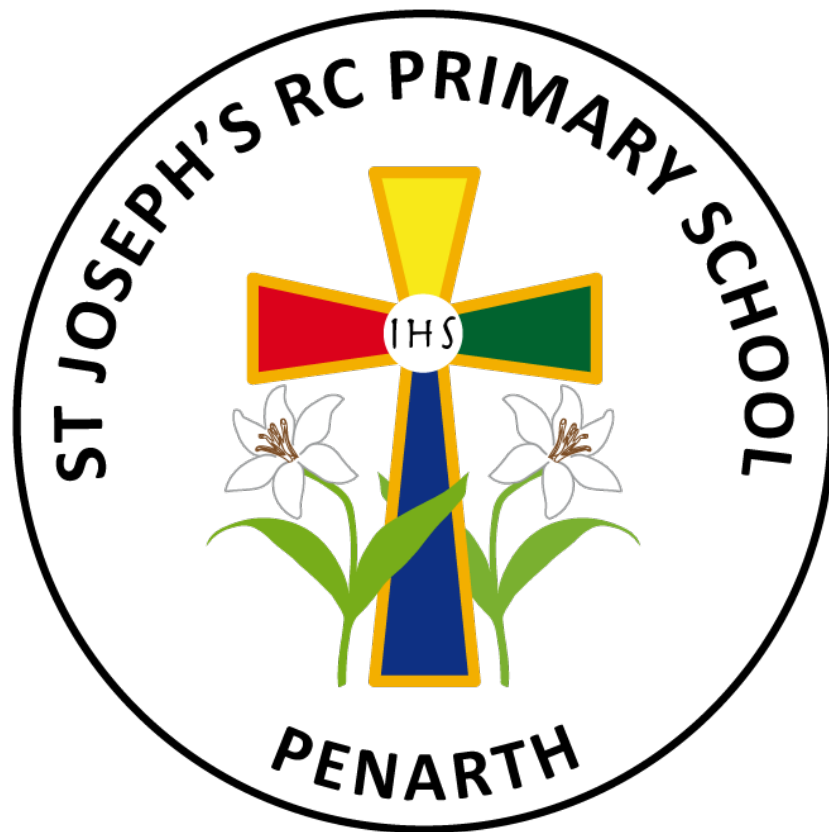


# St Joseph's RC Primary School

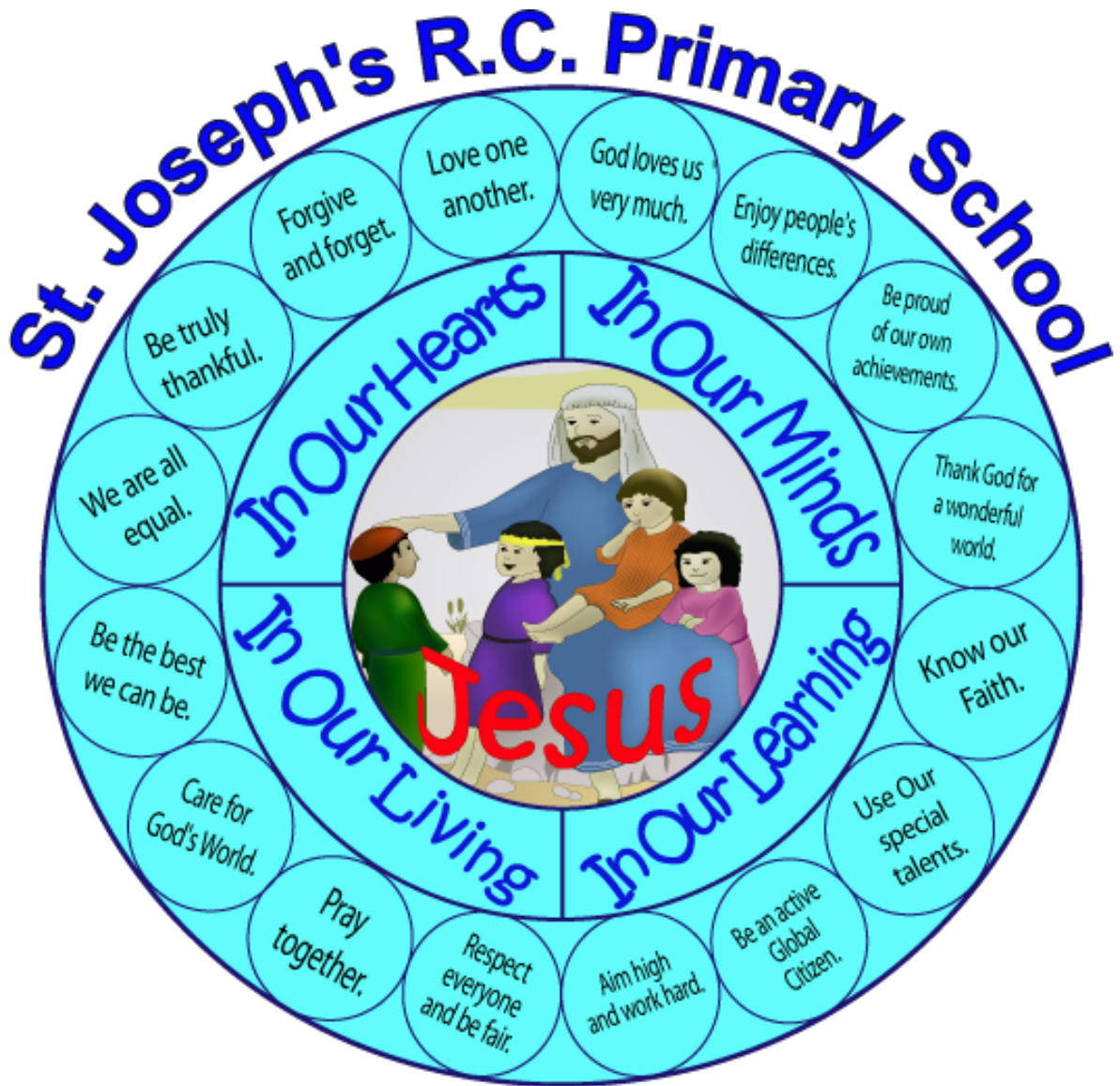
## Religious Education Policy October 2024



### Document Version History

Version Number	Date Review Approved	Date Published	Summary of Amendments
1	13 <sup>TH</sup> February 2025	13 <sup>TH</sup> February 2025	New Policy to align with Religious Education Directory, 2023

Our School Mission Statement



Approved by..... Headteacher

Approved by..... Chair of Governors

## **Our School Vision**

At St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, our vision is to create a welcoming, loving, and transformative community where Christ is at the centre. Through excellent, rigorous, and inspirational teaching, we are dedicated to ensuring that each child develops in mind, body and spirit. At St Joseph's, pupils receive an ambitious curriculum, which is driven by the Four Purposes and designed to open minds, broaden horizons and develop literacy, numeracy and digital skills. This helps all learners realise their potential and develop a lifelong love of learning.

We are committed to developing and encouraging our pupils and staff members to grow in the virtues outlined in the St. Joseph's Pupil Profile. We prioritise the mental and emotional wellbeing of our pupils, equipping them with the skills and attributes they need to form positive relationships with adults and their peers. We foster in each pupil a sense of Cynefin, Welsh heritage, culture, and the uniqueness and diversity of our community and environment. Our aim is to help pupils live by Jesus' example, becoming beacons of His love and light in the world, while also instilling in them good manners and kindness in their interactions with others.

We recognise the importance of building strong connections between the school, home, parish, and local community. Through active participation in school improvement, community action, and the Global Goals for Sustainable Development, we promote informed citizenship and empower our pupils to make a positive impact on the world.

