



St Alban's

Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Member of St Clare's Catholic Multi Academy Trust, Diocese of Hallam

Let God's love shine in our lives as we grow and learn together

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Approved by:	Local Academy Committee	Date:
Last reviewed on:	17 th September 2024	
Next review due by:	September 2025	

Context

St Alban's is an average sized Catholic Primary and Nursery School, a member of St Clare CMAT, Diocese of Hallam and works closely with the Catholic Dearne Valley Family of Schools as well as the Sheffield Catholic Schools who are part of St Clare Trust. Our mission as a Catholic school is to create and develop a community centred upon the teaching of Jesus Christ where all individuals are enabled to reach their full potential in all elements of their lives. Our age range is 2 to 11 with 237 on roll, 187 FTE R – Y6. St Alban's Nursery opened in September 2021, and is led by teachers and experienced qualified Early Years practitioners and has continued to grow in numbers and extended to meet the Government Childcare reforms of 15 hours for 2 year olds for working families. St Alban's serves the local parishes of St Alban's Catholic Church of Denaby and Conisbrough and Blessed English Martyrs, Mexborough all of which are in the city of Doncaster. 75% of our children come from families in the 10% most deprived in the country and is one of the 10 most deprived schools in Doncaster with a changing profile of number of Catholics attending, currently 52% Christians on roll. In recent years, there have been children with more complex needs attending. St Alban's has 41% Pupil Premium children and a higher than average proportion of children with SEN at 35%, most of whom have speech, language and communication (63%) and/or social, emotional and mental health (27%) needs. 44% of children within our current Reception class have significant and complex needs, mainly ASD. Most children at St Alban's are of White British heritage, with a lower than average proportion of children with EAL at 3.23%. St Alban's has lower than national levels of stability and since January 2021 there has been over 40% increase in the number on roll and increasing mobility factors. COVID significantly impacted on attendance and resulted in 27.8% children persistently absent in 21/22 with a 91.9% attendance rate in 21/22. During the school year 22/23, attendance improved significantly and higher than the national primary rate reaching 94.03%, an increase of 2.13% on 21/22 and a reduction to 19.6% persistent absentees. In May 2024, mid-year attendance was at 95.2% and persistent absenteeism 15.5% demonstrating the schools continuous attempt to increase attendance and reduce persistent absence over time.

Introduction

Religious Education Policy

As a Catholic school we are deeply committed to developing and enhancing the talents and potential of each child by providing an ethos that reflects Gospel values and enables each one to grow in their faith.

We understand that all children have their own unique relationship with God, for some this has been nurtured and developed within the home, whilst others receive their first awareness of the Church community at school.

For all our children the religious teaching will be the foundation of the entire educational process, and the beliefs and values studied will inspire and draw together every aspect of our school community.

Aims of the Religious Education Curriculum at St Alban's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

As a Catholic School we aim to work closely with the home and parish to create an atmosphere where, through teaching and example, our children will be helped to enter into a loving relationship with God our Father, Jesus and with each other as members of God's family and so continue to lay foundations of the Catholic faith.

Intent of the Religious Education Curriculum

We aim, through our teaching, to show the relationship between life and faith. We shall try to achieve this through;

- Exploring the Mystery of God and His creation
- Sharing the life and teaching of Jesus Christ
- Promoting knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life
- Fostering a sense of community where each person is respected valued and encouraged to feel
- confident and supported in their 'faith journey'
- Developing an awareness and appreciation of the gift of faith to which they may respond positively
- within their daily life
- Developing skills of thinking critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically so that they are able to:

- o respect and value the views of others
- o appreciate the uniqueness and sacredness of each individual
- o develop a sense of commitment and service
- o accept the responsibilities and challenges of living in a multicultural and multi-faith society

We aim to enhance the children's spiritual development through:

- the Mission Statement, SMSC, assemblies and reinforcing positive behaviour – we will help the children to develop a respect for themselves and others
- engendering a sense of empathy with others through links with other schools in the developing world and through fund raising
- creating an environment of trust, care and compassion
- enhancing the children's appreciation for truth, love, goodness and wonder through the delivery of the whole curriculum in our Catholic school
- seeking to help the children to understand how the impact of their feelings and emotions affects their behaviour and impacts on the feelings and emotions of others
- the Behaviour Policy and Anti Bullying Policy, which provide a clear moral code

that is promoted consistently throughout the school and is reinforced through classroom rules and acceptable playground behaviour

- praise and reward for good behaviour and acts of kindness
- reinforcing the school's values through whole school and classroom displays
- 'The outcome of Religious Education is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. (Religious Education in Catholic Schools, para. 4, Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2000).

Implementation of the Religious Education Curriculum

Teaching and Learning

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in Religious Education, basing our lessons on the 'Come and See' programme of religious study.

Curriculum time allocation:

In line with Bishops' Conference recommendations, 10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This does not include Collective Worship.

Programme of Study:

To fulfil the above aims and to address the four areas of study outlined in the Curriculum Directory – Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ – the Come and See programme is used as recommended by the Diocese of Hallam.

In all aspects of their teaching, the staff remain aware of their responsibility to deepen their own faith and be good 'role models'. Their personal response to faith permeates all aspects of their teaching in every area of the curriculum.

