

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School



Religious Education Policy

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Links with other policies – This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Relationship and Sex Education
- PSHE

School Mission Statement

MISSION STATEMENT

God's children are the focal point of our school community. We strive to create a friendly, enjoyable working atmosphere based on Christ's word, where communication between home, school and parish is of paramount importance.

We aim to provide a Catholic education for our children, in which Christian values are shared and lived by all. We work to provide committed teaching, giving due regard to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Our school offers a secure and caring environment where there is equality of opportunity for each child to realise his or her potential. We seek to enable children to grow in independence, to value a healthy lifestyle both physically and emotionally and to have respect for themselves and others. Children are encouraged to aim for the highest standards of behaviour and to foster an awareness of moral and social issues within our own community and in the wider world.

We aim to develop understanding citizens of the 21st century who recognise the need to participate in a caring and responsible way for the sustainability of our world.

Aims of Religious Education at St Vincent's

- to ensure that Catholic Education plays a central and vital part in our school
- provide opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with God
- enable the spiritual development of each child
- to make children more aware of themselves and more sensitive to people and things around them, as a contribution to their personal development and moral and spiritual growth.
- to help the children to develop moral qualities of self discipline, perseverance, determination, patience, fair play and consideration for others.
- help pupils to become familiar with the traditional forms of prayer
- provide a good experience of liturgy
- to prepare them for Christian moral education and formation of conscience.
- to develop an awareness of Jesus, through prayer and teaching and a devotion to Our Lady.
- to make them aware of other cultures and beliefs represented in our school, its immediate environment and in the country as a whole. To look at major faiths and respect their teachings
- to develop knowledge of, and encourage respect for other faiths and beliefs.

Good learning prevails when:

- within the school life the teacher uses situations which arise to develop the spiritual and moral awareness of the children
- a teacher creates an ethos where children are confident to question the meaning and purpose of their life and to appreciate one another's point of view
- there are cross curricular links
- at every stage the Religious Education is properly adapted to circumstances, age, ability and understanding of each child
- staff are aware of the significance of language and visual images used and presented in the development of equal opportunities in terms of gender and race
- the teacher recalls, deepens, clarifies and extends what children experience at home
- the teacher understands that the school may be a child's only experience of Church
- the teacher creates meaningful interaction between home, school and parish relating to a child's religious development
- a child expresses himself orally or in role play
- a child works well in a group
- a child relates well to others
- a child accepts responsibility for work
- a child shows respect and tolerance for others by listening to their point of view
- a child can distinguish between opinion belief and fact
- a child can form reasoned opinions based on evidence

At St Vincent's religious education is taught through The Way, the Truth and the Life programme. It is supplemented with other resources – God's Loving Plan and PSHE Coram.

Good teaching prevails when:

- a teacher is seen to treat everyone with respect
- a teacher gives each child an awareness and appreciation of their uniqueness and dignity as individuals
- a teacher promotes a Catholic ethos within the school and the classroom
- a teacher helps a child to reach its potential by providing equal access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum

Assessment (see page 6 -10 for guidance on assessment)

The staff at our school believe in upholding the dignity and value of each individual and the methods used to assess performance are those which reinforce the individual's worth and needs.

At St Vincent's pupils are assessed at the end of each topic in a variety of ways including discussion, written work and observation. Achievement and progress are measured through teacher assessment and activities in the units within the scheme. Assessments are linked to the attainment targets.

Good assessment strategies will be rooted in effective planning.

All planning will take account of the concepts, attitudes, skills and knowledge highlighted in the 'Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools' 2012 (p10). Moving on comments are used alongside highlighters to aid progress.

Marking pupils' work will be approached positively and constructively so that it affirms and celebrates success and encourages future learning. Whilst spelling errors in commonly used words should be corrected the focus should be on the content. Care should be taken over presentation of work. Records will provide evidence of what pupils have done and can achieve.

Regular use will be made of pupil evaluations.

The process of assessment will enable us to provide evidence of the attainment of the pupils for teachers, governors, parents and inspectors.

Monitoring

At St Vincent's monitoring is carried out by talking to the children, looking at their books and lesson observations.

