St. Joseph's Catholic
Primary School

# Religious Education Handbook

**September 2026**
**To be reviewed September 2027**

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## 1. The Mission Statement

**Mission Statement**

St. Joseph's family Learn together
With love and faith in Jesus, To become the people
God calls us to be.

**Child Friendly Mission Statement (Motto)**

'We Work, We Care, We Pray, We Share'

## 2. The Aims of Religious Education

*The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and 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 are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.*

Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools 2012

**At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School we aim to:**

- Develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith and, where appropriate, other religious traditions, by following the Gospel values and providing opportunities for prayer, worship and spiritual growth.
- Ensure children feel cared for and care for each other so that everyone who enters our community feels welcome to engage in examination of and reflection upon their own life stance, to deepen their personal faith commitment and to respect that of others. We will strive for friendliness not loneliness to work together as one body. (1 Corinthians12: 27-28)
- Provide a broad, well-balanced curriculum in a stimulating and fun learning environment where we recognise the unique qualities in every child and encourage freedom of expression.
- Give children a happy, memorable time at our school, where we promote the child's innate capacity for wonder, awe, reverence and imagination to shine in all that they do and for everyone to see – "…so that those who come in can see the light." (Luke 8: 16-17)

## 3. Objectives

We will achieve our aims by:

- Providing a programme - To Know You More Clearly that is academically acceptable, enjoyable and taught in a creative and inspiring way, according to standards and guidelines set out by the Archdiocese;
- Developing knowledge and understanding in our children of the mystery of God, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church and the central beliefs which Catholics hold;
- Developing an understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and the relationship between faith and life;
- Developing appropriate skills: for example, ability to listen, to think critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically, to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively, to make informed judgements;
- Fostering appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth, respect for the views of others, awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural, multi-faith society;
- Presenting a 'systematic presentation of the Christian event, message and way of life' in a way that is appropriate to both the age and stage of development of each child;
- Developing staff's knowledge and underlying theological understanding, as well as educational principals, of the topics under focus;
- Providing opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection in implicit and explicit ways;
- Respecting our own Diocesan and pastoral practice and support parish sacramental preparation programmes for First Holy Communion and Reconciliation .

## 4. The Religious Education Programme

To fulfill our aims and objectives we use 'To Know You More Clearly' programme, recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool**.**

### Overview of Content: To Know You More Clearly

The model curriculum has six components known as branches. Each one has a core theme and invites pupils to learn an aspect of Revelation, Scripture, life in Christ, life in Church and to discern what their learning means academically and experientially enabling them to see, judge and act through a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith.

**Branch 1: Creation and Covenant – 'The heavens are telling the glory of God' (Ps 19:1)**

- In this branch, pupils will encounter the God who creates and calls a people.
- They will explore revelation of the Christian belief that all that comes is from God, the creation accounts in Genesis and scientific explanations of the process of creation.
- They will explore the call of God and his covenantal relationship with his people first through Abraham and Moses then through the narrative of the Old Testament.

**Branch 2 Prophecy and promise: 'In many and various ways, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets' (Heb 1:1)**

- In this branch, pupils will learn that the prophets speak of God reaching to his people, calling them back into a relationship with him.
- In this branch, pupils will explore the Christian understanding of the teaching of the prophets as they point to the fulfilment of God's promise in a messiah, Jesus Christ.
- They will explore the expectant waiting for the Messiah through the Advent season and how this speaks to Christians today as they wait for Christ.
- Pupils will encounter the story of the nativity of Jesus and the mystery of the incarnation.

**Branch 3 Galilee to Jerusalem: 'God's only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made him known' (Jn 1:18)**

- In this branch, pupils will experience the ministry of Jesus, the Word of God.
- They will learn about the life of Jesus and his revelation of the Kingdom of God through parables, encounters, miracles, and teachings.
- They will learn about the call of the disciples and the nature of being a follower of Jesus

**Branch 4 Desert to Garden: 'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day' (1 Cor 15:3)**

- In this branch, pupils will study the season of Lent and its culmination in the events of Holy Week.
- They will learn about the Paschal Triduum at the heart of the Catholic Church's Liturgy and life.
- The title of this branch points both to the liturgical journey from the desert of Lent to the garden of Resurrection, but also to the Paschal journey from darkness to light, barrenness to fruitfulness, death to life.

