



# Religious Education

## Autumn 2022



Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company registration number: 07696069 and registered address: St. Alban's Catholic Academy, First Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2NP.

## **Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust**

### **Religious Education Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Religious education forms the cornerstone of the life and work within Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust (OLFCMAT) and permeates through the whole curriculum. Its purpose is to nurture the Catholic Faith, and its teachings, in our children. By helping them to live this faith we hope to encourage our children to develop a better relationship with God and others around them.

The schools' Mission Statements outline each school's aims and ideals for the spiritual and intellectual education of our pupils. Religious Education is not confined to the RE lessons and is implicit in the curriculum (Caritas Curriculum), the organisation and a conduct of the working of our school.

#### **Rationale of Religious Education**

The primary purpose of Catholic Religious Education is to come to know and understand God's revelation which is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. In the person of Christ, the deepest meaning of what it is to be human that we are created by God and through the Holy Spirit united with Christ in his Incarnation is discovered. This revelation is known through the scriptures and the tradition of the Church as taught by the Magisterium. Religious Education helps the pupil to know and experience the meaning of this revelation in his or her own life and the life of the community which is the Church. (Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012)

Religious Education is the core subject in our Catholic school.

"Religious Education may well be received as catechesis, deepening and enhancing their personal faith; for some it will be evangelisation, the first time they will have been presented, personally, with the truths of living faith. Nevertheless, its primary purpose is the step by step study of the mystery of Christ, the teaching of the Church and its application in daily life. The criteria by which it is to be judged are educational." (Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2000)

Religious Education is planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other core curriculum subjects.

The outcome of Religious Education is to develop 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. (Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012)

#### **The Aims of Religious Education**

- To present a comprehensive content, which engages our children, and is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
- To enable our children to continually deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
- To help the children understand the world in which they live.
- To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life. In general, the aim of both schools is to make the children aware of their own abilities and powers, aware of their relationships with and duties towards others, and capable of reaching their full potential as responsible caring adults;
- To raise our children's awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
- To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
- To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;
- To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture. (Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012)
- To see at work in our school community the values of God's kingdom, prayer, truth, holiness, justice, love, forgiveness and peace.
- To develop a sense of awe and wonder within our children and foster in them a reverence for God and the things which are God's, a sense of love and respect for one another, and a true understanding of the Catholic Faith.

### **The Religious Education Programme**

We offer a curriculum that is rich, varied and challenging to develop the whole person. We recognise the dignity of all and actively promote a sense of security and self-worth. We work in partnership and reach out to others to improve the world in which we live.

To enable us to achieve these aims we use the **Come and See** programme of Religious Education, alongside the guidance of the Catholic Directory. In accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops Conference the children in KS1 receive 2 hours of Religious Education per week and in KS2 children receive 2.5 hours of Religious Education per week, and in KS1, covering 10% of the curriculum. The programme is based around three core areas of learning, which are repeated each term through twelve topics over the course of the year. The themes are:

- Church,
- Sacrament
- Christian Living

Each topic lasts for 4 weeks. During the Autumn Term and Summer Term there are two additional weeks for the study of other faiths such as Judaism and Islam. The whole school follows the same themes but individual topics are studied in each year group.

### **Planning**

Taking a whole school approach in using Come and See, we are confident that the breadth of the curriculum is being taught and there is good progression from year to year. Planning grids are available for each topic and individual teachers are responsible for completing these in accordance with the Come and See Programme. Planning is also submitted to the RE Leader on a termly basis.

*(Please refer to the Come and See materials for more detail about planning and curriculum coverage)*

The advantages of this approach are:

- Appropriate content for each group is ensured;
- Planning and recording is easy;
- Continuity and progression across the school is assured;
- Communal celebrations are possible.

### **Feedback for progress**

Work should be marked in accordance with the Trust's Feedback Policy. Work should be assessed in relation to the learning outcomes. Key words must be corrected. Response to learning should encourage children to reflect, analyse and should be interactive.

