

July 2012

**St Michael's Catholic Primary School
RE Policy (including Collective Worship)**

In formulating and applying this policy, the Governing Body and Staff of our Catholic school seek to promote and implement in relevant ways the aims and intentions of the Mission Statement, *'Praise the Lord in Work, Play and Prayer'*, that has been agreed by the whole school community.

1. Fundamental considerations underlying the school's policy on RE:

In formulating and applying this policy, the Governing Body and Staff of our Catholic school seek to promote and implement in relevant ways the aims and intentions of the Mission Statement *"Praise the Lord in Work, Play and Prayer"* that has been agreed by the whole school community.

We recognise that an effective policy for religious education relates to the overall aim of the school as described in our Mission statement. The religious growth and development of the pupils is the aim of the whole school experience - not just timetabled RE lessons.

Each member of staff recognises the role each must play in the growth of the religious education of its pupils. In recognising our responsibilities for this growth we acknowledge the responsibilities that others have.

2. Roles and Responsibilities:

a) Responsibility of the Bishop:

"The chief responsibility for the provision, regulation and supervision of catechetical work in general, lies with the Diocesan Bishop, and, subject to him, the Parish Priest, with regard to religious education in schools, it is the Bishop who has by law the responsibility of regulating and exercising vigilance over religious education within his own diocese". (Canon Law 804).

b) Responsibility of the Governors:

Governors have a definite responsibility in law, both to promote the denominational character in accordance with the trust deed and to see to the provision of appropriate denominational Religious Education.

Foundation governors are specifically appointed by the Archbishop to ensure that the Catholic character of the school is maintained and that the school provides a proper Catholic religious education in its fullest sense in accordance with Diocesan policy.

The governors also have the responsibility to maintain and enhance the Catholic character of the school by appointing suitably qualified, practising Catholic applicants to vacant posts wherever possible.

There is an RE Link Governor who meets at least once each year with the Headteacher and RE Co-ordinator to evaluate and develop current practice within RE.

c) The role of the Headteacher:

The Headteacher has specific and important tasks which are uniquely those of the leader of a Catholic school community:

1. Promoting the school as a community of faith.
2. Promoting the full adoption of “whole school” liturgical celebrations which mark the significant moments of a child’s year in the Catholic community.
3. To ensure that RE has a central position at the core of the curriculum so that teaching and learning will seek to promote the varied capabilities and needs of each child.
4. Completing the Section 48 School Self-Evaluation and making this available to diocesan inspectors.

d) The role of the School Chaplain:

The Parish Priest has a very definite and important role to play and it is vital that the children and parents see the school as part of the wider community of the parish.

e) The role of RE Co-ordinator:

With regard to delivery of the RE Curriculum the co-ordinator will:

- Work in close consultation with all colleagues within the school.
- Be familiar with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools.
- Be fully familiar with the Diocesan RE scheme of work: “Learning and Growing as the People of God” and subsequent relevant guidance.
- Be responsible for ensuring that policy and curriculum guidelines are in place, and that these are regularly reviewed.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and, wherever possible, receive training relevant to the delivery of the RE scheme of work.
- Ensure new staff are familiarised with RC practice.
- Be available to individual teachers to offer guidance and advice, and will keep staff informed of developments in the RE programmes of study and familiarise staff with new publications/resources.
- Set and review annual targets for the development of this subject area, which will be an integral part of the school development plan.
- Be responsible for making and maintaining an accurate catalogue of all RE resources.
- Have an overview of planning and provide each teacher with a long-term (annual) plan detailing when units of work must be covered in a particular year.
- Ensure staff complete relevant assessments each year.

- Observe quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, book trawls, planning trawls, moderation of teacher assessments, pupil interviews and pupil questionnaires.
- Arrange, where possible, enrichment activities such as visits and visitors.

With regard to worship and links with the Parish community:

- Arrange the programme of Mass, through liaison with the Parish Priest.
- Establish and maintain links between the school and parish, especially with regard to the preparation for Sacraments.
- Ensure that children from all classes take responsibility for preparing the liturgy for the celebration of Mass.

f) The role of Parents:

Support for the child's development in faith in a loving God begins at birth, or even before, with the love and care of the family. Catholic parents bring their children to Baptism to initiate them into the Life of Christ in the community of faith, the Catholic Church. From this begins a partnership of education in faith between the home, parish and then later, the school. Our Catholic school seeks to support and develop the primary task of parents, who "are the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith". (Rite of Baptism).

The process of supporting parents in this essential role embraces the total curriculum and life of the school. It invites priests, teachers, governors and parents to come together to celebrate the experience of children as they move through each stage of their Catholic education. The school offers support for the work undertaken by the Parish priest and will work alongside parents in nurturing each child's knowledge, understanding and practice of their faith.

Our school seeks to inspire all parents with confidence in the religious education which we provide and we will work with the parish priest and Governors to facilitate co-operation and involvement of parents in the school's efforts. We explore ways of enabling parents to fulfil more effectively their own vital role as religious educators of their children. The parish priest and school staff engage with parents during the parish-based programme of Sacramental preparation and encourage parents to support their child in their developing knowledge and understanding of their faith. Each term, parents are informed which aspects of the faith the children will learn about. At times when the children are preparing for the Sacraments, meetings are held to which parents are invited. At these meetings the parents, staff and priest discuss ways in which all can work together to help the child prepare to receive the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Parents are expected to attend the Sacramental preparation sessions in the parish with their child.