## **Introduction**

At St Joseph's RC Primary School, our Religious Education Policy is grounded in the principles of the *2023 Religious Education Directory, To Know You More Clearly*, developed by the Bishops of England and Wales. This new directory invites Catholic schools, academies, and colleges to deepen their commitment to religious education as an essential, holistic formation of young people in faith, values, and understanding. Religious Education at our school is a core subject, fostering not only academic knowledge but a lived, personal response to the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church.

Informed by the RE Directory's *Ways of Knowing*—understanding, discerning, and responding—our curriculum nurtures pupils in their journey to know God, themselves, and the world around them. These ways of knowing guide us in developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions that align with the dignity of each learner, celebrating their unique potential as children of God. Through structured and meaningful opportunities for encounter, dialogue, and reflection, we aim to engage pupils in a deep and respectful exploration of Catholic faith and the richness of global religious traditions.

Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and an ethos of inclusivity, our Religious Education program equips our pupils with a strong sense of moral responsibility, empathy, and respect for all. We believe that a quality RE curriculum fosters a lifelong foundation of faith, resilience, and a compassionate commitment to justice, peace, and stewardship of creation. This policy, therefore, serves as a blueprint for a vibrant, reflective, and inclusive RE curriculum that supports pupils to grow in knowledge, faith, and service within a supportive Catholic community.

## **Our Vision for Religious Education**

At St. Joseph's RC Primary School, we are committed to providing a holistic and faith-centered education rooted in the Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Our mission in Religious Education is to nurture pupils' faith, understanding, and commitment to Catholic principles, helping them to grow as compassionate, reflective, and responsible individuals who actively contribute to their community and the world.

## **Purpose of RE**

Religious Education is central to our curriculum, fostering each pupil's intellectual and spiritual development. Through RE, pupils learn about their faith, develop ethical reasoning, and gain cultural awareness, preparing them to live lives rooted in love, respect, and service. We believe that RE is a journey of growth in knowledge and relationship with God, the self, and others.

## **Alignment with the RE Directory**

Guided by the 2023 Religious Education Directory for England and Wales, To Know You More Clearly, our RE curriculum is structured around three Ways of Knowing: understanding, discerning, and responding. These approaches provide a foundation for holistic faith development, inviting pupils into a deeper relationship with God through meaningful study and reflective practice.

## **Aims of the Religious Education Curriculum**

*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.*

*(Religious Education Directory, 2023, p6)*

## **Core Aims**

The RE curriculum seeks 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.
- Enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively.
- 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.
- 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.
- Develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.
- Stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith.
- Enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

## **Curriculum Design and Content**

### **Program Structure**

The RE curriculum is taught for at least 10% of the total curriculum time, in alignment with Diocesan expectations. Lessons are structured to include Scripture, Catholic teachings, and relevant social and ethical themes, providing pupils with a comprehensive understanding of their faith.

## Structural Elements

<b>Knowledge Lenses</b>	set out the object of study for pupils; they indicate what should be known by the end of each age-phase.
<b>Ways of Knowing</b>	set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey.
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	are a synthesis of the content outlined in the knowledge lenses and the skills described in the ways of knowing. Each age-phase will have a prescribed set of outcomes that will indicate what pupils are expected to know, remember, and be able to do, using the language of the ways of knowing and applying it to the discrete knowledge within each lens.
<b>Curriculum Branches</b>	are the way this programme of study presents its model curriculum. The model curriculum presents the expected outcomes in six curriculum branches that correspond to the six half-terms of a school year.

### Knowledge Lenses

The knowledge lenses are the object of study for pupils; they indicate what should be known by the end of each age-phase. (5-7, 7-9 and 9-11)

There are 6 knowledge lenses:

Hear  
Believe  
Celebrate  
Live  
Dialogue  
Encounter

### Ways of Knowing

Our curriculum emphasises understanding, discerning, and responding. Lessons are designed to help pupils understand Catholic teachings, discern their meaning and application in today's world, and respond personally through actions of faith and service.

