



The
Holy Spirit
Catholic Multi Academy

'With grace and humility, glorify the Lord by your life.'

RE & Catholic Policy

This policy applies to St Thomas More Catholic Academy & Sixth Form College part of The Holy Spirit Catholic MAC

This RE & Catholic Life Policy has been approved and adopted by The Holy Spirit MAC on 12th July 2021

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Signed by the Chair
of the Education
Standards
Committee

Signed by the
Principal

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1. Mission Statement

At the Holy Spirit Academy, we welcome, nurture, educate and inspire our school community, as members of God's family, to achieve their full potential and grow in faith.

We enable children, in an atmosphere of respect and affectionate trust, to be happy and to grow in their understanding of the Gospel Values thus preparing them to become valuable members of society.

We strive to make the teachings of Christ the source and inspiration of all we do.

'With grace and humility, glorify the Lord by your life.'

Religious Education is central to the curriculum of the Catholic school and is at the heart of the philosophy of Catholic Education.

Religious Education in schools should be regarded as an academic discipline with the same demands and rigour as other subjects. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and depth as other subjects.

(Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19) for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales 2012)

2. United Conventions on the Rights of a Child.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

3. Aims of Religious Education

1. To lead children to a living Christian faith with knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and life.
2. Initially to recall, deepen, clarify and extend what the children have experienced of human and Christian values at home and in the Church.
3. To assist children in relating to others and to God.
4. To help children to grow in knowledge and understanding in their faith and to understand their lives in the light of their faith in a gradual manner according to their age and stage of development.
5. To appreciate and tolerate in others sincere views which differ from their own.
6. To be aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
7. To have the skills required to engage in an examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.

4. Approach and Progress

As the moral judgement of the child develops slowly and progressively in this key stage, the general atmosphere of the school, classroom and the outlook of staff helps the children develop moral qualities of self-discipline, perseverance, determination, patience, fair play and consideration for others. Additionally children are taught to love and worship God and live good lives in response to this love, which includes forgiveness of others.

5. Moral Education and Development

- The provision for moral development comes from home and from within the ethos of the school, when people help one another to distinguish right from wrong. Moral education is also taught within the subjects of the curriculum especially when teachers take time to identify and address moral issues and dilemmas including implementing the behavior policy.
- Moral education and development permeate through the whole curriculum and in the general relationships and attitudes of staff and children to one another.
- Every opportunity is taken to enrich the Catholic Life of our schools through the relationship between church, family and school by involving the priests, parents and children in activities such as special assemblies, school masses, concerts, displays and exhibitions.
- Ways and means of forging links with the Community are continually evaluated and reviewed.

6. Spiritual Development

- Children are encouraged to explore their spiritual development through other subjects such as art, P.E., music etc.
- Assemblies are focused around spiritual development encouraging children to pray in a range of different ways.
- Spiritual, moral and personal development involves the human spirit in the gradual process of making connections between the values, stories, and experiences of their own lives and the values, story, and traditions of our faith and community.

7. Catholic Social Teaching

All Catholics are called to reach out to others in ways reflected in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Catholic children need to be introduced to and nurtured in the ways of social justice so it will become second nature to them.

- God made each one of us and we are special because we are God's creation. This means that we treat others with respect and fairness because God made them too.
- All God's people should have food, work, clothes, a home, school and medical care. These are 'rights'. Jesus wants those who enjoy these rights to help their sisters and brothers obtain their rights. We do this through being a Rights Respecting School and through acts of charity working together for the Common Good.
- All children are taught to be good stewards of God's creation through recycling, litter picking, etc.
- At the Holy Spirit Multi Academy we work together to be the best that we can be.

8. Catholic Life

Our schools are an open community, concerned with the education of the whole person. They present a unique, clear vision of God, people and life, centered on Gospel values and reflective of the teaching of the Catholic Church. We treat one another as brothers and sisters in Christ and pride ourselves on our social action. The children are involved in the parish and the wider community. The children have the opportunity to become a 'Mini-Vinnie', support families and be involved in social action. We are committed to ensuring that our children are educated in actively living out their faith recognizing how they can play a part in supporting vulnerable members of society, knowing that small contributions can make a big difference to the lives of others.