### **Assessment and Record Keeping**

Each teacher has the responsibility for maintaining records on the children in their class. Children are assessed on their knowledge of scripture, understanding of God's message, their moral development and attitudes. At the end of each topic, for St Alban's and St Luke's every child completes a 'big question' (from the beginning of the topic) Respond booklet. For St John Fisher, an assessment task is undertaken which assesses the learning for the topic.

Pupils are assessed through teacher assessment at the end of each topic and once a term through a task where the piece of work is assessed in accordance with the standards in RE.

Teachers of pupils in Key Stage 1 will choose whether an oral or written evaluation is more appropriate. At regular intervals samples of pupil's work will be kept in their record of achievement.

Progress is reported to parents at parent meetings and in the formal written report to parents in the summer term.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning**

The RE Leader monitors work through regular learning/culture walks, drop-ins, book scrutinies and by collecting samples of work for a school portfolio.

Within the trust, whilst we believe that academic rigour is as necessary in RE as in any subject, this should not negate spiritual and emotional development and learning which are not always possible to assess using formal methods, but are an integral part of Religious Education.

Issues concerning Come and See topics will be discussed in staff meetings prior to their commencement to enable staff to benefit from the supportive atmosphere and experience of others.

### **Staff Training and Involvement**

Frequent and regular staff meetings are held to discuss the teaching of RE. The RE Leader attend termly meetings and other relevant courses and report back to the rest of the staff.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We believe that all children are entitled to equal access to the full RE curriculum regardless of gender, race, cultural or social background. Religious Education is one of the highest order activities of the human race, i.e. the quest for God. It should, therefore, always promote values of respect, equality and reverence for all people, everywhere, whether or not they have faith.

All pupils, regardless of their educational ability will have full access to RE in the curriculum. Work in lessons will be Scaffolded according to ability in the same way as in other subjects. Account will be taken of highly talented and more able children as well as those with learning difficulties.

### **Other Faiths**

We believe that learning about other faiths and cultures is essential for a better understanding of our own faith and culture. The emphasis should be on similarities rather than differences. Everyone will study world religions Judaism and Islam, as prescribed in the Come and See programme. Timings for these study areas are set out in the School's liturgical calendar, usually occurring in the Autumn Term and Summer Term.

### **Prayer and Liturgy**

Prayer in both schools, takes many forms, at the beginning and end of the day, before and after meals and at other times informally throughout the day. Whole school assemblies take place on three days, a key stage assembly on one day and one day for classroom worship. Throughout the year each Key Stage 2 class prepares a Class Mass with the help of the Spiritual Lead and the Parish Priests. Where Holy Days of Obligation occur during school term the pupils attend Mass either at the Parish Church. At other times of the year celebrations are prepared by various staff with the support of the Leaders for example at Christmas and Easter.

### **Spiritual, Moral and Social Education**

The Come and See programme encourages the children to think about their relationships and to act responsibly. Alongside Come and See we use a range of other resources to support the spiritual, moral and social development of our children. There are Prayer spaces in both KS1 and KS2 where children are encouraged to take time to pray and reflect. Year 6 take on the role of prefects within the school.

### **Home, School, Parish Links**

We recognise the importance of parents as the child's first teacher and their role in faith development. Parents and staff do everything possible to work in close partnership. There are many opportunities for parents to engage in school life.

The schools within our Trust seeks, in partnership with parents and parish, to develop and nurture the Catholic faith of our children. We strive to bring pupils to a fuller understanding and knowledge of the Roman Catholic tradition. RE lessons are further enriched through our partnership with our Parish Church. Children gain experience of the different sacraments such as Baptism and Eucharist, through visits to the church and talks with the Parish Priest.

Parents and other interested visitors are invited to participate in our celebration of Mass, assemblies, etc. Each class prepares one assembly per year, which is a reflection and celebration of their classwork. Whole school masses are held in the Parish Church. Pupils make visits to the local parish church and other places of worship. The priests and other religious leaders are also invited to the school. Parents are invited to celebrate Mass with the school community and on other occasions when a collective act of worship takes place in both schools.

