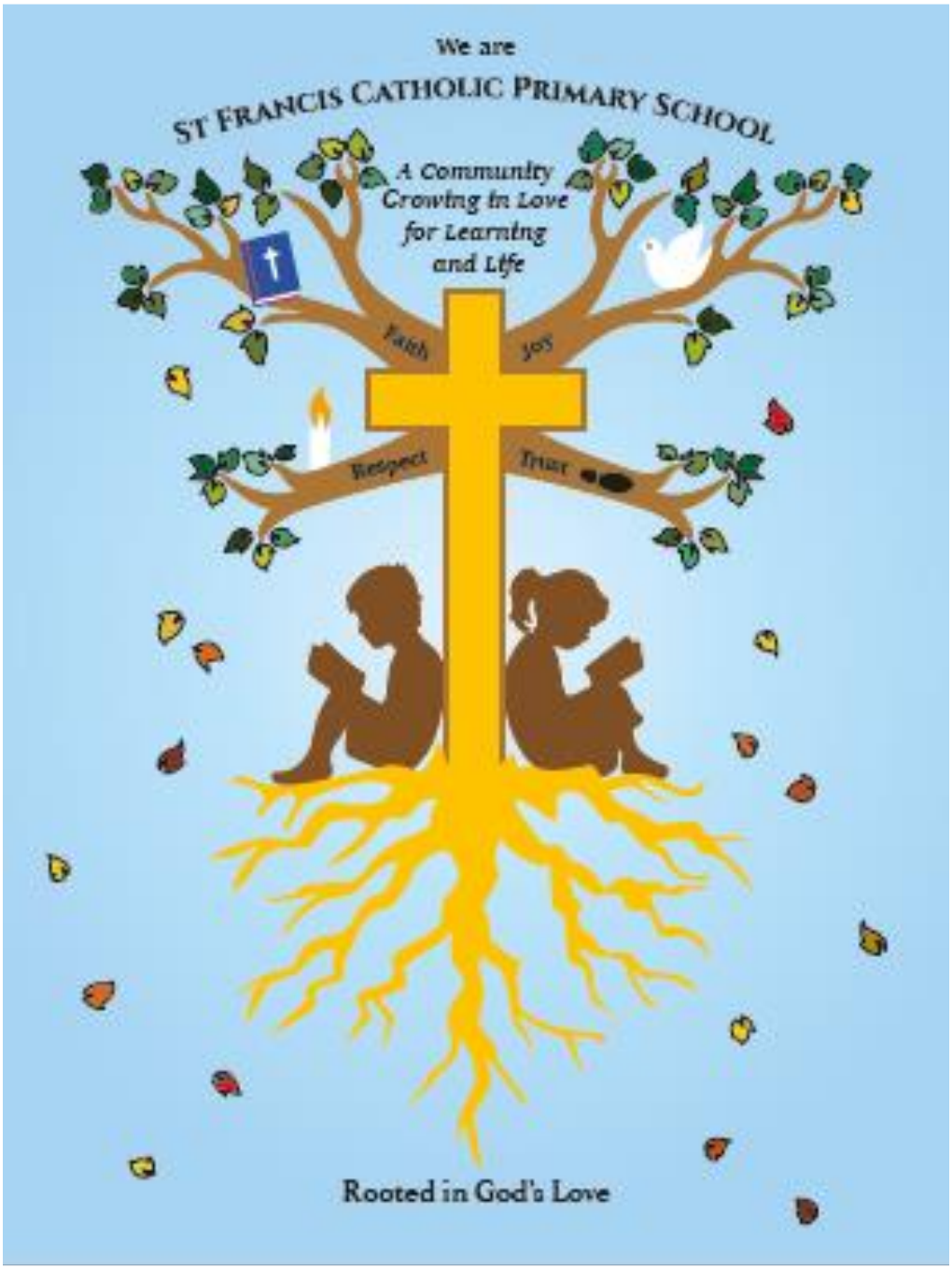
St Francis Catholic Primary School
Policy for RE



Mission statement

At St. Francis we work in partnership with the parish and parents to develop our children's awareness and appreciation of the Catholic faith.

We create a Christian environment where adults working with the children promote a deepening of the child's spirituality and uniqueness in the family of God. We seek to develop children to their full potential.

Statutory Requirements

Formation and education provided in schools is subject to the authority of the Church (can. 397, 806). It is for the Episcopal Conference to issue general norms concerning formation and education in the Catholic religion and for the diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it (can. 804).

Religious Education as the heart of the curriculum
Religious education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.
Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.
In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

Compliance with the Religious Education Directory
The Religious Education Directory includes the programmes of study approved by the Bishops' Conference for the various age groups. The competence for approving these programmes of study is currently exercised by the Department of Education and Formation, but the Bishops' Conference can delegate this function to another department, commission, or committee of the Conference.
Catholic schools are required to comply with the Religious Education Directory.

Implications of the primacy of religious education in the curriculum
Religious education is to be properly organised, coordinated, taught, and resourced.
In primary schools there is to be a Coordinator of Religious Education who is to have at least parity in status and remuneration with those of any other curriculum area.
The religious education department in secondary schools is to have at least parity of status and resourcing with any other subject department. The department is to be given the highest possible status. This is to be reflected in the status and remuneration of the person leading that department.

Aims of Religious Education

The aims of religious education are:
1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;

2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

Outcome of Religious Education
The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Teaching and Learning in RE.

All teachers will follow 'Lighting the Path' scheme for the teaching of RE and the school overview plan which identifies the branch for each term. Additional resources may be used with the agreement of the RE Co-ordinator.

