**St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School**

**Mater Christi Multi Academy Trust**

Loving, Living, Learning Together



At St. Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, we believe that every child is a unique creation of God.

We promote respect and care for one another following in the footsteps of the family Jesus wants us to be.

Caring for one another is at the centre of our school life.

We promise to provide educational opportunities and experiences to enrich the learning and well-being of the children by following the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Our school values its partnership with the Parish community and MAT, together enabling our children to become rounded, confident individuals, with an understanding of Gospel values as preparation for the world of work and life.

**Religious Education Policy**

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| **Written by:** | **Date reviewed:** | **Approved by:** | **Date for next review:** |
| Jo Garnock-Jones | September 2021 |  | September 2022 |

St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School was built to serve the parish of St Joseph’s Catholic Church, Lancaster. Its commitment to serving the local faith community is central to its purpose – and the role of Religious Education within that context is crucial to its success. The school’s Teaching and Learning policy recognises that education takes place at school in many ways – both in the classroom and during the many events and routines that go to make up each school day. Consequently, the Religious Education that takes place in the classroom must be supported and experienced by the children in other aspects of their daily life here:

 • when they are taught to love one another as Christ has loved them, they should experience that from other members of the school community;

 • when they are taught about the forgiveness of a loving God, they should experience such forgiveness at school;

• when they are taught that God’s goodness to us is a cause for rejoicing, they should experience such joy at school.

Parents send their children to St Joseph’s because they want them to share in the experience of a faith community. Our Religious Education and Relationships and Sex Education programme provides them with both the knowledge needed to become an active member of that community and the experiences that will help their faith take root more firmly in their lives. In doing so the school acknowledges a shared mission with the wider faith community. The governors, staff and pupils have worked together to prepare a Mission Statement for the school which reflects its priorities:

**At St. Joseph’s Primary School, we believe that every child is a unique creation of God.**

**We promote respect and care for one another following in the footsteps of the family Jesus wants us to be.**

**Caring for one another is at the centre of our school life.**

**We promise to provide educational opportunities and experiences to enrich the learning and well-being of the children by following the teaching of Jesus Christ.**

**The school values its partnership with the Parish community and MAT, together enabling the children to become rounded, confident individuals, with an understanding of Gospel values as**

**preparation for the world of work and life.**

Our mission is what God sent us into the world to do;

The tools we will use to do this are the following Gospel Values:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| * Kindness
 | * Compassion
 |
| * Love
 | * Gentleness
 |
| * Honesty
 | * Peace
 |
| * Forgiveness
 | * Mercy
 |
| * Faith
 | * Justice
 |
| * Community
 | * Tolerance
 |

All of these values are reflected in the Positive Relationships and Anti-Bullying Policy, and the Policy for Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education thus ensuring that the Gospel Values of the school are echoed throughout all teaching on moral issues.

**Aims and Objectives**

The ‘learning outcome’ for every aspect of Religious Education at St Joseph’s

is to improve the religious literacy of every pupil. This means developing their

knowledge, skills and understanding so that – appropriate to their age and

capacity – they can think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and are

aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

**The Organisation of Religious Education at St Joseph’s**

Religious education is a shared responsibility. It is based on a partnership

between the school, the parishes and the home. The Governors recognise,

however, that the nature of this partnership may differ from family to family –

for some children religious education at school is a form of catechesis, as they are already firmly committed to their faith journey through the home, while for others it is a form of evangelisation, an early opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel.

With this in mind, we have adopted the published scheme, Come and see

used alongside the RECD Curriculum Planning Wheels and Caritas in Action.

**Time allocation**

At St Joseph’s we are committed to making Religious Education a priority in

the curriculum offered to the children. This means that sufficient time must be

allocated to specific RE lessons at each Key Stage.

It is acknowledged, however, that time alone is not adequate to judge the

appropriateness or effectiveness of the Religious Education we provide. While

dedicating 10% of the taught week to RE, we believe that quality is just as

important as quantity – some teachers may choose, for example, to organise

their RE lessons into longer blocks, more widely spaced, while others may opt

for 30 minutes more frequently. The emphasis should always be on providing

quality learning opportunities for the children, and they should be helped to

understand that this part of the curriculum has a special priority for all of us.

**Creating the atmosphere**

In the same way that teachers ‘model’ ways of working in other subjects

(handwriting in English, for example, or addition methods in Maths), care is

taken to ‘model’ appropriate behaviour and attitudes with regard to

Religious Education:

* Each classroom is organised to have a focal point for prayer: this can consist of a statue, a candle, flowers for example, and should be linked in some way – perhaps through the existence of a display close by – to the children’s work. The focal points are changed according to the time in the churches’ year
* Time is made available within lessons for reflection and prayer – this is used either as a stimulus at the beginning or as a ‘plenary’ to close the lesson.
* The attitude of the teacher is open-minded and honest.
* Respect is shown for other points of view and the children are taught about other faiths through Faith Days, while acknowledging our belief in Catholic doctrine.
* Each class starts and ends their day with prayer.

