

The Federation of The Annunciation Catholic Schools



'Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire'
St Catherine of Siena

Religious Education Policy

Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

Our Mission Statement

“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire”- St Catherine of Siena.

The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools is comprised of our Infant and Junior Schools and serves the Catholic Parish of The Annunciation, Burnt Oak. As a Federation, both schools work in close partnership with one another, sharing expertise and resources, thus enabling us to provide the very best education for every pupil in our community. We provide a welcoming atmosphere in our schools and encourage a sense of belonging to our Faith Community. Love, care and respect are values we cherish. We create an enriching environment in each of our schools where each individual is valued. Through our partnership with home and parish the children can learn and grow to the best of their abilities

Our Federation’s Aims:

Intent:

As Catholic Schools, **Religious Education and the values of the Gospel remain at the core of everything we do** – making Christ known to all, serve the local Church and the community and assist parents as the primary educators of their children. Underpinning the life of our schools is our aim to preserve and develop:

- A caring Christian Community, working successfully in partnership with the children’s homes and our parish.
- The Spiritual formation of our children through Prayer and Liturgy and appropriate Religious Education.
- A respect and care for each other, mutual toleration and sympathy, awareness of the human dignity of each person, as made in the image of Christ, irrespective of race, religion, social background or disability.
- A positive self-image for each pupil, a sense of individual worth and an appreciation of the value of his/her contribution to their school.
- Standards of behaviour, which are based on love and respect, in all circumstances.

Our curriculum seeks to:

- Recognise that everything we do and teach ultimately relates to our belief in God.
- Meet the needs of young children through the provision of opportunities for first-hand experiences and plenty of practical work.
- Provide equal access and opportunity for all children regardless of gender or special need.
- Foster a sense of enquiry and a love of learning, as well as encouraging the ability to think for oneself and become an independent learner.
- Enable children to work collaboratively together, and with adults, forming good social relationships.
- Ensure the highest levels of achievement for each child according to his/her capabilities, through quality teaching, high expectations, a regard for truth and making the best possible use of available resources.

- Help children develop a sense of responsibility and respect for the world around them.
- Promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of our children, as they grow and develop in our care.

Objectives

Implementation

Each child is unique and comes with their own gifts to develop and to share with others. We aim to draw out these gifts and help the children value each other and their opinions and accept and appreciate that everyone has something to offer. At The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools, our children are encouraged to learn in an environment where all aspects of mutual care and love of each other, respect for life and love of God are continually promoted.

We seek to achieve this through:

- Our Religious Education programme which explores the beliefs, values and way of life within the Catholic tradition.
- Becoming familiar with the church's liturgical year through our units of work, school assemblies, Celebrations of The Word, Masses, Prayer Services and other liturgical celebrations or events.
- Our Staff and Governors who model examples of Christian values. Our Governors , including our governors with responsibility for Religious Education, work in close partnership with School Leaders to evaluate and support the Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education and Collective Worship provision and outcomes for all pupils.
- The wider school and classroom environments, which are abundant with signs of our faith, especially our classroom prayer areas.
- Our children as they learn to appreciate and respond to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of life, through a variety of mediums: discussion, personal experiences, written work and practical activities.
- Our close links with our parish church, The Church of the Annunciation, alongside our School Chaplain and Assistant Parish Priest, Fr Chinedu Eneh. Fr Chinedu is also a School Governor, responsible for working closely with School Leaders to set the vision for the school's Religious Education and form policies to support the implementation and evaluation of this.

Teaching and Learning in RE

Religious Education is at the core of all we do and we timetable 10% of our curriculum time for its explicit delivery. At The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools, our children are taught using the Margaret Carswell Religious Education programme of study, '**In God's Name**'. This programme of study is arranged to cycle through the life of Jesus as the Catholic Church does and the resource is framed around the Liturgical Year. Over three

years the resource prioritises hearing the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, while it moves through the seasons of Advent, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time. Links between resources develop naturally and theologies introduced in one unit are consolidated in another.

We adhere to the Curriculum Directory guidelines and learning outcomes. This provides a cohesive approach and opportunities for whole school assemblies and celebrations, as well as displays which are relevant to the liturgical year and children's own work and ideas.

