

Holy Family School

Religious Education Policy

Our Mission Statement

Our catholic school sets out to provide an education that is God centred. It is a community where everyone is valued, loved and respected by each other.

Our children are encouraged to give of their best in all they do, to understand their beliefs and to work and play happily together. They are further encouraged to express their god given talents and to show qualities of honesty, tolerance, forgiveness, caring and patience.

We value our place in the parish and aim to maintain our strong partnerships with parents, governors and the wider community.

We aim to work as a team in a partnership that is truly supportive and understanding of everyone's needs.

We seek to follow God's guidance of loving and caring for each other in the way He taught us and to uphold our school name, living each day as one happy and Holy Family.

Introduction

This policy is a revision of the Religious Education Policy drawn up in March 2008.

The policy has been arrived at through close consultation with staff at all levels and by seeking advice and guidance from outside agencies. It has been developed with the following aims and philosophies very much in mind.

The Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement is central to the life of the school. It is displayed in all rooms.

All the children are encouraged to think of ways in which they can strive to live out the Mission Statement.

The Importance of the Role of Parents in Religious Education

Holy Family School recognises the central role parents have in the religious education of their children. As the Statement of the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales on Religious Education in Catholic Schools '2000' states, "The first educators in the faith are parents. It is they, above all others, who establish in their children the first sensitivity and responsiveness to the presence of God, to the practice of prayer and to the patterns of life in the community of faith, the parish. By their example in the home and in the participation in the Mass and the other sacraments the foundations of a life-long faith and discipleship in their children are laid down."

Our Catholic School

It is in the spirit of the above statement that our school works. We see Holy Family School in the partnership with the home and the parish communities to which our children belong. As the General Directory for Catechesis affirms, "This partnership between home and parish is enhanced by the role of the Catholic school in which the educational mission of the church finds a particular and important expression." This 'educational mission' is our central role.

The Aims of Religious Education at our School

In keeping with our Mission Statement, we aim to provide a Religious Education (RE) that attends to the needs of every pupil. Within this environment we believe that:

“...Religious Education is not one subject amongst many but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life.”
(Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1988)

“For the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings.” (*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium 1998*)

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Policy on Personal, Social, Health Education (P.S.H.E.)

Our Mission Statement is central to the life of our school. All members of the school community are encouraged to think of ways in which they can strive to live out the Mission Statement in their everyday lives

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

Our aim is to create a happy, caring, stable environment which is truly Catholic and based on the life and teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church.

To enable all members of the school community to understand and to live our mission statement: "to follow God's guidance of loving and caring for each other in the way He taught us."

To enable each child to deepen his/her relationship with God and to further his/her understanding of the Faith through R.E. teaching, prayer, reflection and celebration.

To enable each child to develop a sense of moral and social responsibility supporting and caring for those close to them and extending to the wider community.

To help each child to feel valued and respected for his/her contribution to school life, where success is celebrated and difficulties and problems talked through and prayed through.

Our Approach to Religious Education at Holy Family School

We aim to provide an environment where every child feels secure. We teach the children how to respect and value each other as individuals and how to care for one another so they help to foster a calm, happy and caring community.

We discuss our attitudes and behaviour and how they affect the well being of other members of our school community.

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 assemblies (see assembly planner) and to celebrate the Liturgy on a number of occasions each term.

Through R.E., assemblies and liturgies we teach concepts, knowledge of the scriptures, the church and moral attitudes.

We follow the Religious Education Programme – ‘Come and See’.

We encourage home, school and parish links.

We welcome the visits of the parish priest of The Holy Family and clergy and their involvement in the life of the school.

We work collaboratively with the parish of The Holy Family, Addlestone 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.

We acknowledge that everyone is equal in the sight of God and follow a policy of equal opportunities.

We promote the Catholic identity of the School through the Governor’s Admission Policy.

The Religious Education Programme at the School

The RE Curriculum is delivered primarily through the programme 'Come and See'

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.*'

Central to the programme are three basic human questions and the three Christian beliefs that are the Church's response in faith.