**Spiritual Development**

Spiritual Development is an implicit part of our teaching, especially but not

exclusively in RE. The responses sought from the children require them to

consider carefully the questions put to them and to take the answers they

discover into their own lives. Equally, assemblies seek to promote

consideration of many questions which enrich the spiritual lives of the

children. Wherever possible, links are made in all curriculum areas to the responsibility held by us all to act continually in a truly Christian manner.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of awe and wonder through the

widening of their horizons, which in turn allows them to be to realize the extent and wonder of God’s creation and care for us.

**Collective worship and prayer**

Through our collective worship and prayer life at St Joseph’s we aim to:

* Provide opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with God through the use of Prayer Journals.
* Enable and encourage the spiritual development of each child
* Help the children to become familiar with the traditional forms of prayer used in the Catholic Church.
* Provide an experience of good liturgy
* Facilitate growth in a knowledge of the person and teaching of Jesus Christ
* Encourage a social and individual moral consciousness
* Develop a sense of loyalty and belonging to a worshipping Christian

 community

* Introduce a variety of formal and informal prayer settings and forms of prayer.

As St Joseph’s is a Catholic School, it is expected that parents are in

agreement to their children attending acts of worship unless a specific

request is made for their child to be withdrawn. Equally, teachers and

teaching assistants are expected to support the Catholic ethos of the school,

including their attendance at acts of collective worship.

Collective worship at St Joseph’s closely follows the Church’s liturgical year. The programme of assemblies also celebrates other major events in the life of the school. The timing of assemblies is, of course, dependent on changes in the dates of different feast days.

**The celebration of Mass**

A whole school/parish Mass is held at least three times a year at St Joseph’s Catholic Church. The children are actively involved in the liturgy through readings, bidding prayers, singing and conducting the offertory procession. Every child is encouraged to attend, together with their parents and other members of their family.

Individual classes also attend Mass every week on a rotational basis.

In addition, our Parish Priest/Deacon delivers Thursday Thought on a weekly basis throughout

the year.

**Assemblies**

Acts of worship are central to the life of our school. We are aware that for some children this is the only way they will gain knowledge and experience of their faith.

Assemblies are held daily

**Prayers**

Throughout the scheme of work, opportunities are provided for the children to develop an ability to formulate personal, informal prayers. In addition, they are taught some of the formal prayers from the Catholic tradition.

**Intent**

Religious Education at St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School is designed to help the children understand the place of God in the world, to know how they can respond to that understanding through religion, and to be able to use that knowledge and understanding in their daily lives so that they can all contribute to building God’s kingdom in their community.

Our RE curriculum reflects our Gospel Values of kindness, love, honesty, faith,

forgiveness and community. We ensure that spirituality in particular is at the root of our teaching - we want the children to ask deeper questions and look for meaning in the world around them, to value difference in others and not just tolerate them, to make good choices even when no-one is watching and to know that their life matters.

Above all we want them to know that they are loved and to learn about ways in which they can respond to that love, supported by the teachings of the Church about social justice, care for creation, and faith and morals.

**Implementation**

Religious Education is taught according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, as required by the school’s governing body, the Mater Christi Trust and diocese. Teachers use a combination of a scheme called Come and See, the Curriculum Planning Wheels and Caritas in Action and lessons focus on both providing the children with a knowledge of the Catholic Faith and leading them to an understanding of the significance of religion in their lives. They are encouraged to give a variety of responses to what they have

learned and to measure their own development as Christians by reflecting on their relationships with others and with God.

Closely linked to our teaching of RE is the way in which this is reflected in the

Catholic life of the school. Every day starts with collective worship in each class, so that prayer and spirituality are at the heart of every day’s learning.

Assemblies are another important part of the religious life of our community. At assembly we pray together, sing hymns together and reflect on aspects of our faith within the context of our own experiences.

We also regularly celebrate Mass together as a community – on certain feast days, at the beginning or end of the term, and on Sundays throughout the year at St Joseph’s Catholic Church. In addition, our parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school. Fr John-Paul Evans also celebrates class Mass every Thursday with one of the Key Stage 2 classes.

In order to develop a deeper understanding of faith, each class has a chosen saint to celebrate in the autumn term. On the feast day of the saint, the children will come off timetable and find out all about their chosen saint. They will complete a range of activities to support their understanding.

During the Spring term the children in each class will organise and run a charitable event as an act of service for their community.

In the Summer term children learn about a prominent Old Testament figure and their impact on religious life today.

Each year the Year Six children will be offered the opportunity to become ‘school chaplains.’ They will be young faith leaders who will support each class in living their faith, through a range of activities, including shared liturgy and support outside of the classroom.

The children will also have an opportunity to take part in a ‘Faith Hero’ Club, during which they will follow a programme developing the skills and talents needed to live by faith today.

**Impact**

Our children do know that they are loved - there is evidence all around for this, in every aspect of the life of our school. They leave St Joseph’s knowing that they have a purpose in the world and a responsibility towards one another. This is reflected in the positive impact they have through their responses to charitable work, their contributions to the liturgy of the school and the parish, and in the reflective work they produce in their RE books.