

Religious Education

Religious Education lies at the heart of the curriculum and school life.

"Jesus is at the heart of our school"

We aim to teach the children and each other, by example, in the daily life of the school. We pray together, teaching both specific school prayers and how to pray spontaneously and peacefully. We gather together for whole school worship each week for the "Statements to Live by" and we celebrate class liturgies and worships each week in our own classes. We gather together for Hymnal praise on a Thursday and a celebration and award assembly which is well attended by friends and family every Friday.

Through Religious Education, worships and liturgies we teach concepts, knowledge of the scriptures, the church and moral attitudes. We encourage home, school and parish links.

We welcome the visits of the parish priest, Father Dan, from St Joseph and St Francis Xavier Church and his involvement in the life of the school. We work collaboratively with the parish of St Joseph and St Francis Xavier in preparations of the children in Year 3 for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

We promote the children's awareness of the local and wider communities by encouraging them to participate in charitable activities and fund raising.

Religious Education is the "core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school (Pope St John Paul II). Placing RE at the core of the curriculum in Catholic schools helps the school to fulfil its mission to educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of their existence." (Catholic Education Service)

"Learning about the religion and cultures of those who do not share the Catholic faith is one of the ways in which Catholic schools embody the call to love one's neighbour. It prepares the pupils in our Catholic schools for life in modern Britain, giving them an understanding of the beliefs of others." (Catholic Education Service)

St Mary's R.C. Primary School acknowledges that Religious Education is a lifelong process and recognises 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.

To fulfil our aims we use the Come and See programme of Religious Education as recommended by the Diocese of Middlesbrough. In accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops' Conference the children at St Mary's receive 2.5 hours of Religious Education each week. It integrates the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Levels of Attainment 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 and Judaism. Come and See meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. There is a selection of ritual objects, books, CDs and other resources within in school that enrich the children's learning within Religious Education.

'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 rather it should engage in interdisciplinary dialogue. Religious Education in schools underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational and catechetical activity of the whole school. (Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the human search for meaning, God's initiative in Revelation who comes to meet us and our response of faith. This pattern guides the structure of the programme and informs the process of each topic, opened up through; Explore, Reveal and Respond.

Explore

The teacher helps the children to begin to look at and focus on the experience within their own lives - concerning themselves, their relationships and their world. In this way the children are led to a deeper understanding, clearer vision and the discovery of significance and value of the experiential events of everyday life.

Explore will take one week of Religious Education time to complete.

Reveal

Reveal is the heart of the process. The teacher and the children together discover the Christian understanding of the mystery of the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They explore the mystery of human life as revealed in the person, life and gospel of Jesus Christ Christians. It will involve learning about Scripture, the teaching of the Church, prayers, rites, psalms, hymns and other expressions of Christian faith and the lives of outstanding Christians.

Reveal will take two weeks of Religious Education time to complete.

Respond

Remember is the first part of this section. The children will respond by remembering and celebrating all that they have learnt.

Rejoice is the second part of the section. There will be the opportunity to plan and take part in a celebration.

Renew, the teacher helps each child to make an individual response, to hold on to and make their own, what they have understood of the topic.

Respond will take one week of Religious Education time to complete.