**Branch 5 To the ends of the Earth: 'Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Mt 28:19)**

- In this branch, pupils will study the events that flowed from the Resurrection and Ascension in the coming of the Holy Spirit and the work of the apostles and early Church.
- They will also learn about the Catholic Church today as the apostolic Church and how its liturgy and structures flow from the early Church.

**Branch 6 Dialogue and encounter: 'For "In him we live and move and have our being"' (Acts 17:28)**

- In this branch, pupils will learn how Christians work together with people of different religious convictions and all people of goodwill towards the common good, respecting the dignity of all humanity.
- They will also encounter other pathways of belief drawing on the teaching of the Church about intercultural dialogue

## THE APPROACH CHOSEN

At St. Joseph's we have mixed age classes. In Class 1 (Reception/Year 1 mix) both the EYFS and Year 1 planning are used every year in conjunction. In Class 2 and Class 3, we use a two-year rolling programme. In Class 4, the teacher uses the Year 6 curriculum every year as this is a single age class.
The allocated time for Religious Education as advised by the Archdiocese is 10% of the curriculum time each week and is as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Early years/KS1 | - | 2 hours 15 minutes |
| Key stage 2 | - | 2 hours 30 minutes |

The subject leader is responsible for monitoring timetables to ensure quality time for Religious Education.

Within all classes, teachers will need to have regard for the standard indicators when developing activities for children of different age groups and abilities.

### Differentiation

As with all other areas of the curriculum the purpose of differentiation in Religious Education is:

- To enable children to succeed in the set task or activity and to challenge them to take the next step in learning;
- To challenge children to be self-motivated and to take responsibility for their own learning;
- To enable children to recognise and celebrate their achievement;

At St. Joseph's we recognise that children learn in different ways and so we strive to teach the children using a variety of teaching methods to allow all children to be fully involved in all lessons. We recognise that children work at different ability levels and so through rigorous assessments, we use our prior knowledge of the children's abilities to build on their understanding to encourage them to achieve their best at their own level. This requires regular discussions with other staff members, particularly when children are moving classes. We therefore ensure that our assessment for learning strategies are solid to make certain that teaching is pitched at the correct level for all children. The variety of tasks allows teachers to choose appropriate work that can be adapted to suit every individual. We strive for every child to achieve their maximum potential and therefore plan tasks for the whole class which can then be supported or extended as staff see fit throughout each lesson.

**Additional learning needs and/or disabilities**

During the planning process all children on IEP's will be planned for individually if appropriate. Children who are on our SEN register will access Religious Education as much as every other child in our school. They will be encouraged to achieve their maximum potential through regular assessments. Every child will feel included in all areas of Religious Education.

## 4. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is focused by the overall aims and objectives of Religious Education *'Come and See'* page 27 and the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges pages 65-66. Assessment establishes what pupils know, understand and can do. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith. Assessment in *'Come and See'* emphasises a wide range of achievement.

In our school it involves:

### Informal assessment

- General observation of children engaged in classroom tasks and activities;
- Observations of contributions made to classroom displays;
- Assessment for learning techniques such as: thumbs up/down, questioning of children's understanding;
- Marking of more formal written work against the learning focus
- Learning objectives to include driver words/skills as appropriate, so when highlighted teachers can use these for termly judgements.

### Formal assessment – Years 1-6

- At St. Joseph's we assess both learning about religion and learning from religion.
- Staff meet termly to moderate six pieces of work from each cohort. These are mixed ability pieces of work.
- From this, we decide on judgements for each child based on the work undertaken throughout that term; not on a 'stand-alone' piece of work. This is in line with other curriculum subjects.
- For Come and See in Y5 and Y6, teachers use standard indicators and driver words whilst considering individual targets for each child and evaluations from previous topics.
- At the end of the year the standards grids are then passed on to the next class as they move up each year. This is also passed from Year 6 up to secondary school.