"A faith without works, a faith that doesn't get you involved isn't faith, its words and nothing more than words' Pope Francis

10. Cross Curricular Links

R.E. is not taught only as a single subject. It is integrated into many other subjects. As mentioned previously the children will encounter spiritual and moral issues during other lessons and through the Catholic Life of the school.

11. Schemes and Topics

We follow the topic areas developed through “Learning and Growing as People of God”. Teachers are encouraged to use others resources to support and extend the topic work. We also follow the Ten:Ten

‘Ten Ten Resources helps school communities grow in faith, love, understanding and compassion. We do this by creating a wide-range of unique media-rich programmes and resources, inspired by our Christian faith’.

Within the Ten:Ten program we also follow the RSE scheme ‘Life to the Full’.

12. Inclusion

All children regardless of any impairment will have an entitlement to a broad and balanced RE programme within mainstream education that is relevant to their needs.

We identify those children have special educational needs. It is important to: become knowledgeable about their impairments; to concentrate on their abilities; to have a positive attitude about providing a challenging programme for them; and above all to consider how tasks, equipment and access can be modified so that they have a meaningful experience.

Teachers should differentiate work in RE to accommodate the needs of very able children and those with learning difficulties. Available teaching support is targeted on the pupils and classes where the need is greatest. Children with Special Educational Needs are encouraged to contribute in all aspects of Religious Education. Teachers should also be aware and sensitive to children’s fears and inhibitions that may make it difficult for them to participate fully in lessons.

13. Equal Opportunities

We work in celebration of the fact that all are made in the image and likeness of God. We believe that every person is a unique individual and we are therefore committed to equal opportunities. We believe that all children, irrespective of physical ability, race, gender, creed or stage of achievement have the right to reach their full potential in R.E. All activities should be suited to the age and stage of development of the children. Care should be taken that opportunities be given to both boys and girls in R.E. Pupils should be encouraged to share their experiences and culture with others in order to enhance the quality of the learning. The emphasis in our teaching of RE is to allow all the children to have enjoyment and achieve success.

Religious Education should introduce children to the background and beliefs of other faiths so that prejudice and misunderstanding can be overcome from an early age – we endeavour to seize each opportunity as it arises to ensure tolerance, respect and understanding between all cultures and traditions represented not just in the school or its immediate environment but in the world as a whole.

14. Excellence and Enjoyment

Children should be encouraged to achieve to their full potential and to experience a sense of achievement, excellence and enjoyment.

Excellence can be celebrated by:

- Displaying work and photographs of children’s work
- In assemblies.
- Sharing good work with the rest of the class
- Receiving an Award e.g. Principal Award, star worker, Virtue and Value Award etc.

Enjoyment can be achieved through teacher praise, stimulating lessons and inviting resources.

15. The Role of the RE Subject Leader

The curriculum subject leader for RE has responsibility for the management of curriculum development, resources, record-keeping assessment and liturgical development (including sacramental preparation).

Together with SLT the subject leader for Religious Education has several responsibilities not least being to support and promote the Catholic Mission of the Holy Spirit Academy and its individual schools.

1. Take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in R.E. throughout the school.
2. Support colleagues in the development of detailed work plans and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record keeping activities.
3. Monitor progress in R.E. and advise the principal on any action needed.
4. Take responsibility for the R.E. budget and the purchase and organisation of central resources for R.E.
5. Keep up to date with developments in R.E. and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate.
6. Run or organise INSET on areas needing development.
7. Work in partnership with the diocese e.g. attend training, conferences and other events.

15. The Role of Parents and the Parish

The child's development of faith begins at birth with the love and care of the family. Parents are encouraged to attend assemblies, masses and concerts and contribute to their child's religious education and particularly preparation for the Sacraments of First Holy Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation. They are kept informed of topics through weekly homework. Parents have a right to withdraw their child from the daily act of collective worship.

16. Planning and Assessment

The Baseline Assessment is carried out when children first start school in the Reception class. It is used to find out what children's prior religious knowledge, vocabulary and experience is. This information helps schools to show how much progress is made from that initial starting point.

