

POLICY STATEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School, Hutton is a Christian community whose mission is as follows:

*With Jesus
We learn, we care
We listen, we share
So that He might be seen
In the people that we are and the things that we do*

As Saint Joseph is our school's patron Saint, we feel the qualities he portrayed of love, care and support for Jesus and Mary, together with responsibility and hard work, provide ideal values for the staff and children to try to imitate.

"... all that happens in the Catholic school, the relationships, the priorities, the aims and objectives, the pastoral care and discipline, has the potential to speak of God's loving care for each individual".

(EDN-1)

Our aims and objectives are linked to Diocesan guidelines:

- To share the belief that God is at the centre of our working day and to provide opportunities and situations for each child to live, share and learn about their Catholic faith and its history
- To encourage self respect, recognising that each individual is unique and important, and should be valued and supported in our family of St. Joseph's
- To help deepen the child's personal faith commitment whilst respecting that, owing to a number of personal, social and cultural factors that they, like ourselves, are at different stages of their faith journey
- To nurture a caring, worshipping partnership between the home, school and church, acknowledging a common goal
- To acknowledge and respect other religious beliefs and customs and to promote a sensitivity for them
- To provide an environment wherein a welcoming, caring community exists, promoting Gospel values
- To encourage children of other faiths and cultures to share their beliefs, customs, festivals, celebrations and forms of worship and culture

- To reflect upon and incorporate aspects of Personal, Social and Health education in our teaching of religious education

Religious Education permeates all activities at St. Joseph the Worker. From the Early Years Foundation Stage, and throughout their primary education, the children are taught prayers, and hymns, and participate in liturgical celebrations and participate in the Catechesis in the Parish. The Christian attitude permeates the whole life of the community. We aim to respect and develop the children's innate capacity for wonder, awe, reverence and spirituality.

The staff are committed to the gospel values: Jesus said: "*I am the way, the truth and the life*" and we strive to create suitable conditions for the Christian message to be sought, accepted and investigated so as to prepare the children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of the future.

Come and See

The Religious Education Programme, *Come and See*, has been recommended by Brentwood Religious Education Service and our RE teaching follows themes and its focus areas for each year group, within the broader RE curriculum. This programme gives the children a sound knowledge of the teaching of the Catholic Church and time to reflect, respond to and celebrate the themes. It enables teachers to develop their own thoughts, to question and discuss with colleagues, to receive support with aspects of Doctrine and Language, Prayer, The Bible, Celebration and the Sacraments.

Come and See operates through three major themes each term:

- The Church
- The Sacraments
- Christian Living

Come and See is a systematic presentation of the Christian event, message and way of life in ways appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child. It helps children to explore and question about life, dignity and purpose within the Catholic tradition. It also provides opportunity for celebration, prayer and reflection.

Each topic is taught over a four-week period, through three main areas of focus:

- Explore
- Reveal
- Respond

The **Explore** phase uses the child's own knowledge and experience as a starting point for further learning. Each child's contribution is recognised, acknowledged, valued and respected.

The **Reveal** part of the topic introduces children to the Christian experience and, where appropriate, the experience of other faiths, through six specific learning focuses. Pupils read, reflect upon and respond to passages of scripture and learn what the Church teaches about key aspects of faith.

In the Respond phase, children are invited to remember and appreciate the work they have done, reflect upon and celebrate their learning, and then apply this to their own lives and experiences.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of RE and children are encouraged to reflect upon what they have learnt. Assessment is based upon pupils' ability to:

- **retell** some of the stories they have heard, for example the story of Jesus's birth.
- **describe** some ways in which characters live their lives, for example, Jesus and His disciples, a saint or an inspirational person.
- **make links** between their learning and what people believe about God and Jesus, for example, linking the events of the Last Supper with the celebration of the Eucharist.
- **give reasons for** and **show understanding** of aspects of faith, for example, why Catholics make the Sign of the Cross.

Pupil progress is regularly assessed and monitored by class teachers and the RE Coordinator. Each term children will be assessed in 1 topic on a rolling programme/cycle.

Organisation and structure

Classes celebrate the end of topics, feast days and liturgical events in a variety of ways including class and key stage celebrations, masses and liturgies and whole school celebrations.

Liturgies

The school celebrates Mass together at the beginning and end of each term and on special feast days. Class masses are enjoyed each term in Years 4, 5 and 6, and these classes are also invited to attend Parish weekday masses in church.

Children from the school are invited to participate in the annual Parish Eucharist and Reconciliation programmes.

Services of Reconciliation are celebrated with Years 4, 5 and 6 during Advent and Lent.

Year 6 enjoy an annual retreat at Walsingham House. All pupils celebrate an annual retreat experience in the school (EYFS and Key Stage 1 before Christmas, and Key Stage before Easter).

Services in the church and school (for example, Christingle at the beginning of Advent and Stations of the Cross during Lent) provide an excellent opportunity for the whole school community to celebrate their faith.

Children's learning is shared and celebrated at class assemblies and at a special Subject assembly which Governors are invited to attend.

Our Parish Priest, a regular and welcome visitor, governor and friend, supports the school community in many ways.

School Chaplains

At the beginning of the school year a small number of Year 6 pupils are elected by their peers and teachers to be School Chaplains. Their role is to work with the RE Coordinator in planning and leading assemblies, liturgies and school celebrations.

Charities

Each year the school adopts a charity, as well as supporting regular charities throughout the school year (Food Bank scheme, Operation Christmas child, The Catholic Children's Society, Haven Hospice, CAFOD.) Gospel values are put into action, enabling the children to become more aware of the needs of others and providing opportunities to use their initiative in organising inventive ways to fundraise.

Governors

The Governors acknowledge that the parents are the first educators of their children in their faith and the school will build upon their foundation.

Each Governor is assigned to a class for the duration of their time at the school. They are committed to providing support via class visits, attendance at class assemblies, services, educational visits and whole school events, and by reporting their observations back to the school and the Governing Body.