The teachers continually assess the children throughout the year and place judgements on the school tracker three times a year; once at the end of the autumn term, once at the end of the spring term and once half-way through the summer term. These are monitored by the Religious Education co-ordinator and assessment co-ordinator to ensure all pupils are on track and developing in their learning. Teachers use the results from these assessments and consult the standard indicators to inform their planning in order to provide opportunities for children to progress in their learning.

### Foundation Stage

Regular assessments take place throughout the foundation stage as Religious Education is on-going throughout all aspects of learning. Evidence is collected in a variety of forms and floor books are made to show the progression of children's learning in each topic.

## 5. RECORDING

Recording provides evidence of achievement. It involves pupil's self-assessment and progress in dialogue with the teacher. At St. Joseph's recording takes many forms such as:

- Notes from observations;
- Visual evidence – photographs of displays, videos of dance, drama, celebrations, assemblies;
- Pupils' written work

## 6. REPORTING

There are four dimensions to reporting in Religious Education. Reporting:

- Provides feedback to pupils on their achievements and progress;
- Informs teacher colleagues of the achievement of individual pupils and the areas studied by a class and year group;
- Informs parents of the progress and achievements of their children;
- Informs parents, governors, parish and external agencies of the content and quality of Religious Education being provided and the achievements of the pupils.

The above is done through oral and/or written reports at various times throughout the school year. Religious Education forms a large part of our comments to parents on end of year reports and is placed at the beginning of our comments. We report on children's attainment and effort in Religious Education, as we would all other core subjects.

## 7. EVALUATION OF TEACHING

Teaching will be evaluated by the R.E subject leader through a number of strategies including the observation of:

- Monitoring of children's workbooks.
- Interviewing children when timetabled for monitoring.
- Assessments carried out by individual teachers.
- Lessons in Religious Education.
- Displays of children's work in R.E in class and around the school.
- Class and school assemblies/Collective Worships.
- Ensuring use is made of resources or alternative, appropriate materials are introduced for topics.

It is the school's policy for all curriculum co-ordinators to be given the opportunity to examine and monitor samples of work and discuss their subject with staff. The samples cover a cross section of above average, average, below average. This monitoring ensures Religious Education has the same precedence as all National Curriculum subjects and that all the standards expected across the subjects are the same. It also gives the opportunity to view the progression through topics.

## 8. EVALUATION OF LEARNING

Children are able to evaluate their own learning using a brainstorm of their ideas and the *Remember and Renew* stage in each topic.

**Remember**
The teacher enables the children to recall and review the work done in the topic. This is done by:

- Recalling what was given worth at the celebration;
- Giving time for the children to remember, make a conscious effort to bring together, what they have done and learned as individuals and as a group;
- Asking specific questions to discover what learning focuses have been achieved;
- Using gathered examples of work and resources as prompts;
- Summarising and reinforcing learning that has taken place;
- Evaluating the topic.

**Renew**
The teacher helps the children to hold on to, and make their own, what they have understood of their own experience and of the experience of the Church community. This can be done by:

- Giving children time to reflect on what they would like to hold on to and never forget;
- Helping them to focus on and choose a song, a hymn, a doctrinal statement, a poem, phrase or line, picture, photograph, symbol, story or reading which encapsulates their understanding and enables them to bring it to mind again;
- Exploring the possibility and potential for living in a deeper and fuller way;
- Identifying ways of applying this in life.

**Further suggestions for children's evaluation of their learning**

- Something I understand better
- Something I've thought about
- Something I've enjoyed
- Something I didn't enjoy
- Something I'll try to do that I didn't do before
- Something that puzzled me
- Anything else that you have thought about

## 9. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

At St. Joseph's, staff development is linked to Performance Management. At the heart of the performance review is an opportunity to celebrate achievement wherever possible, as well as to discern where there is scope for development. In-service is carried out in line with the School's Strategic Plan which is produced through whole staff involvement.