RE is identified as a core subject in this school and receives 10% of curriculum time to teach the content from the Religious Education Directory. This equates to 2 hours 25 minutes in the Foundation stage, Key Stage 1 is 2 hours 27 minutes and 2 hours 37 minutes in Key Stage 2. RHSE receives additional time and it is expected that every teacher over the course of a term will allocate approximately 3 to 5 hours depending on the topics to be covered and the needs of his/her class.

SEN
Work is matched accordingly for pupils with SEN. Support may also be given in the form of extra teacher or TA input. A special endeavour is made to identify those pupils who are perhaps less able in literacy, thus find recording difficult, but who have well-developed skills in RE.

Catholic Social Teaching
Catholic Social Teaching is incorporated into the curriculum and children are encouraged to put their faith into action. Acts of Worship and assemblies make reference to the Catholic Social Teaching Principles and the children are taught about what these look like in our everyday lives.

World Religions
The teaching of World views is incorporated into the RE curriculum through the branch, 'Dialogue and Encounter'. In addition, links to other faiths through the unit of study eg inspirational people, justice, special places should be exploited and evidence will be looked for in children's books and in displays. Children are encouraged to learn to respect the

beliefs and traditions of other people in the multicultural society in which they live. Other cultures are also celebrated through subjects such as English, Maths, History, Art and Music.

Cross curricular links

Teachers are encouraged to make meaningful links with Religious Education across the curriculum. Links are especially encouraged through topic work, citizenship, circle time and RHSE.

Spiritual Development

At St Francis we value and recognise the need to foster the spiritual development of our pupils in all aspects of school life. We encourage this by enabling pupils to be in touch with their natural curiosity and awe and wonder in everyday life and the world around them. The school plans for Spiritual Development within RE lessons, Prayer and Liturgy, the wider curriculum and within the general ethos of the school. Pupils are encouraged to engage in prayer and quiet reflection. Pupils experience individual class and whole-school prayer. All classes have the opportunity to reflect on the awe and wonder of God's creation through the use of the environment and curriculum.

The Sacraments

The pupils are taught about the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, The Eucharist and Confirmation through the RE curriculum. Preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and The Eucharist takes place within the Parish. Members of staff celebrate with the pupils in the Parish, by attending the First Holy Communion masses. Mass and assemblies are subsequently held to pray for the First Communicants, and celebrate together as a school community.

Prayer

Pupils have a very special relationship with God. They are open to Him and experience Him in themselves, in the people who care for them, in their sense of awe and wonder of the beauty of nature and in their experiences of sorrow, happiness, fear anger and disappointment. True prayer draws us to discover God within our deepest being. Pupils are introduced to prayer from the Early Years, initially within the environment created within the classroom. For example:

- Through a classroom full of colour, shapes, natural objects, living creatures, plants and flowers.
- Through the awe and wonder of the outdoor area.
- Through the adults' responses to joy, sorrow, love, and the world around them.
- Through creating a focal point for prayer in each branch of the curriculum.
- Pupils are introduced to traditional scripture, psalms and prayers.
- Prayer is part of each celebration.

Pupils are exposed to a variety of forms and styles of prayer. For example: traditional prayer; psalms; repetitive prayers, five finger prayer etc.

Time for prayer is made every day. Pupils come together as a school to pray in collective worship. Class prayers take place in the morning, before lunch, and at the end of the day. The pupils are encouraged to learn traditional prayers and also make up their own spontaneous prayers in response to certain events, situations or feelings.

Opportunities for prayer should be made in all assemblies. When assemblies don't take place, a time is set aside for prayers in the classroom. This is particularly applicable to the Foundation stage where the pupils may only attend one or two assemblies a week when they first begin school.

Focal areas

Each classroom will have a focal area which reflects the current unit of study, or the time of the Liturgical year. Pupils' work reflecting the theme will be displayed on or around the focal area. Each class has their own prayer book and class 'big book' which they contribute to throughout the year. This could be with learning opportunities they have had or with thoughts of wonder.

Equal Opportunities

All teaching and learning of RE will ensure that every child has the right to be included and supported as far as possible in the knowledge that there is equality in terms of opportunity, social background, race, gender and disability. The programme of study is designed to cater for pupils working at different levels and with different abilities. It is also designed to be challenging and raise expectations. Suitable opportunities are provided for all pupils by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and experience of the pupil. We plan to allow all to achieve, building self-esteem and fulfilling our aim to give all pupils the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

Assessment and Progress

The Catholic Education Service (CES) and the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA) regularly publish and update documents containing the age-related standard for Religious Education. In addition, the Education Commission produces support documents for the assessment of the subject which we, at St Francis, use to support us with our planning and assessment of the subject. Teachers at St Francis Catholic Primary School plan assess and record for Religious Education in the same manner as we do for all other core curriculum areas. Data is entered into the tracking system each term, in line with English and Maths.

The Local Governance Committee

Curricular development is linked to the School Development Plan and performance management cycle where necessary, and subject leaders will report to the Senior Leadership Team as part of the curricular review and development process.

Professional Development

All staff will receive ongoing training and updates in the RE Curriculum and methods of assessment.

Links with the wider community

The school supports the home, school parish triangle and welcomes members of the parish to special assemblies and termly school/parish masses. As a Catholic school, the pupils are encouraged to think and learn about people who are less fortunate than themselves and take part in fund raising for charities and involve themselves in the local community.

Links with parents

Parents are encouraged to come into school to celebrate class assemblies and whole school masses. Parents are informed about RE each term through the termly newsletter, website and social media.

Parents' right to withdraw pupils from Religious Education

Parents are permitted, by law, to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of religious education. This request should be made in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will keep a record of all pupils who have been withdrawn from RE.

Review Date: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2028