Links with home, school and parish

One class attends Mass at our parish church, Our Lady Help of Christians, each half term. The Parish Priest visits the school regularly and celebrates Mass with the children and staff on Holy days of obligation and at other times during the school year.

St Vincent's advertises and supports parish events.

Collective worship

Whole school Liturgy assemblies take place on Wednesday. On Tuesday and Thursdays assemblies take place in the afternoon. On Mondays & Wednesdays, classes worship in their classrooms.

All classes begin and end the day with prayers and all classes say grace before lunch

Spiritual development

At St Vincent's pupils are taught to appreciate the beauty of God's world and a sense of awe and wonder is fostered.

The pupils' spirituality is developed through class meditations and through discussions and reflections.

Moral Education

At St Vincent's pupils are given opportunities to:

- develop confidence and responsibility and to make the most of their abilities
- prepare to play an active role as citizens respecting and valuing themselves and others, ensuring they consider their personal, physical and emotional well-being and that of others
- develop good relationships and respect the differences between people

Resources

The Way the Truth and the Life teachers' books and text books for Years 1-6

The Way the Truth and the Life CD for Foundation stage

The Way the Truth and the Life website – resources for the interactive whiteboard <http://www.tere.org/>
God's Loving Plan
Coram (PSHE & Relationships and sex education)
Resources for other Faiths

Madeline Lindley Books which support themes in assemblies, PSHE and lessons in the RE scheme
Library books linking to Religious Education
Posters, pictures, candles, hymn books, music
Crucifix in each class and the main entrance
Artefacts from other faiths

Visits from leaders of "Other Faiths" and workshops eg Hinduism, Diwali and others.

Check list for class teachers

1. Focal points for Prayer

- a) Does the focal point for prayer in my classroom reflect the liturgical season or the current prayer theme?
- b) Is it situated at eye level and available for whole class prayer? If not, can it be moved to a central area when required for whole class prayer? The focal point should always be visible in the classroom, an important reminder of the spiritual dimension of our lives.
- c) Does it incorporate good religious art (icon, picture) together with, perhaps, coloured candles and/or tasteful floral display? Do I sometimes display a well bound copy of the Bible to use as a focal point?

2. Children's work

- a) Do I offer a variety of tasks in keeping with skills and ability of all the children (eg for a child struggling with reading – a task involving very little reading)?
- b) Do I use a multimedia approach with tasks involving such as art experiences, music, drama as well as written and oral work?

Tasks should be such as to enable children to succeed.

3. Display

- a) Do I afford prime wall space to RE work and so convey a powerful non-verbal message about the importance of RE in our class and in our school?
- b) Is this work well-presented and well-mounted?

4. Assessment

In RE planning have I built in a way of assessing:

- a) The experience provided for the children?
- b) The response made by the children to these experience.
- c) What knowledge, values, attitudes, skills the children have acquired?
- d) How did the children assess their work?

Marking and commenting on work

A personal verbal dialogue between teacher and pupil is encouraged whenever possible.

Marking work in Religious Education needs to be:

- Consistent with the school's marking policy
- Positive and constructive so that it affirms and celebrates success and encourages future learning
- Serve to challenge and encourage pupils to reflect
- Encourage high standards
- Give attention to key vocabulary

Comments made will reflect on the progress in understanding of Religious Education concept or concepts being explored. Consistency of approach across the classes is important.

Typical classroom tasks observed, which demonstrate the extents to which pupils are achieving the intended learning outcome are:

- Engaging in creative play
- Planning and completing a piece of written work
- Planning, creating or mounting a display
- Creating and performing drama of 'play'
- Discussing an issue and drawing conclusions
- Engaging in role play
- Composing a hymn, song or poem
- Preparing a celebration or liturgy
- Planning and completing a piece of art/craft

Good teachers know a group is working well when:

- Pupils are on task
- Pupils are taking part in discussion
- They are involved and enjoy learning
- They are evaluating their own and others' contributions
- They are selecting appropriate methods and organising effectively the resources they need
- They are co-operating with each other
- The learning intention is being achieved
- Progress is visible

Observation will enable the teacher to ascertain that the task:

- Is understood
- Is appropriately differentiated, by task, support and at times by outcome
- Enables learning
- Presents challenge to pupils

End of task review:

Pupils are enabled to assess the work they have done. Criteria for such assessment are agreed with the pupils and include such questions as:

- Do we understand the task?
- How far have we got?
- What do we know and understand now?
- How well have we worked together?

