

Trust vision

*We are a Catholic family of schools,  
working as one, transforming every  
individual, their family and our Trust*



## Religious Education Policy (reviewed January 2025)

The School Motto is:

*'God shines within our hearts. Jesus walks by our side. The Holy Spirit gives us strength.'*

This policy should be read in conjunction with the NRCDES policy.

[https://www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/application/files/4015/1022/7703/Religious Education Policy - January 2017.pdf](https://www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/application/files/4015/1022/7703/Religious_Education_Policy_-_January_2017.pdf) (Under review with new RED)

The principles underpinning the spiritual development of our children are based on the Gospel Values of justice, compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation. Children learn to appreciate the love of God in their everyday lives and in the world about them.

The life of the school is underpinned by the school's Motto, which is displayed in every classroom and public area. School life is driven and shaped by these values, our mission statement and our Catholic ethos.

### Mission Statement

*'Our school is a little bit of heaven on earth. It is a Christ centred community where we are the people and Jesus is the love, the care and the courage.'* (Pupils)

St. Mary's offers a unique opportunity to ensure every child is nurtured in their journey of faith, recognising that they are all important and precious and spiritually fulfilled. They are celebrated within an environment which has the Gospel Values of forgiveness, love and kindness embedded into everything that we do. Pupils develop an understanding of communal obligations and personal aspirations to develop their role as global citizens.

We try to follow in Jesus' footsteps through our actions, thoughts and words especially in our charitable efforts in helping those in need within our community and the wider world.

*'When we help others, our trust becomes stronger.'* (Pupils)

All children have the opportunity to fulfil their God given talents, to be the best they can be. Every child is a dream found in God's heart. They all have a sacred purpose and that is to do something wonderful with their lives. Everyone is unique, we are all equal and we respect each other working in harmony.

*'We look after God's world because he made it for us. When I look at the sky I look at God.'* (Pupils)

This policy will outline the approach to Religious Education including related issues such as collective worship, spiritual development and moral development.

### **1 Rationale**

1.1 Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Nottingham is required to teach, develop and resource Religious Education with the same commitment as any other core subject;

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‘Catholic religious education must ensure that Catholic pupils are ‘initiated into the knowledge of the mystery of salvation’ (Ibid., CCE, 2022, §13) and become ever more aware of the faith into which they have been baptised. At the same time, fidelity to its mission requires a Catholic school, and the religious education it provides, to form its pupils in the virtues that will foster their life in Christ and assist them to serve the Church and society; and, to lead ‘its pupils to promote efficaciously the good of the earthly city and also prepare them for service in the spread of the Kingdom of God, so that by leading an exemplary apostolic life they become, as it were, a saving leaven in the human community’ (Gravissimum Educationis, Declaration on Christian Education, Second Vatican Council, 1965, §8 2023 Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales)

## **2 Our aims and objectives**

2.1 At St. Mary’s CVA, we aim to nurture every aspect of Catholic Life and to provide individuals with opportunities to develop a personal relationship with God by creating:

- An environment that uses Jesus as a role model, thus demonstrating the Christian values of respect, trust, honesty and co-operation
- A celebrating community, which uses prayer, assemblies, festivals, liturgies, positive discipline and worship
- A sense of belonging to and participating in a community
- A real understanding and practise of the Catholic Faith
- Opportunities to develop understanding, respect and appreciation of other faiths
- Familiarity with religious language, symbols, signs and gestures of worship and prayer
- A curriculum that develops the whole child, integrating physical and intellectual growth alongside moral, spiritual, emotional and physiological growth.

## **3 The Religious Education Curriculum**

3.1 Religious Education is a core subject which is central to the Catholic life of the school, based on the expectations and aims outlined in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools (To know You more Clearly: The Religious Education Directory for Catholic schools, colleges, and academies in England and Wales 2025).

“Our task is to make that place the Catholic school, with religious education at its heart.  
*Catholic Bishops ‘Conference of England and Wales ( 2023)*

## **4 ‘To Know you more clearly’ Programme**

4.1 Curriculum branches 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. The model curriculum is rooted in the narrative of salvation history and leads pupils on a journey in each year of schooling that gives a sequence to the learning. As they revisit each branch in each

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year of school they come to a deeper understanding of its significance for Catholic belief and practice, which allows them to make links between the four knowledge lenses within the context of the narrative of salvation history. The six curriculum branches are: creation and covenant, prophecy and promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, desert to garden, to the ends of the Earth, and dialogue and encounter

4.2 In addition to the timetabled RE sessions and daily collective worship, St. Mary's CVA celebrates holy days, special feast days, key stage assemblies, class assemblies, hymn practice, liturgies, Adoration, class Masses and whole school Masses.

## **5 The Structure of Religious Education Teaching**

5.1 This is delivered through a process recognised in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

- The programme of study for religious education in Catholic schools presented in this directory has a framework with four structural elements:
- knowledge lenses, ways of knowing, expected outcomes, curriculum branches.
- Knowledge lenses set out the object of study for pupils; they indicate what should be known by the end of each age-phase. They are referred to as lenses, since they are the things we are looking at and they divide the content of the programme of study into four systematic subsections for the study of Catholicism and two additional lenses for the study of religions and worldviews, which together comprise the six knowledge lenses of hear, believe, celebrate, and live (the study of the Catholic religion), dialogue, and encounter (the study of other religions and worldviews).
- Ways of knowing set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey. Whenever we know something, we always know it in more than one way: we remember it, we critically assimilate it, and we put it into practice.
- All three are ways of coming to know the things that are the object of our study. The ways of knowing are an evolution of the Age-related Standards in Religious Education, which were themselves an evolution of the Levels of Attainment in Religious Education.
- The three ways of knowing are: understand, discern, and respond. They are represented in the programme of study by icons: head (understand), heart (discern), and hands (respond).