All staff are encouraged to make use of the supportive documentation for planning at the start of the topic. All staff attend a whole school assembly/Prayer and Liturgy on a weekly basis.

At St. Joseph's, as in all Catholic schools, the R.E subject leader has, under the direction of the Headteacher, the responsibility to co-ordinate the development of the 'To Know You More Clearly' programme. It is also the duty of the R.E subject leader to keep staff informed of developments within this by attending inset and meetings. The R.E subject leader will deliver staff development through:

- Providing and talking through ideas.
- Working alongside colleagues
- Making information available
- Having informal/formal discussions with staff about their needs and the support they would like.

## 10. STAFF INDUCTION

The R.E subject leader is responsible for explaining the approach chosen for the delivery of the R.E curriculum and the necessary time allocation. He/she is responsible for giving guidance and support to all newly appointed staff, in the teaching of RE. The R.E subject leader will always be available for further advice and support if necessary.

Class teachers have the responsibility of making available to any supply teacher or student teacher in their year group the relevant information and support for the teaching of Religious Education, which is to take place in the absence of the class teacher.

## 11. STAFF COMMUNICATION

At the start of each academic year all staff are given a copy of the topics to be studied for the year and dates for the topics to begin and end. Dates of any celebrations, feast days and services are also included.

Each term a medium term plan, together with a breakdown of dates for allocations of time is given to all staff.

Time is always available at briefings and staff meetings for information throughout the year and more specific staff meeting time can be allocated to Religious Education. Staff are able to speak to the R.E subject leader whenever necessary. It is the school policy that all staff make themselves available as subject leaders to support colleagues and this is often done either on a one-to-one basis or during staff meetings.

The Headteacher passes on any information from the Christian Education Department (or other relevant information) to the Religious Education subject leader or to the whole staff as appropriate.

## 12. RELATIONSHIP OF R.E. TO THE WHOLE CURRICULUM

**Policies and Guidelines for Collective Worship**

Collective worship is held each day either in class or as a whole school celebration to ensure children have the opportunity to attend collective worship every day.

**Opportunities Provided for Spiritual Development**

Opportunities for spiritual development are met through the curriculum, the influence of Come and See, collective worship and assembly. Examples can be found in various curriculum policy documents in school.

**Opportunities Provided for Moral development**

There are many and varied opportunities for moral development to take place among and within staff and children. The mission statement serves to state an ethos we foster and consistently work towards in our school. Much of the success of moral development depends upon the close working relationship that exists between children and adults in school; school and parents, Parish and Parish Workers.

Opportunities for moral development are discussed through School Rules, moral code, moral stories, team spirit, respect for others, assembly, Collective Worship, circle time, PSHE, RSHE and our behaviour policy.

**Opportunities provided for Away Days and Retreats**

In Year 6, the children are given the opportunity to attend the Anderton Centre, whereby they spend three days away from home. As part of this trip, children are encouraged to keep a journal of their time away and are invited to attend reflection time where they sit outdoors to reflect quietly on their growth in independence. This has proven to be excellent preparation for secondary school and we find the children do return with a developed maturity. Staff are all invited to attend if they wish to take part in this important time.

Year 6 attend an annual retreat day at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Chorley where they meet with other Year 6 children from the local area to celebrate their Catholicity. The day culminates in a Mass with hundreds of children.

Year 5 children are invited by the local Catholic High School to attend a retreat day. This allows the children to share in their faith with children who they knew from school and children from

other schools who are their own age.
Children in Year 5 and 6 visit Animate Youth Ministry annually for workshops held there.

**Links with parents, parish and the local community**

Parents are informed each term through newsletters as to what is being taught in all areas of the curriculum including R.E. in each class. Parents are invited to assemblies, Collective Worships, school and class Masses, carol services and many other school events. Parents are encouraged to attend preparation for Sacraments both at school and Church.

St. Joseph's has strong links with the parish and often joins in with parish celebrations. School events and successes are regularly included in the parish newsletter. The 'Wednesday Word' is sent home online, weekly. This is free to all families and encourages families to sit around with each other to discuss the Gospel. Our leading Catechist, who undertakes all the Sacramental preparation, is also a parent and governor at our school which, again, allows for close links between home, school and parish.