Planning

Teachers throughout the Federation come together at a staff meeting each half term to plan effectively for Religious Education the following term. The RE Lead and Senior Leaders support the delivery of staff professional development and quality assure planning. The lessons are based on the detailed medium term plans included in 'In God's Name' Religious Education programme, with teaching staff adapting these for our children's needs. Added to this are any feast day or other whole-school events that are happening.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

RE learning is assessed on a half termly basis and children's progress and RE age related standards are entered onto our electronic system, Sonar. Age Related Standards are decided over a number and range of activities; not just one assessment task. Progress and attainment is monitored by the RE Lead, the Deputy Headteachers and the Headteacher. Additionally, teachers constantly assess and evaluate their own children's work through discussions, questioning within lessons as well as evaluating written work. Moderation takes place within the Federation, as well as within the Deanery and Diocese to ensure assessments are consistent. Parents receive an annual written report which includes Religious Education as the core subject in our curriculum

Self-Evaluation

The Federation reviews the CSED form for each school at least annually and uses the outcomes to inform our CPD programme and Religious Education school development priorities.

Resources

Each class has a prayer corner reflecting the liturgical season, with a selection of books, a Bible, artefacts or objects, which can be the focus of our daily acts of worship. Pupils can also use this area for quiet times of their own. Areas for prayer and which celebrate and promote the liturgical year are also available in the communal areas in each school and in the outside environments.

Monitoring

The monitoring of Religious Education at The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools is the responsibility of the RE Subject leader, the Headteacher and other Senior Leaders and the Governing Body. Their role is to monitor and assess the RE curriculum throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression. They also ensure that the aims and learning outcomes in the Curriculum Directory are identified and fulfilled; and that standards are high. The RE Subject leader is responsible for obtaining resources. RE is monitored regularly through learning walks, book and planning scrutinies, celebrations in school and in the church and through pupil voice and feedback from all stakeholders.

Presentation

Children will present their knowledge and understanding in RE through a variety of ways:

- Discussion and written work
- Research and collating of evidence
- Whole school and class celebrations, liturgies and Masses
- Art and written displays in class and around the schools
- Use of ICT

Marking

At The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools, we expect and encourage the same high standards and expectations in Religious Education as we do for all our curriculum subjects. Marking of children's learning in RE should be positive and supportive to encourage the child in his/her faith journey. Marking will focus upon religious content and comments, feedback and next steps given will look to enhance religious skills, knowledge and understanding rather than literacy skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Key religious vocabulary, which is introduced in any lesson, is corrected in pupils work if spelt incorrectly.

Special Educational Needs

In Religious Education we recognise the need for resourcing, as well as careful planning and differentiation to cater for children of all abilities ranging from the very able children to those of lower ability. Staff are reminded to clearly identify pupils who are achieving at a high level in RE in their planning and adjust their teaching and pupil learning accordingly. RE presents a particular challenge to teachers in that all classes contain pupils who may not have good literacy skills but are very able and insightful in RE. These pupils are catered for at an appropriate level.

Study of Other World Faiths

Whilst Religious Education at The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools is specifically of the Catholic Church, we welcome learning about and from other faiths and denominations. We appreciate and value how the beliefs and values of other faith communities can enrich our own spiritual existence. Our pupils learn about other faiths throughout the year with opportunities for children to have speakers in from different world faiths or visits arranged to other places of worship. This underpins the inclusive character of Catholic education which respects and engages with people of all beliefs or none and heartens the religious development of all in their own faith.

Judaism is studied for a focus week each year, alongside other learning on the Jewish faith and practices and traditions. This takes place at relevant times of the year and through units of study and links to celebrations such as Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah.

Additionally, another major world faith is studied during a focus week each year. The second major world faith chosen may reflect the representation of pupils from other faiths at the schools or reflect faiths significantly represented in the local community. For example, Islam, Sikhism or Hinduism and the faith may change each academic year, based on what is most relevant and meaningful for the children in the schools to learn about.