## **6 Planning**

6.1 We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in two phases; long-term and short-term. The long-term planning maps the RE topics studied in each term by each year group. (These are found on the school website <https://www.stmarysnewmills.srscmat.co.uk/curriculum/curriculum/come-and-see/>.)

Planning is tailored to the specific needs of the children so that the learning is accessible and engaging.

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## **7 Time allocation**



7.1 The time allocation for Religious Education is 10% of the taught week in each key stage, in accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops of England and Wales. Therefore, children in EYFS and KS1 will receive two hours of RE per week and children in KS2 will receive two and a half hours per week. This allocated curriculum time does not include forms of collective worship as outlined above.

## **8 Early Years Foundation Stage**

8.1 In Reception classes, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. RE is included in 'Understanding the World' and 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development' areas of learning. Children complete a baseline assessment in recognising religious words, actions and objects at the beginning of EYFS and at the end.

## **9 Assessment**

9.1 St. Mary's CVA use the Nottingham Diocese Education Service End of Year Expectations Document (*July, 2019*) to assess children according to their year group expectations. Children are assessed against the 'driver words' applicable to their year group and are assessed in three strands; learning about religion, learning from religion, and forming an opinion about religion. Pupil progress is judged through observations, discussions and extended pieces of recorded work, which is internally and externally moderated to substantiate judgements. The Education Service also set assessment tasks once per term to aid moderation. (In review with new RED)

9.2 Lesson drop ins, book looks and pupil voice are used to inform termly pupil progress meetings with the Head Teacher.

9.3 Evidence is gathered against the standards throughout the year. This will include assessment tasks and extended pieces of writing that have been moderated and a judgement agreed upon. The aim of this is to exemplify RE standards for each year group for tracking purposes, and to further support teaching staff in their decisions and pitch of lessons. Monitoring is completed with the link governor. In term one, term 2 book looks are completed and term three pupil voice is collated. St. Mary's CVA use the Trust assessment framework on Insight to monitor pupil progress.

9.4 Pupil Progress meetings are held termly for each class with the Head Teacher. Children may be identified and targeted thereafter to ensure at least expected progress is made from their starting point in RE.

9.5 A baseline assessment is carried out at the beginning of Reception to help find out what basic Catholic knowledge, vocabulary and experiences children have on entry to the school. Throughout Reception, the teacher and the school 'add value' (teach the children basic Catholic knowledge, vocabulary and offer a Catholic context to give some experience of Catholic life). The baseline is then carried out at the end of Reception to demonstrate the gains in knowledge and understanding (value-added).

## **10 Marking and Feedback**

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Feedback occurs at one of three common stages in the learning process:



1. Immediate feedback – at the point of teaching/ during task
2. Summary feedback – at the end of a lesson/task
3. Review feedback – away from the point of teaching – usually at the start of the next lesson in that subject.

The stages are deliberately numbered in order of priority, noting that feedback closest to the point of teaching and learning is likely to be most effective in driving progress,

especially for younger pupils.

The primary method of giving feedback at St Mary's will follow the procedure below:

The teacher will review the work completed by pupils noting in their planning:

- ☐ The work to praise and share
  - ☐ Need of further support
  - ☐ Notes on presentation
  - ☐ Basic skills error
  - ☐ Common misconceptions and notes for the next lesson
- Key issues for all children will be fed back to all children at the start of the next lesson\* and an opportunity will be given to correct errors or to improve work.
  - The impact of this will be reviewed after this lesson as learning moves on.

No annotations or comments are expected in the child's book – these will be at the discretion of the teacher.

\* [Feedback may be given at a time other than at the start of the next lesson – including during register time or bespoke sessions where appropriate – this is particularly encouraged in RE – where the use of 'heads, hearts and hands' will be used to encourage improvements of further thinking around specific aspects.

### Frequency of feedback

Assessment and Feedback in Religious Education (RE) will be at least weekly. Termly RE assessments will be formally marked.

Peer and self assessment will be used to give children the opportunity to reflect on their own successes and areas to improve and to help to provide that feedback for others.

Feedback that is verbally completed with the child is encouraged – especially while the children are working so that they can make an immediate change/correct a misconception. There is no need for the verbal feedback to be written in full but some markings can be made to support the feedback. All teachers use the learning intentions

Staff are actively encouraged to use ways of giving feedback that works for them and their class – aiding them to maintain a healthy work life balance.

### **Feedback & assessment -please refer to Feedback Policy**

(chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.stmarysnewmills.srscmat.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2024/03/St.-Marys-feedback-policy-2024.pdf)

*community through the building of God's  
Kingdom, caring for our environment, **today**  
**rather than tomorrow.***

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Guidance on the right of withdrawal from religious education and/or collective worship in schools in England (CES)

- (i) The right of withdrawal from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship Parents of pupils in VA schools and voluntary academies<sup>9</sup> are permitted, by law, to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of religious education<sup>10</sup> and/or collective worship<sup>11</sup> given at the school and any such request shall stand until such time that a parent's request is withdrawn

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<sup>1</sup> School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.69(1).

<sup>2</sup> The term 'trust deed' is defined widely: see section 579(1) of the Education Act 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 19, paragraph.4; Instrument of Government, clause 2.

<sup>4</sup> *The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement* (December 2020); *Academy articles of association: For use by Catholic academies* (February 2019).

<sup>5</sup> School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.70(1).

<sup>6</sup> School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 20; Instrument of Government, clause 2.

Guidance on the right of withdrawal from religious education and/or collective worship – July 2024

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