### Expected Outcomes

Pupils are encouraged to grow in knowledge and wisdom in age-appropriate ways. Expected outcomes, as outlined in the RE Directory, provide a pathway for skill development, guiding pupils toward a mature understanding of faith, respect for diversity, and a commitment to living justly. Each age-phase has a prescribed set of expected outcomes that indicate what pupils are expected to know, remember and be able to do, using the language of the ways of knowing and applying it to the discrete knowledge within each lens. It is against these expected outcomes that we assess pupil progress, both formatively, and summatively.

### Curriculum Branches

With a strong focus on stories and scripture, pupils encounter scripture and what the Church teaches about scripture and what this means for a life lived in Christ as part of the Catholic faith, through six curriculum branches.

These are:

- Creation and Covenant
- Prophecy and Promise
- Galilee to Jerusalem

- Desert to Garden
- To the ends of the Earth
- Dialogue and encounter

## **Catholic Social Teaching Integration**

Our curriculum integrates Catholic Social Teaching principles, including human dignity, care for creation, and justice, helping pupils see the Gospel message reflected in modern issues and inspiring them to live out their faith in action.

## **Teaching and Learning Approaches**

### **Methods and Pedagogy**

RE teaching at St. Joseph's employs inquiry-based learning, reflective dialogue, and creative expression, using stories, art, music, and drama to deepen pupils' engagement and understanding. Lessons encourage pupils to ask questions, reflect critically, and draw connections between faith and daily life.

### **Inclusion and Differentiation**

We recognise that pupils come with varied backgrounds and learning needs. RE teaching is differentiated to be accessible to all, ensuring each child can fully participate and contribute, regardless of ability or personal faith background.

### **Expected Outcomes and Assessment Strategies**

Pupil progress is measured against the RE Directory's age-related outcomes, which guide our tracking and reporting processes. This approach ensures consistency and supports targeted feedback to further pupils' faith formation.

Regular feedback in RE encourages pupils to reflect on their learning journey and think deeply about their faith. Reflective practices are embedded throughout the curriculum to foster a lifelong relationship with God.

Assessment in RE is conducted through a range of approaches, including quizzes, Exit Tickets, Assessment Tasks, oral presentations, and class discussions. These assessments evaluate pupils' understanding, discernment, and ability to respond thoughtfully to RE topics.

### **Role of Parents, Parish, and Community**

#### **Home-School-Parish Links**

We recognise the vital role that parents and the parish community play in the faith formation of our pupils. Parents are the first educators in the faith and establish in their children the first response to God, the practice of prayer and the introduction to the community/ parish. By their example in the home and in their participation in the Mass and other Sacraments, the foundations of lifelong faith and discipleship in their children are laid down. However, we do recognise that this is not true for many of our children and their families. Consideration also has to be given to the fact that children come from a variety of backgrounds including practising Catholic, non-practising Catholic, non-Catholic and no faith background.

For some children, Religious Education may be catechesis, deepening their faith, for some it will be evangelisation, the first time that they will have had experience of their living faith. The purpose though 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.

Parents are encouraged to participate in school events, liturgies, and celebrations, and the school works closely with St. Joseph's Parish to support sacramental preparation and parish involvement.

Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and First Holy Communion at St Joseph's, Penarth and St Mary's, Dinas Powys Parish, takes place in the parish. The school maintains a connection with the parish for the Sacraments and one of our teachers is a catechist.

Through service projects and social action, pupils connect their learning with real-world applications of their faith, building a sense of solidarity and responsibility within their local and global communities.

### **Prayer and Liturgy**

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic School is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship with him. 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 and ethos of the School.

At St Joseph's RC Primary School prayer is an important part of our daily life. We believe it to be the lifting of the mind and heart to God, to help us form a personal relationship with Him. For this personal relationship with God to develop we must encourage and foster our children's prayer life in a variety of ways.