Where do I come from? Life – Creation

Who am I? Dignity – Incarnation

Why am I here? Purpose – Redemption

In *Come and See* these big questions are considered in the light of the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church, as expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Come and See is developed through three themes based on the above documents of the Second Vatican Council, which are gradually explored each time at greater depths. They are Church, Sacrament and Christian living.

'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.

Multifaith Programme

As part of the 'Come and See' R.E. programme all children will study for two weeks of the year, Judaism and one other World Religion.

Year 1 and Year 4 Hinduism

Year 2 and Year 5 Islam

Year 3 and Year 6 Sikhism

This enables the children to have an understanding of what life is like for a child of another faith by the time they leave us.

RSE (Relationships and Sex Education)

In line with Diocesan guidance, the 'Journey in Love' programme is used to deliver RSE (Relationships and Sex Education)

RE in the school timetable

Following the advice of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales and the Diocesan R.E. Advisor, the school spends 10% of the teaching week on Religious Education. That is Key Stage One 2 ¼ hours and at Key Stage Two 2 ½ hours, which does not include Collective Worship.

Teaching Methods Used in the Teaching of R.E. at the School

At Holy Family School the children have the opportunity to be taught in different ways.

- a) Whole class discussion and teaching.
- b) Group discussion and feedback.
- c) Differentiated activities according to abilities.
- d) Partner work.
- e) Individual research and study.

Teachers are encouraged to be as varied and as creative as possible in the methods they use in the teaching of R.E.

Marking of Work

Each class teacher is responsible for the marking of recorded work in R.E. books.

The marking is done in accordance with the school guidelines (see Marking Policy).

The marking of R.E. must be seen in the light of the children's response to the subject, to the learning objective given at the beginning of each element of the 'Come and See' theme, and their use and remembering of the key words give with each theme.

Developmental marking is central to our marking policy.

Assessment

It is neither possible nor appropriate to attempt to assess the children's religious commitment, but assessment can be made in the pupil's knowledge, understanding and skills.

The teachers complete an assessment of the children's attainment one topic per term using the Diocesan framework. This makes reference to the National Levels of Attainment in Religious Education and by using level descriptors and provided in the 'Come and See' Programme.

These levels of attainment are recorded on the school's assessment recording system for the core subjects. Comparison is then made with pupil's performances in other subjects, particularly Literacy.

Homework

Children are set R.E. homework where appropriate. This can be related to classroom R.E., involve research, or the learning or writing of prayers.

Display

All classrooms have an R.E. display relating to the current 'Come and See' topic.

All classrooms have a prayer corner.

Teachers are encouraged to emphasise and draw attention to the prayer corner with the highest possible standard of display and presentation. The children are encouraged to face or gather around this area during prayer.

The hall always has a current display linked to the liturgical year and there is an opportunity for children to write their own prayers for display and reflection in the special Prayer Corner.

Reporting

There are parent evenings in the Autumn and Spring Term, when parents have opportunity to talk to the class teachers around their child's progress and to discuss ways in which the home and school are able to support each other.

In the Spring Term, parents are able to see the children's work.

A written report is sent home during the Summer Term.

Monitoring

The Headteacher/Co-ordinator collect in a sample of the children's R.E. books each year.

General feedback is given at a staff meeting. Individual feedback is also given if appropriate.

R.E. teaching is monitored as part of the appraisal process and written feedback is given to staff.

RE work is moderated during sessions which include twilight RE meetings for teachers, moderation meetings with other Deanery schools, during regular RE co-ordinator meetings.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Holy Family School has always tried to create the atmosphere needed to fulfil our Mission Statement. We try to emphasise the qualities of self-discipline, self-control, perseverance, determination, a sense of fair play and thoughtfulness for others in school and in the wider community.

(See Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Personal Social and Health Education Policy).

Creating a Secure, Stable and Happy Environment

We believe that the way in which we welcome children into our school enables the foundation of a happy and secure community.