End of Unit assessments are carried out by class teachers three times a year. The focus for assessment follows a four year rolling programme based on the following themes: The Liturgical Year, Scripture, The Sacraments and Living as Christians.

The assessment schedule identifies which units are to be assessed by each year group and are used in conjunction with the relevant class record sheets.

17. Displays and Whole School Prayer Areas

Each class has an area which provides a focus for prayer in the classroom. This area should be changed regularly to reflect the season of the liturgical year (e.g. a green cloth for ordinary time), the topic being covered, a special saint etc. and can include religious artefacts, prayers, candles, and children's work. It should not be cluttered. Children should be encouraged to help with this area.

Various resources are used to encourage the children to stop and pray, reflect, read the thought or write a prayer. Each school has an outside environment dedicated to prayer which enhances a calm and peaceful time.

18. ICT

ICT can be integrated into RE in a number of ways through the use of computers, digital cameras, ICT suite, laptops, the school website, DVDs and c.d. player. Learning and Growing as the People of God often recommend websites for further extension ideas. Interactive White Boards can be used to present symbols, pictures, music and presentations to support RE lessons and collective worship sessions.

19. Collective Worship

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Aims of Collective Worship

Collective worship in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff;

- to contemplate something of the mystery of God
- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- to explore own beliefs
- to respond to and celebrate life

- to experience a sense of belonging and developing community spirit
- to develop a common ethos and shared values
- to enrich religious experience
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development
- to reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- to reinforce positive attitudes
- to participate fully
- to take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to'.

Principles

All acts of worship in this school will;

- Give glory and honor to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character

Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for liturgical life of the church. In order to do this, celebrations will; be kept small whenever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience; be appropriately placed and timed.

All schools have regular whole school and class assemblies, hymn practice Mass and small group collective worship times.

20. Prayer

Prayer is a crucial part of the life of our school and as such is at the heart of our catholic faith and ethos as a means of expressing and fostering our relationship with God.

Children are 'open to god' and so have a natural aptitude to prayer. They respond in joy, wonder, anger and disappointment or elation to the world around them. So we have to create and maintain an environment where prayer-life is fostered. Prayer is a normal part of life, as natural as eating and drinking!

Children are encouraged to discover different ways to pray, formally and informally. They are encouraged to be still and listen to God, that prayer can be private and communal, planned and spontaneous.

Each classroom has a special place which is a focal point for prayer. Depending on the time of year this area may have a lectern for the Bible, candle, crucifix/or statue, flowers or other aids to prayer and meditation.

This helps us to put Jesus at the centre of all we do in the classroom.

Liturgical colours are used to enhance the area and reflect the cycle of the Church's Year.

- Green – ordinary time
- Purple – lent/advent
- White/gold – Easter and Christmas
- Red – Pentecost
- Blue – Our Lady

Prayer in school is progressive:

Opportunities for prayer occur across the curriculum i.e. thanking God and praising Him for a piece of work well done, or a skill learned.

The prayer life and spiritual feeding of the staff as well as the children is of high consideration. All meetings begin with a prayer.

At special times of the churches year there are extra opportunities for the staff to come together

Before school and share a prayer time prepared by different members of staff. E.g. Lent, October etc.

Informal Prayer

From their first year in school YR children are encouraged into the ordinary everyday language of praising, thanking and asking, as well as being able to say 'sorry'.

We must remember that God answers prayers by saying 'No' sometimes. The children should become aware of this. The role of staff, especially class teacher as role models is a vital part of this. Teachers who are not catholic can still lead the children in the respect and spiritual experience of prayer.

Formal Prayer

Many of the prayers that belong to our Catholic tradition are taught and as far as possible the language is explained to the children in a meaningful way. These are introduced gradually throughout the programme. Children will become familiar with them through collective worship in the classrooms and assemblies:-

- Hearing them said and by joining in
- Singing them
- Focusing on small phrases

Children are introduced to gestures and postures of formal liturgical prayer: - genuflecting, bowing, joining of hands, body prayer and an attitude of reverence is nurtured. Simple responses e.g. "The Lord be with you" "and also with you" are taught along with prayers from Mass e.g. Creed.