This means in Religious Education we are not just teaching a curriculum subject but also a living faith, which we are encouraging our children to share in.

Planning

There are nine topics to be covered each year and each topic lasts for four weeks, there are also two multi-faith topics each year, each lasting a week.

Medium term planning, taken from 'Come and See', is the responsibility of each teacher and incorporates the learning objectives outlined in the scheme for each topic. As in other curricular areas, Short-Term planning is also the responsibility of each class teacher who will:

- allocate time for each learning outcome to be achieved
- select appropriate activities for the whole class or groups of children
- indicate the focus and method of assessment

Mastery approach to teaching

As with all other areas of the curriculum, the purpose of Mastery in Religious Education is:

- to enable children to succeed in the set task or activity;
- to challenge children beyond their comfort zone of knowledge, understanding and skills;
- to enable children to recognise their achievements and celebrate these.

Golden tickets are used in children's RE books, as they are in all other curriculum subjects. The tickets highlight the three stages of Mastery – skills, fluency and deepening. The Golden Tickets are also an acknowledgement to the child's success within the lesson - by both class teacher, pupil and learning partner.

Pupils with Special Needs & Equal Opportunities.

At St. Alban's, the curriculum is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children. If a child is identified as having a special need, we do all we can to meet these individual needs in accordance with current school policy which follows the guidance contained in the SEND Code of Practice.

Assessment

Assessment is focused by the overall aims and objectives of Religious Education.

"... The objective of Religious Education is to include analysis and reflection, critical appreciation of sources and examples, and a real sense of progression through the different stages of education". Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, January 2000. Assessment provides pupils and teachers with a clear understanding of pupils' attainment, that is their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do improve. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith. Assessment of RE is both formal and informal. Assessment is on-going throughout every topic and one topic each term is chosen for assessment to refer to for evidence of data to input onto the school's assessment system.

Assessment of RE may take the form of:

- general observation of children engaged in classroom tasks and activities
- observation of contributions made to classroom displays
- review of end of task, activity or lesson
- conversations with individuals or groups
- marking of more formal written work

The standards for Primary Religious Education are:

- Knowledge and understanding (learning about)
 - Developing knowledge and understanding
 - Making links and connections
 - Historical development
 - Religious and specialist vocabulary
 - Engagement and Response (learning from)
 - Meaning and purpose
 - Beliefs and value
 - Analysis and Evaluation
 - Use of sources as evidence
 - Construct arguments
 - Make judgements

- Recognise diversity

End of Year Expectations

Children are assessed against end of year expectations appropriate for their year group. Each child's progress and attainment is recorded each term and the terms topics are evaluated to inform future planning. At the end of the year, each pupil's attainment is recorded in order to inform future provision and planning.

The purpose of the assessment is to support children's learning by offering an account of educational progression. They will help teachers to make accurate judgements on pupil's achievement, to sum up what pupils have learned so far and to identify how pupils can make the next step in learning. They will also contribute to the quality of Religious Education provision within the school.

Recording

Recording provides evidence of achievement. This may take many forms:

- notes from observations
- written comments on children's work
- visual evidence –photographs, displays, videos or recording of drama or celebrations;
- pupil "I can..." sheets – one for every unit taught. These are included in every child's RE book, both teacher and pupil complete with the ticking system used across the school
- pupils' self-assessment

Reporting

There are four dimensions to reporting in Religious Education. Reporting:

- provides feedback to pupils on their achievement and progress
- informs colleagues of the achievement of individual pupils and the areas studied by a class and year group
- informs parents of the progress and achievement of their children
- informs parents, governors, parish and external agencies of the content and quality of Religious Education being provided and the achievements and progress of the pupils

Monitoring

At St. Alban's Catholic Primary School monitoring is carried out by talking to the children, looking at their books, scrutinising planning, RE displays and lesson observations. The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in Religious Education. The subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching and for being informed about current developments in the subject.

Links with home, school and parish

The Parish Priest visits the school and celebrates Whole School Mass, Class Masses and Liturgies with the children and staff on Holy days of obligation and at other significant times during the school year. Masses take place both at our Parish church, within school and also in the outdoor areas of our school. Members of the parish are invited to all of these events. St. Albans advertises and supports parish events. There is strong links with the parish and other local organisation, including Cafod, local Food Banks and St Vincent De Paul Society (Minnie Vinnies). Together, we fundraise for those in need.

Role of the Subject Leader

Each term the subject leader and the SLT will complete a RE book scrutiny to identify differentiation, progress and attainment. Staff are given the opportunity to come together and moderate samples of work from each class, thus giving all teachers the opportunity to develop their confidence and expertise in assessing RE. Examples of pupils' work and books are shared at a Deanery meeting to be moderated by other RE co-ordinators. The SLT and subject leader also observes the teaching of RE in classes either through formal observations or through learning walks. This is followed by a discussion between the teacher and the subject leader, noting the strengths and areas for development.

Collective worship

Whole school assemblies take place on Monday and Friday. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays classes worship in classrooms. We use "Word of the Week" as well as the Gospel reading as points of reflection and worship. All classes begin and end the day with prayers and all classes say grace before and after lunch.

Please see the Collective Worship Policy for more information