Separate to these focus weeks, meaningful and relevant opportunities to learn about and celebrate the traditions and practices of other world faiths are planned in the curriculum and celebrated in assemblies. For example, the festivals of Diwali, Eid, Lunar New Year.

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching is threaded through our Religious Education and wider curriculum. Each half term, children will focus on one of the 6 core principles of Catholic Social Teaching and use resources from Rooted in Love – Caritas Westminster to study the principle in RE lessons. We also focus on where Catholic Social Teaching can link to other subjects across the curriculum such as Geography, Science and RSHE.

Catholic Social Teaching Principles are based around the Church's belief that we can all make a difference in our world and make it a better place for all. These teachings are rooted in Scripture and especially in the teachings of Jesus found in the Gospels. Christ shows us how to walk in his footsteps, bringing love and care to those both near and far. We hope to make present in our unjust world, the justice, love and peace of God through our words and actions.

Dignity

Each of us is made in God's image. Every person has an innate human dignity no one can take away. God said, 'Let us make human-kind in our image, according to our likeness.'
Genesis 1:26

Community and Participation

We live in community with others, growing together. We are called to be active participants in all that we do. We have a responsibility to be inclusive so that we allow all people to participate. When each separate part works as it should, the whole body grows and builds itself up through love" Ephesians 4:16

Creation

Stewardship is all about caring for the many gifts that God has given to us. These include our environment, our own talents and other resources. All living things are connected so we must use God's gifts responsibly to meet the needs of everyone, now and in the future. 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.' Genesis 2:15.

Solidarity and Peace

Being in solidarity is recognising others as our brothers and sisters and actively working for their good. We are connected to people and places all over the world. All of you are one in Christ Jesus.' Galatians 3:28

Peace is not just the absence of war. It is part of God's nature, and a value we should all seek to live out in our daily lives. Peace comes from both justice and love and is dependent upon people understanding one another. '...those who promote peace have joy.' Proverbs 12:20

Option for the Poor

A preferential option for the poor means that we think first about the needs of those who are the most vulnerable. Jesus taught that when we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, look after the sick and visit those imprisoned, we are looking after Him. 'Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.' Isaiah 1:17

Dignity of the Worker

Catholic Social Teaching holds that work is dignified and an intrinsic good, and workers must always be respected and valued. The state has also the duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members, the workers, women and children. Work must be undertaken responsibly, and labour treated well, this includes how we approach the work we do, what it is we do with our work and how employers treat their

employees. 'The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.' Timothy 2:6

Home School and Parish Partnership

Religious Education is a fostering of each child's relationship with God and their neighbour. This begins at Baptism and is continued at home as well as at church and in school. Parents are the first educators of their child and support the child with his/her first religious experiences. Our school works in close partnership with parents and parish to enrich the lives of our pupils.

We communicate with parents regularly to notify parents of Masses and liturgies, both in the school and the parish. Children receive the 'Wednesday Word' each week which is shared with their families. Therefore, families can come together to reflect and celebrate the Gospel teachings at home.

Parents and families are invited to join us for assemblies, Masses, Celebration of the Word and other events to support their child's spiritual development and celebrate their achievements. Curriculum meetings and regular Newsletters provides information on and celebrates the Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education and Collective Worship taking place in the schools and invites parents to be actively involved in this.

The children in our schools support Parish events as well as fundraising for CAFOD, the Catholic Children's Society, Advent and Lenten appeals as part of our work towards the Common Good. Our Schools comes together with the parish to celebrate Holy days of obligation and feast days. Our Chaplain and Assistant Parish Priest, Fr Chinedu, comes to school regularly to speak with our children, lead us in Mass and help us celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Along with other Governors he also works with school leaders to evaluate and support the Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education and Collective Worship provision and outcomes for all pupils.

Cross Curricular Links

"We believe that Religious Education is not a subject among many but, the foundation of the entire education process." (Bishops of England and Wales)

In accordance with this statement, we believe that Religious Education is at the heart of what we teach and therefore permeates the whole curriculum. It is reflected in our prayer life and liturgy, in our personal and extended relationships and through developing an awareness in our children of the need to appreciate and care for the wider community and the world in which we teach.

