



**Good Shepherd Catholic
Primary & Nursery School**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Last Review Date: January 2024

Next Review Date: January 2027

Mission Statement

LEARNING TOGETHER AS PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

At Good Shepherd, we will:

Follow the Catholic faith to become more like Jesus

Appreciate that we are all unique and celebrate our different talents

Inspire everyone to develop a love of learning

Treat others as we would like to be treated

Help everyone to become confident and resilient

Introduction

At Good Shepherd, everyone is valued and respected as part of God's family. Our faith permeates every aspect of our school life and is at the heart of everything we do. The Catholic life of the school is rich in opportunities for children to encounter God and to deepen their relationship with Him as a loving, compassionate Father. Each pupil's school-life is enriched as we enable children to come to know and love God through prayer, liturgies, Religious Education lessons and through the relationships and support throughout the school community. Religious icons can be found throughout the school and displays work created in RE lessons are of very high quality and can be seen in classrooms and all around the school. Each class has a prayer focus area, which is adapted and changed throughout the liturgical year. The Christian values at the heart of our Catholic faith incorporate the British values and in everything we do, we aim to further each child's sense of commitment and responsibility to themselves, to others and in the wider world.

The aim of our Religious education programme is to develop a knowledge and love of God in our children by making them aware of His world. We also aim to help the children understand their role as Catholics, in our community and within the wider world and to develop a Christian attitude to those around us.

Aims and Objectives

RE and worship at Good Shepherd is in line with The School Mission Statement which drives all the work we do

- To establish a loving relationship with Father, Son and Spirit
- To help pupils recognise and appreciate the spiritual, religious and moral dimensions of life
- To allow space for searching and questioning
- To challenge pupils to examine their own life stance, to deepen their personal faith commitment and to respect that of others
- To lead pupils to a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Christian tradition and the ways in which it seeks to express the significance of human life

- To lead pupils to a deeper knowledge of other religious traditions
- The school aims to play a full part in fostering home/parish/school links

The Religious Education Curriculum

The programme for RE is based on the expectations stated in the Religious Education Directory for Catholic Schools (REDC). Religious Education is a subject in its own right and is afforded the same importance as the core subjects English and Maths.

Time Allocation

In accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops' Conference, 10% of the taught week is dedicated to the teaching of RE. This amounts to 1 hour and 10 minutes in Nursery and 2 hours and 40 minutes in Reception, KS1 and KS2. This time does not include prayer and liturgy time.

The RE Programme

At Good Shepherd, we follow Come and See, recommended by the Archdiocese of Southwark. The programme is based on Scripture and the Tradition of the Church and underpinned by the theology of Vatican II. Come and See fulfils the requirements of the Bishop's Conference and the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education, which sets out the expectations for what should be covered by Religious Education teaching in Catholic Schools in England and Wales.

Come and See follows a one-year cycle and is developed through three themes; **Church, Sacraments** and **Christian Living**. Each year group explores their own topic based on a whole school theme which are gradually explored each season in greater depth.

Come and See supports and enables the faith experience of all children as it starts with their real-life experience and leads them to reflect upon and consider the Christian message in all its richness in that experience.

We recognise that at Good Shepherd there are children of other religions and understand that it is our role to 'promote their human growth in such a way that they can integrate their particular faith with every aspect of their lives.' *Catholic Schools, Children of Other faiths and Community Cohesion: CES & Bishops' Conference 2007.*

Content Overview

Each term, one topic from each theme is taught. Topics are taught for four weeks each. Below is a breakdown of the topics taught in each term and a description of each.

AUTUMN

Family – Domestic Church

This theme focuses on life as a gift, myself as a unique and loved creation, the creative love that can be expressed in family groups.

Belonging - Baptism/Confirmation

This theme focuses on the call to belong, the creative potential that belonging develops and the sacraments of the gift of God's life and friendship.

Loving – Advent/Christmas

This theme focuses on the capacity for entering into loving relationships and the perfect gift and revelation of God's love, Jesus, born of Mary, born as one of us.

SPRING

Community - Local Church

This theme focuses on the people of God gathered in Christ, united in the journey of faith, in caring for one another, in sharing their story and in celebration.

Inter-relating – Reconciliation/Anointing of the Sick

This theme focuses on the love, compassion and forgiveness of God the Father revealed in Jesus and poured out by the Spirit to bring forgiveness and reconciliation in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Giving – Lent/Easter

This theme focuses on Jesus' loving self-giving on the cross, the Father's love that raises Him to new life and the challenge to Christians to follow Jesus' example of self-giving.

SUMMER

Serving – Pentecost

This theme focuses on the on-going mission of Jesus Christ in the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Relating – Eucharist

This theme focuses on the invitation to know Jesus, to live in communion with Him and one another.

Universal Church – Worldwide

This theme focuses on the same love revealed in the diversity of the world and its people, and in the gifts of the Spirit that bear fruit in love, joy, justice and peace for all people.

The Process

The process for delivering the topics in 'Come and See' has three stages – **Explore**, **Reveal** and **Respond**, which enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.

Explore

The teacher helps the children to begin to look at and focus on the experience within their own lives-concerning themselves, their relationships and their world. In this way, the children are led to a deeper understanding, clearer vision and the discovery of significance and value of the experiential events of everyday life.

Reveal

Reveal is the heart of the process. The teacher and the children together discover the Christian understanding of the mystery of the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They explore the mystery of human life as revealed in the person, life and gospel of Jesus Christ. It will involve learning about Scripture, the teaching of the Church, prayers, rites, psalms, hymns and other expressions of Christian faith and the lives of outstanding Christians.