Prior to starting in the Reception Class, we invite the children to spend a session in school with their class teachers. The class teachers also do a home visit to see the children and their parents in the home environment.

We stagger our admission days and times to allow the children to become socially integrated and to get to know their teachers.

Children joining other classes are taken on a tour of the school and if possible given the opportunity to spend time in their classes before admission.

We take care to establish a calm, stable, working atmosphere in the school and to establish a routine, as we believe all children thrive if they are confident in the knowledge of what is consistently expected of them.

We view each child as an individual and value each child's contribution to the life of the school. We acknowledge that children learn by example. We consider it essential that each child realises that all staff care for his/her well being and show respect. It is also important that children see adults working alongside each other and co-operating with each other.

We stress the importance of consideration for others and illustrate how behaviour affects other members of the school community. Politeness and good manners are considered essential and are positively encouraged. Good behaviour is praised and used to illustrate the positive benefit it brings to the school community. Misbehaviour is corrected and care is taken to show how it brings unhappiness to others. Each case is handled sensitively and children are encouraged to learn from their mistakes. A readiness to apologise and to forgive is strongly promoted.

To foster continuity and stability, we foster links with our feeder secondary schools with the Year 6 teacher visiting teachers from the secondary schools and the pupil's visiting their new schools before admission.

Prayer

At Holy Family, we aim to help children value and respect the power of prayer and to use it to help strengthen the children's relationships with God. Pupils are provided with ample opportunity to pray in different ways including collective liturgy, meditation, reflection and spontaneous prayer.

We want to be a praying community. It is important for the children to know 'formal' prayer of the church which we may all pray together and which we all hear and say with the parish/family communities outside school.

We also value 'formal' prayers which have been written especially for children and which hold meaning for them. With these two aspects in mind we aim to teach particular prayers increasing in difficulty as the children develop.

We all pray collectively at school in the morning (in class or at assembly), before lunch and at the end of the school day.

Prayer does not only mean 'formal' prayers. We do hope to help each other to listen to God speaking to us and to respond in our hearts and minds during moments of silence. We also encourage prayer writing by the children themselves. All children understand that they can request personal intentions and can compile and share their own prayers.

Each class has a prayer area which provides a focus for prayer in the classroom. The Prayer Garden is recognised and respected as a very special place.

At school the children are taught to know by heart the following prayers:

The Sign of the Cross

The Lord's Prayer

The Hail Mary

The Glory be to the Father

The Morning Offering

The Night Prayer

Grace before / After Meals

During Key Stage 2 children become familiar with and are encouraged to learn:

The Prayer for the Dead

The Prayer of the Rosary

The Act of Contrition / Sorrow

The Responses to the Mass

The Hail Holy Queen

The Apostles Creed

Assembly

At Holy Family School the Daily Collective Act of Worship is an essential element of our School Life.

We value the opportunity to gather as a community which can pray together, sing together, share sadness together and celebrate good news together.

On Tuesdays and Fridays the whole school gathers together for an assembly. These are led by the Senior Management Team. Children attend separate Key Stage Assemblies. For Key Stage 1 this is on Wednesdays and Thursdays. For Key Stage Two this is on Thursdays.

Liturgy takes place in the classrooms when children are not attending an assembly.

At Assemblies on Fridays reward certificates are given to two individuals from each class for positive things they have done during the week. The results from the House Point system (to which each child is a member of either Howard, Champion, Fisher or More) is announced, with the winning house taking a step up on the ladder to achieve a reward.

Holy Family Flames - In our school we share the light of Jesus. We do this by being kind, thoughtful and thinking of others, just as Jesus would want us to do. Each month a special flame is awarded to one member of each class, because their class teacher believes that they have been sharing Jesus' light with all those around them.

Our assemblies are related to a particular feast day or season in the liturgical year, or are linked with the 'Come and See' themes. Readings from the Bible and stories form an integral part of the

assemblies. They are related to the children's daily lives and practical applications are stressed, encouraging the children to put what they hear in the gospels into action.