A degree of honesty and maturity is needed but pupils can be encouraged to assess whether or not targets have been met by reflecting on their work, comparing it with others and discussing it with peers, support assistants or teachers

End of lesson review:

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and share what they have learnt during the lesson as individuals and as a group. The teacher may ask specific questions to discover which learning objectives have been achieved. The teacher then effectively summarises and reinforces learning that has taken place and keeps note of learning intentions which need to be revisited.

End of topic/module assessment

Summative assessment brings together the learning for each individual involved in a unit of work but also provides a group response and a group assessment. Consequently there will be elements of diagnostic and evaluative assessment. The greater the repertoire of assessment tasks used the richer the possibilities of response. Achievement can be demonstrated through art, drama, mime, music, visual representation (photographic, video) celebration and liturgy, as well as, through written work including summaries of discussion, collation of findings and topic evaluations by teacher and pupil. It can be expressed either individually or collectively and in combinations of any of these forms. By offering pupils a variety of media in which to express their achievement the teacher is encouraging self-expression in verbal and non-verbal ways.

Display

A topic display offers evidence of pupil achievement and also celebrates this. The possibility for written, art and graphic work allow individuals to select a medium of their own choice to express what they know and understand about the topic covered. The standard set by the teacher ensures that the best efforts go into this Summative statement. Building the creation of a display into the planning of the topic means that it can grow throughout the topic rather than consume disproportionate amount of time at the end. A growing knowledge and understanding brings a continuous process of assessment that informs the development of the topic.

What can be assessed in RE?

Developing skills,
 what pupils know about religions,
 what they are learning from religions

Skills	Example
Investigative	Research task eg 7 year olds find names, dates and celebrations associated with 2 different festivals and make cards to go with them
Interpretative	Interpreting a poem or parable, drawing meaning from artifacts or seeing nuances of symbolism eg pupils work on the moral codes of Jews and Buddhists (Ten Commandments, Precepts). They can become interpreters of these codes by answering problem page letters from young Jews and Buddhists facing dilemmas

Reflection	Pupils own attitudes and beliefs – after reflecting on a candle and barbed wire, pupils can write poems, meditations or prayers inspired by their thoughts
Empathy	Opportunities for pupils to consider lives and values of others – difficult to assess as complex. If pupils visit a church or mosque ask them to write a paragraph for a guide book to the building under the heading 'Please respect our holy place.' It's a chance to use sensitive and respectful language in empathetic ways
Evaluative	Assessment questions which ask pupils to evaluate are easy but structures to evaluate skillfully, referring to different points of view and reasons to support ideas are more difficult. Could do the following: Write 10 simple comments about prayer answered and unanswered on cards. Ask pupils to choose the five cards they think makes the most important points and copy out the comments saying why they think it's important
Analysis	Processes here involve distinguishing between different religions and between fact, belief and opinion. Children could be given a mixed sheet of pictures of artifacts and identify which picture goes with which religion.
Synthesising	Assessment can set pupils problems or tasks which focus on this skill asking them to 'do the jigsaw' with the material they have studied eg make a menu for a meeting of Jews, Muslims and Christians synthesising what they have learned about diet in the three religions
Application	Assessment tasks could ask pupils to apply what they have learned about religion to a new situation. After studying the ethics of Jesus they could give reasons why Christians might support particular charities
Expressive	Children write their ideas of God, human nature, life's meanings etc Use a fiction approach 'The Whale Song' could enable older children to write their dreams and hopes and could encourage younger children to express their insights into special times and places

It would be difficult to assess

A growing awareness of the role of belief in life
 Making own commitment to high ideals
 Developing determination to pursue good ends
 Thinking through and articulating personal vision
 Relating learning in RE to problems and difficulties in own life
 Thinking about responding with goodness to temptations they face
 Empathising personally with those who have different beliefs and values to their own
 Internalising respectful attitudes
 Responding to the challenges of faith
 Using their personal resources to respond to suffering
 Moral development
 Spiritual development