Respond

Remember is the first part of this section. The children will respond by remembering and celebrating all that they have learnt. Rejoice is the second part of the section. There will be the opportunity to plan and take part in a celebration. Renew is the final aspect. The teacher helps each child to make an individual response, hold on to and make their own, what they have understood of the topic.

Teaching of Other Faiths

It is an expectation that Catholic schools should teach about other religions the equivalent of two weeks of RE lessons each academic year starting in Early Years. In accordance with these instructions, other faiths are taught, each year, throughout the school. One week, in the autumn term, will be spent learning about Judaism, with another week devoted to Islam during the summer term.

Teaching and Learning

Topic Structure

Beginning the topic

Each topic starts with a discussion around a Big Question to assess children's initial understanding. In EYFS and KS1, teachers scribe children's ideas to create a class answer to the Big Question. In KS2 children answer the Big Question independently after a class discussion.

Ending the topic

At the end of the topic children are encouraged to look back at the Big Question and review it based on what they have learnt. At the end of each topic, children plan for an end of topic liturgy by deciding which aspects of their learning they would like to include. Each year group has the opportunity to present a liturgy they have planned together during the year.

Lesson Structure

Beginning the lesson

A focal point is created by lighting a candle. Children are given the opportunity to distance themselves from their previous activity in readiness for the RE lesson. Examples include

- Listening to a piece of music
- Closing your eyes and think about something that has made you happy today

- Silently talking to God
- Thinking about Jesus

Once children are calm and ready for RE, the lesson begins with a prayer or a song.

Ending the lesson

The reflection at the end of the lesson must be linked to the lesson. This could include adding to the focal point of the candle with an image from the lesson, reading a prayer, poem or scripture, playing a piece of music or sitting quietly with closed eyes to reflect on the lesson.

Planning

Each topic is taught for 4 weeks using Come and See.

Monitoring

The RE Lead monitors standards and progress in RE on a termly basis. RE monitoring, is planned for and includes learning walks, book looks, lesson observations and pupil interviews. The monitoring of RE feeds into the RE Development Plan.

Assessment

“Assessment is at the heart of good teaching and does not require highly complex procedures. The unnecessary recording of assessments can tire and stifle the creativity of the teacher, and hamper the learning process and is to be avoided.” *Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Religious Education. P13.*

Assessment in Come and See is related to the concepts, skills and attitudes developed through the exploration of themes and against the learning objective of the lesson. Assessment establishes what children know, understand and can do. Children are mainly judged on their Knowledge and Understanding, which refers to their learning about religion, and on Engagement and Response, which refers to their learning from religion.

At Good Shepherd, assessment is ongoing. Observations of contributions to discussion, engagement in tasks and activities and marking of work all inform teacher assessment.

It is important to understand that Come and See is directed towards spiritual growth and development, which is, in itself, immeasurable. At Good Shepherd, we recognise that faith, feelings, beliefs and values cannot be assessed.

Recording

Recording provides evidence of achievement and takes place in a variety of ways including notes of contributions to discussion, written work, artwork and visual evidence such as photographs of drama, music or displays. Creativity in how learning in RE is recorded is encouraged.

Marking

Through marking, the spelling of key vocabulary that links to the children’s learning in RE is corrected and marking is against the learning objective for the lesson. Through the use of

reflective questions, challenge and greater depth thinking is planned for as children are encouraged to think more deeply about what they have learnt and how we can live it out in their daily lives.

Reporting

Assessment data is recorded three times a year, at the end of each term. Using the language of working towards, age related and exceeding, each child's ability is recording on the wider curriculum tracker.

Leadership and Responsibilities

The Headteacher

Is responsible for:

- ensuring that RE has a high profile within the school
- ensuring RE is taught as a core subject

The Governors

Are responsible for:

- preserving and developing the religious character of the school

The Subject Lead

Is responsible for:

- leading the RE curriculum
- ensuring that RE is well resourced
- regular and comprehensive monitoring of RE

The Class Teachers

Are responsible for:

- planning engaging and creative RE lessons
- covering all objectives in each topic
- ensuring children take pride in their RE books
- enabling children to evaluate their learning

The Children

Are responsible for:

- taking care of their RE books and ensuring their work is well presented
- contributing to discussions
- participating in liturgies

- being respectful of the beliefs of others

Parental Involvement

Communication is important, as, for some children, school will provide their only experience of Church and Catholicism in practice. To involve and inform parents we send a weekly newsletter including the Parish Priest's reflection for the week, details of dates for upcoming whole school celebrations, Parish/School events, and charitable work or fundraising initiatives, as well as celebrating the children's achievements. Curriculum overviews are emailed out at the start of each term and contain information about the RE topics children will be covering. Children's RE books are shown during parents' meetings with their progress in RE discussed. Families are also invited to all class prayer and liturgies, whole school celebrations and school Masses. The Friends of Good Shepherd (FROGS) are also involved in many aspects of the Catholic life of the school.

Parish Links

There is excellent communication between school and the Parish Priest who delivers weekly prayer and liturgy and is available to discuss and support the teaching of RE when necessary. The children visit Good Shepherd church as part of the RE curriculum and we attend Mass at the church on holy days of obligation.

Sacramental Preparation

It is diocesan policy that sacramental preparation takes place in the parish. In Year Three the children receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist. During this year the parents are invited to attend a programme of meetings at the parish church, to support them in their responsibility for the faith development of their child.

Although preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are completed outside of school within the Parish community, during Year 3, the RE curriculum also supports children in this journey towards fuller participation in the Mass and the life of the Church.