Our children play an active part in our community by sharing harvest gifts and also singing carols for everyone in the local area at Church and at the Parish Centre. Every Class attends Mass at least twice in a term. The whole school is also invited to Mass on a number of occasions including a welcome Mass, Ash Wednesday and an end of year celebration Mass.. We also raise money for CAFOD and The Good Shepherd during Lent and Shelter at Christmas.

**Sacramental Programme**
As mentioned earlier, the catechist at St. Joseph's Church is a parent and governor at our school. This ensures that there are close links between the Sacramental Programme and the work undertaken in school. Although the Sacraments are now undertaken by the parish, we ensure that they are celebrated in school. We have a dedicated display board to the children undertaking their Sacraments and ask the children to share their experiences with the whole school during whole school collective worship. The whole community is invited to share in these celebrations.

**Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)**
At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we try to help children develop a healthy awareness of the importance of relationships and how to live our life to the full. We use the programme 'A Journey in Love' recommended by the Archdiocese. This is delivered to each class at various times throughout the school year which is planned out and mapped for the whole school. (See RSHE policy for further information).

**Citizenship**
Regular projects are planned to encourage citizenship among our children. For example we have undertaken a community project where the children researched different communities and examined how they are important in that community. We have also undertaken world of work weeks that show the children the importance of different talents and gift within a community. Through our work on the Live Simply project, children learnt the meaning of being a good citizen and helping those around us. Our eco-council continue to strive to care for our

common home.

**Equal Opportunities**
At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School a Catholic education is provided, irrespective of how committed to the Catholic Church or not parents may be. We are committed to creating a caring atmosphere where each individual child can develop their own sense of worth.

**Special Educational Needs**
Every child is valued as a unique individual with many talents, gifts and skills and potential to excel in many areas of their life. Throughout the school, the child engages in activities prepared for them that meet their individual need and respects any learning and physical difficulty they may experience on a short or long-term basis. Children have Individual Educational Plans. All staff are aware of the children's needs and plan activities with these in mind. The programmes used enable the children to explore their faith at their own level of maturity, pace and need. We encourage all our children to grow as individuals at their own rate and relative to their own ability.

**Displays**
Display is seen as being very important throughout the school. It conveys the message to children about the quality of work expected, the standard of work, the variety of work going on throughout the school across all the year groups and shows that their individual contributions are valuable.
Every classroom has an RE display for each topic and collective worship. This will also be seen throughout the school.

## 13. EVALUATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK

This handbook was renewed by Mrs Katie Cunliffe, in partnership with the whole staff and governors, in the academic year 2025-26. It is a working document which aims to reflect the schools current thinking about the delivery of Religious Education. This handbook will be reviewed in October each year by staff and governors and updated as necessary after whole school discussions.

The curriculum as a whole is audited on a yearly basis in terms of effectiveness, time allocation and needs of staff and RE is an integral part of this audit.

The RE subject leader will update the handbook as required. The Headteacher and R.E subject leader will follow the advice of the Archdiocesan team and any relevant documentation when reviewing and updating the handbook.

**REVIEW DATE: September 2027**

## APPENDIX 1

### The Role of the Subject Leader for Religious Education

**The Religious Education Subject Leader will be responsible for:**

- Working with senior leaders on monitoring teaching and learning, planning and standards through lesson observations and work scrutinies according to school practice.
- Organising and maintaining the school portfolio of pupils' moderated work.
- Organising in-house moderation of standards meetings.
- Self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Ensuring the curriculum offered is appropriate, suitable and relevant to pupils' needs and interests.
- Attending appropriate training and keeping up to date with current thinking, policy and developments and feeding back to staff.
- Organising and leading in-house staff training and development.
- Identifying training needs of staff to ensure their suitability to teach effective Religious Education.
- Supporting and advising colleagues in the delivery of Religious Education.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, Governors, parents, the Education Service on matters relating to Religious Education.
- Auditing, managing and developing resources within a given budget.