sources The Bible, the special book for the Church
Eucharist relating	Gathering The parish family gathers to celebrate Eucharist	Meals Mass; Jesus' special meal	Thanksgiving Mass a special time for saying thank you to God for everything, especially Jesus	Listening & sharing Jesus gives himself to us in a special way	Giving & receiving Living in communion	Memorial sacrifice The Eucharist the living memorial of Jesus' sacrifice	Unity Eucharist enables people to live in communion.
Lent/Easter giving	Growing Looking forward to Easter	Change Lent a time for change	Opportunities Lent; an opportunity to start anew in order to celebrate Jesus' new life	Giving all Lent a time to remember Jesus' total giving	Self discipline Celebrating growth to new life	Sacrifice Lent a time of aligning with the sacrifice already made by Jesus	Death & new life Celebrating Jesus' death & resurrection
Pentecost serving	Good News Passing on the Good news of Jesus	Holidays & holydays Pentecost: feast of the Holy Spirit	Spread the word Pentecost a time to spread the Good News	Energy Gifts of the Holy Spirit	New life To hear & live the Easter message	Transformation Celebration of the Spirit's transforming power	Witnesses The Holy Spirit enables people to become witnesses
Reconciliation Inter-relating	Friends Friends of Jesus	Being sorry God helps us to choose well Sacrament of Reconciliation	Rules Reasons for rules in the Christian family Sacrament of Reconciliation	Choices The importance of examination of conscience Sacrament of Reconciliation	Building bridges Admitting wrong, being reconciled with God and each other Sacrament of Reconciliation	Freedom & responsibility Commandments enable Christians to be free & responsible	Healing Sacrament of the Sick
Universal Church world	Our world God's wonderful world	Neighbours Neighbours share God's world	Treasures God's treasure; the world	Special places Holy places for Jesus & the Christian	God's people Different saints show people what God is like	Stewardship The Church is called to the stewardship of Creation	Common good Work of the worldwide Christian family

Each topic has three elements:

		Time allocation
Explore	This is the introduction to the topic where the children's life experience is explored, the questions it raises are wondered at, shared, investigated and their significance reflected upon.	25%
Reveal	This is the heart of the programme where knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith is revealed through the Word, in Scripture, Tradition, doctrine, prayers, rites and Christian living.	50%
Respond	This is where the learning is assimilated, responded to in daily life.	25%

Judaism and Islam are taught for one week each during each year.

3. Curriculum Time Allocation

10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This does not include Collective Worship.

4. Liturgical Year

The Curriculum follows the Liturgical year and through this children are introduced to the lives of the saints and the main cycles of the Church Year.

In particular the school's patron saints, St. Thomas More, St. Peter, St. Theresa, St. Bernadette and St. Francis are studied and referred to frequently throughout the school year.

5. Prayer

Children use the school prayer book throughout their time at St Thomas More School. Children in Key Stage 2 have their own copy and are encouraged to fill in their own personal details, including dates of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, when they take part in an assembly and when they read at Mass. Prayers are said in each class at the beginning and end of each day and before lunch. Children are encouraged to write and say their own prayers. Classes contribute to the School Prayer of the Week.

6. Assessment, Reporting and Recording

Teachers observe, assess and record, knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes which have been taught and learned in R.E. each term. Assessment is made with reference to the Statements of Attainment in R.E. Annual reports to parents reflect assessments made against the levels associated with these targets.

The statements are:

Attainment Target 1	Learning about Religion
Attainment Target 2	Learning from Religion
Attainment Target 3	Evaluating and Analysing learning

Assessment of standards is carried out according to Diocesan guidelines using the criteria set out in Levels of Attainment in RE agreed by Bishops' Conference.

7. Inclusion

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme.

8. Home, School, Parish Links

The school sees itself as being in equal partnership with home and parish. It is important that all partners realise that they cannot exist in isolation and cannot function effectively without the support and co-operation of the others. Whenever possible, parents are invited to join the Clergy and the children in celebrating Mass, assemblies, and class celebrations.

During the year classes may visit Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Church and St. Mary's C of E Church in Saffron Walden and once per year there is a whole school celebration at St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Stansted.

School

As well as following the R E programme, the children take part in school and class assemblies, Feast day masses, Penitential Services and Christmas and Easter Celebrations. Parent and parishioners are invited to those celebrations where appropriate. The school joins with others in the community to encourage Christian links with other denominations such as 'Spirit of Christmas,' a celebration with other schools in the town held in St. Mary's Church. Year 5 or 6 join with other schools at the Christmas, Easter and 'Moving On' Event at the Baptist Church. Our children are encouraged to join VBS during the school holidays.

A welcome assembly and Mass is celebrated each September to welcome children and staff who are new to the school.

A Leavers' Mass is celebrated each July for those children moving into secondary education and for staff who are retiring or changing jobs.

Parish

The majority of the pupils come from the parishes of Saffron Walden, Stansted, Thaxted and Bardfield, while other children are from smaller parishes across and from outside the catchment area. We welcome the parish priests into our school to celebrate mass and to speak to the children in their classes.

The parishes are responsible for the sacramental programme, though the school supports this through its RE scheme and the school ethos. In particular there are strong links in the Year 3 curriculum as this is the usual age when children receive their First Holy Communion. The school joins with the local SVP to celebrate Harvest.

Home

Parents are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their children, and therefore must be recognised as the primary and principle educators but in this primary task, parents need the subsidiary help of civil society and other institutions. The family is 'the primary, but not the only and exclusive educating community'. Among those who cooperate in the task of education, the Catholic school assists in the delivery of a programme of learning in Religious Education appropriate to the age and particular learning needs of the pupil.

Special Note

Non-Catholic children take part in all the religious activities in the school. Any special religious event in the life of a non-catholic child is also celebrated. At St Thomas More School we value the richness offered to us by children and staff of other Christian denominations and other faiths.