Liturgy

At Holy Family we believe that celebrating the Mass together is important to the spiritual life of the whole school community. We try to make each celebration of the Mass a community celebration which involves the children, teachers, support staff, parents and parishioners.

These masses are carefully prepared by the children and appropriate themes are chosen. The children welcome the visitors, serve the mass, under take the readings, prayers and offertory procession. Drama and art work is occasionally used.

Mass is celebrated to mark the beginning of each term, the beginning of the major seasons of the Church Year, such as Advent, Lent and on Holy Days of Obligation. Our First Holy Communicants lead us in a special Mass of Thanksgiving for the Eucharist. The children attend Mass at The Holy Family Church. However, a Mass of celebration for Year 6 Leavers in the summer term is held in the school hall.

Sacramental Programme

Children in Year 3 are invited to join The Holy Family programme in preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. The school is fully involved with the programme, with a senior member of the teaching staff delivering the programme in the capacity of Catechist for the parish.

Links with the Home

To provide the best Catholic education we believe that it is essential to establish and maintain links with the parents.

1. Home-School Agreement

On accepting a place at the school parents and carers are requested to sign a Home School Agreement document which acknowledges the catholic identity of the school and outlines the commitment expected of the parents and children as the basis for a good working relationship between home and school.

2. Welcoming Prospective and New Parents

We provide relevant information about the school in the school prospectus which is available to prospective parents online.

We show parents around the school, before applications are made, if this is requested.

We organise an evening for parents before admission to the Reception Class, to give the parents the opportunity to meet each other, the Headteacher, the Class Teachers and representatives of the Governing Body and to find out all they need to know about the school.

3. Regular Information about the Child and his/her Progress and Welfare

The Headteacher and teaching staff are always very willing to talk to the parents about the education and welfare of their child.

The Headteacher is generally available before or after school to see parents if they have any questions, suggestions or concerns. If he is unavailable the Deputy Headteacher may be seen or an appointment made through the secretary.

Parent Evenings are held in the Autumn and Spring Term, when parents are invited to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher. In the Spring Term parents have the opportunity to see their child's recorded work. Written reports are sent home every summer term.

4. Parents Supporting the Work of the Teacher at Home

The School Prospectus contains guidelines on how parents and carers can support their child's learning at home.

There is a home-school reading scheme and a homework policy.

Information about forthcoming topics to be covered in each subject is provided in a termly letter. Parents are also invited to attend a special information evening providing information about the curriculum to be followed during the year.

5. Providing Information about the School and What is Happening

The monthly Newsletter conveys a wide range of information about the work of the school, special events taking place in the school or Church, upcoming Feast Days and Masses.

6. Parents and Parishioners Sharing the Religious Life of the School

Parents and parishioners are always invited to attend any celebration of the Mass.

Links with the Wider Community

We welcome the visits of the Parish Priest of the Holy Family and other members of the Clergy. We value the clergy's contribution to the teaching of R.E. in the classrooms.

We take the children regularly to Mass at the Holy Family Church. When studying other faiths, children have the opportunity to visit different places of worship.

We have a strong link with St. George's College. Sixth Form students from St. George's work alongside children from Year 3 and Year 6 delivering part of the 'Come and See' programme, culminating in the celebration of Mass in the College Chapel.

We work very closely with deanery colleagues sharing expertise, resources and ideas as well as organising special celebrations. We attend the annual Deanery Celebration of Mass at Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge.

We share excellent links with St. Mary's University mentoring their students.

We have a strong working relationship with I-Can Meath Special School providing benefits for staff and children of both schools.

We regularly encourage the children to participate in fund raising for the benefit of the Local and Wider Community.

Induction of New Colleagues

All new members of the staff must read very carefully the R.E. Policy. They are encouraged to ask the R.E. Co-ordinator for any help in any matter relating to R.E. They attend training at DABCEC to help support induction.

Resources

The Resources for R.E. are kept outside the Year 1 and Year 2 classrooms, whilst books for Assembly are located outside the Staff Room. Books for the children are kept on prominent shelves in the library.