The school have strong links with other schools within the deanery, where all the schools in the deanery come together each year to celebrate Mass together. We have close links with Catholic (and other) feeder schools, which helps the children in their transition from primary to secondary school.

The school aims to develop in the children, concern and charity towards others in the community. As part of our development strategies we involve the children in charitable fund raising events throughout the year. In the Autumn Term children are encouraged to support local charities; in the Spring term the whole school supports charitable activities which aim to help people in the wider world. This is carried out during Lent with the money raised being sent to charities like CAFOD. We also collect money for the Bentwood Catholic Children's Society usually during the Christmas Concert. It is hoped that through these and other activities children become aware of the needs of others both near and far, and develop sensitivity, generosity and a sense of responsibility towards their neighbours in Christ.

Parents are:

- Given a warm welcome when they visit our school;
- Given termly curriculum overviews which inform them of the topics covered in class, as well as ways they can support their child's learning;
- Given weekly newsletters;
- Given a verbal report on their child's RE development during Parents Evenings;
- Given a written report on their child's RE development at the end of the year;
- Given opportunities to be involved in all charity activities during the year for school and the wider community.

### **Environment and Display**

From the moment you enter any school in our Trust, the school environment says loudly and clearly that we are a Catholic school. There are special areas as you approach the school office, devoted to the Sunday Gospel and displays the current liturgical colour for the Church's year. Throughout the school there are a variety of RE displays and focal areas. There is a strong emphasis on prayer throughout the school with prayers displayed in

prominent areas. The school also has a prayer corner for both the infants and juniors where children can have moments of peace and reflection. The Stations of the Cross are also displayed on a route around the outside of the school classrooms.

Each Year Group has a prayer area in a prominent place within the classroom, displaying religious artefacts and the current liturgical colour. In addition to this each classroom has a display dedicated to current learning in Religious Education, with key vocabulary and driver words to assist in the children's learning.

### **Resources**

A wide range of material resources are used in both schools to supplement Come and See. Each class has its own collection of books such as Listen, Praise, Children's Prayer Books and Bibles. Staff and children alike have easy access to a wider selection of resources, which are centrally stored in both libraries to augment those already in existence in the classroom RE corners. An increasing number of on-line resources are being used especially for assemblies and lessons. These resources are continually reviewed and updated. Within the Trust, we recognise that people are our greatest resource and that teachers 'take the place of Christ' in relation to the children's understanding of the Catholic Faith. Therefore, we work to promote respect, love, understanding, compassion, kindness, dedication and personal growth.

### **The Role of the Subject Leader**

The first purpose of the RE Leader is to help improve the quality of the teaching and learning that children receive in Religious Education.

The RE Leader is responsible for:

- Writing and keeping relevant documentation up to date;
- Help generate a climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel teachings so that our children experience a Christian, caring community;
- Co-ordinating the teaching throughout the school by encouraging collaboration between year groups and key stages;
- Monitor the quality of teaching to ensure high standards are maintained throughout the school:
  - Regular Book Scrutiny
  - Regular learning/culture walks
  - Peer Observations
- Monitor the progression and the continuity of Religious Education throughout the school;
- Being involved in the process of assessment, recording and reporting;
  - Assessment Tracking
  - Termly Analysis of Assessment Data
- Keep informed of developments in the teaching of RE, primarily through contact with BRES (Brentwood Religious Education Service);
- Identify resource requirements and where necessary purchase resources from the curriculum budget allocation; With the Executive Headteacher, completing the

Religious Education Action Plan and using it to inform the School Improvement Plan.

The Spiritual Lead is responsible for:

- Provide support and guidance for teachers of the RE curriculum and in the preparations of the Mass, liturgies and other celebrations;
- Maintaining the high status of worship within the school;
- Be responsible for setting dates and organising celebrations throughout the liturgical year;
- Maintaining the strong relationships between the school and the Diocese and with the school's Diocesan advisor;