For further information see Prayer and Liturgy Policy 2024.

### **Bilingualism**

The Welsh language is used in all areas of school, including learning and teaching activities. Incidental Welsh, e.g. greetings, instructions, should be used by staff and children in all sessions.

The Archdiocese have developed 'Canllaw Addoliad i Ysgolion Catholig- A Worship Resource for Catholic Schools' that is used to support teachers and pupils in their use of Welsh language in Religious Education. The materials include incidental Welsh language patterns and phrases, and prayers and songs that relate to specific themes and Church seasons.

### **Classroom Environment**

Our classroom practice must always reflect the shared vision articulated in the Mission Statement and aims and objectives of the school. There should be a designated quiet area or prayer table provided to enhance and support the children's prayer life at the school, where it is a place for interaction as well as silent prayer. A suitable Bible should be placed in a prominent position - maybe on a special cushion or stand. The children should be introduced to this as the most important book in the room. They should see it kept in a special place and handled with care. The Bible should have a cover or rest on a piece of material that changes with the season. There should be a crucifix in the room to remind the children of the presence of God.

A display board close by should be linked in with the present theme of the topic being studied, showcase RE work and expectations and provide a support for the children's learning e.g., through key words and questions

The use of the Pupil Profile Tree is an important way to mark the children's understanding of the Pupil Profile Virtues but also for there to be a reminder of what these virtues mean to the children and adults in school, supporting their journey with being the person that want to be.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Processes**

The Religious Education Lead, with the Senior Leadership Team, regularly monitors progress in Religious Education across the school as part of the school's processes of self evaluation. This includes:

- monitoring of pupils' books/class books
- monitoring of medium and/or short term planning
- conducting 'listening to learner' discussions with pupils
- lesson observations
- review of suitability and storage of resources.

The Religious Education Link Governor Team meets with the RE leader at least once a term, to discuss and consider the subject policy, action plan, self-evaluation reports and standards.

## **The Role of the teacher**

Teachers are at the service of the faith which the children live at home and in Church. They support, extend and clarify this experience of faith.

The children's faith is deepened and strengthened through contact with the faith and prayer of their teachers and the Christian atmosphere of the school.

Their faith grows and develops each year as they are introduced by their teacher in an even deeper manner to the sources of Christian revelation and trained to relate the faith to their present lives and experience.

At school they are also assisted to express their faith and nourish it through prayer liturgy and the Sacraments.

With regard to RE in our classroom practice therefore we must aim to lead the children to a deeper, more living, active and personal faith.

The role of the teacher is to prepare, plan and deliver Religious Education to class groups, prepare their class for the Liturgical Feasts of the Church, help to develop the prayer life of the pupils and are responsible for planning the Religious Education display in their classrooms and on occasion around the school.

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

The role of the Subject Leader is to:

- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject
- provide professional development, particularly around the RE Directory's Ways of Knowing and teaching methodologies that align with our faith mission.
- support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject
- attend appropriate training and keeping up to date with current thinking, policy and feeding back to staff
- monitor learning and teaching, and pupil progress in that subject area
- provide efficient resource management for the subject.

The school gives subject leaders leadership and management time to support them in carrying out the necessary duties involved in their role.

## **Equality Statement**

St Joseph's is committed to equality and we do not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against anyone on the grounds of their gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, ability, disability or any aspect of their social/cultural background. Furthermore, we strive to be an anti-racist school. All the practices and procedures detailed in this policy are designed to be inclusive and we have considered equality implications as part of our obligations under the public sector equality duty when preparing it. The School's Strategic Equality plan can be found here <https://www.stjosephsrc.com/policies-1/>

## **Review Cycle**

This policy is reviewed every two years, involving input from the Senior Leadership Team, RE Lead, Governors, and feedback from pupils and parents. This process ensures that the RE policy remains aligned with the latest guidance and best practices, supporting the continued growth and spiritual development of our pupils.