3. Aims of Religious Education at St Michael's School are:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and to foster a response to Jesus Christ, Son of God, in the moral and spiritual development of pupils.

- To support and encourage the faith of the children and to facilitate and develop its growth.
- To develop a knowledge, understanding and love of the Gospel and the Gospel value.
- To promote an appreciation and understanding of Catholic doctrine and practice.
- To promote an appreciation and understanding of general religious questions and an acquaintance with other religious beliefs and practices.
- To encourage active participation in the life of the Church.
- To foster an awareness of the place of love and service in everyday life, and to foster an informed conscience and appropriate attitudes e.g. respect for truth, respect for others, awareness of the spiritual.
- To develop appropriate skills e.g. ability to listen, to think critically, to acquire knowledge, to make informed judgements.
- To develop “religiously literate young people”. (Curriculum Directory).

4. Expectations within Religious Education at St Michael’s School:

All RE taught in our school is in accordance with the beliefs, rites and practices of the Catholic Church. In its content, RE in our school will have as its points of reference for teaching, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. These documents provide a clear framework for the teaching of essential doctrines.

a) Planning:

The Co-ordinator will produce long-term (annual) plans detailing when the units of work will be covered. We will use “Learning and Growing as the People of God” as medium-term (unit) planning until such time as a more cross-curricular approach has been developed. Short-term (weekly) planning is the responsibility of the class teacher and will be based on “Learning and Growing as the People of God”. Teachers will ensure that short-term planning shows evidence of differentiation and teacher support. They will also ensure that it is made available on the learning platform.

b) Teaching and Learning:

Class teachers will set expectations within Religious Education that are at least as high as in other core areas of the curriculum. They will ensure all children can access the curriculum through effective and targeted differentiation and support where necessary, with particular regard to children who have identified Special Educational Needs. Clear learning objectives will be shared with the children in each lesson. Through reference to the Scheme of Work and professional discussions with colleagues, class teachers will ensure progression of understanding within common units (e.g. liturgical year units). Teachers will ensure children have a positive experience of Religious Education lessons through creative activities, setting challenge, providing support, and ensuring opportunities for enquiry and thinking skills to be developed.

c) Early Years

Provision will be made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children. Teachers will build on and extend the foundations of religious education begun in the home. Teachers will, in partnership with home and parish, prepare pupils for more formal religious education at a later stage. Foundation Key Stage staff will also follow "Learning and Growing as the People of God".

d) Provision:

The Governors, Headteacher and RE Co-ordinator will ensure that 10% of curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education lessons. In Key Stage 1 this equates to 2 hours per week, and in Key Stage 2 this equates to 2½ hours per week.

The school strives to provide enrichment activities with Religious Education. Key Stage 1 visit St Philip's Anglican Church, Year 3 visit Alton Castle for a day retreat to celebrate receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion, Year 5 visit Alton Castle on a three day residential retreat. When possible, Year 6 receive a visit from LIFE and visit the Cathedral and Oscott College. In addition, visitors are invited to speak to the children in classes or assembly, for example, Fr Hudson's Society, CAFOD etc.

e) Assessment and Recording

Assessment of Religious Education will take many forms. It will always focus on children's knowledge and understanding of the lessons delivered, and must not be based upon, or influenced by, individual children's personal beliefs.

In line with school policy for core subjects, pupils have the opportunity for self-evaluation.

The class teacher will mark written work in accordance with the agreed whole school marking policy. In addition, teachers will correct subject-specific spellings and ensure children always use a capital letter for "God", "Jesus" and "Holy Spirit". Teachers are expected to ensure that children receive feedback which will clarify misunderstanding and promote deeper thinking and understanding. It is not expected that the class teacher will be able to give such feedback to every child after every lesson, and it is acknowledged that on some occasions, verbal feedback may be more appropriate.

The class teacher will assess a sample of the class during identified units of work from "Learning and Growing as the People of God", based on a four year cycle of monitoring which focuses on the four key strands of the Curriculum Directory. The assessment, along with copies of children's work to support the judgement, will be kept and moderated by the RE Co-ordinator. Assessment judgements will be based upon the level descriptors agreed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and implemented in accordance to guidance issued by the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The class teacher will report to parents within the annual school report about the academic achievement of their child in Religious

Education. Within Foundation Key Stage, staff will carry out baseline assessment annually.

f) Other Faiths

It is our intention to help our children learn about other faiths. We will teach them to respect other faiths and see value in them. We will teach them to understand that

“The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is holy or true in these (other religions). She regards with sincere reverence the ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men”
(Diocesan guidance Nov 2006).

However, it will remain our duty to instruct our children in the Catholic faith as the main source of truth about God.

In our teaching, we will help our children learn about different peoples and cultures in the world in general, as well as in our own country. The school will take guidance from the Diocese on which materials are suitable for use alongside the RE strategy. Children in each key stage will learn about certain world religions that have been identified by the Diocese.

g) Cycle of Evaluation

Within the annual Subject Development Plan, the RE Co-ordinator will identify a strand from the Curriculum Directory which will form the core of all monitoring, evaluating and purchasing of resources. This strand will be focused upon through:

- The class teachers' assessments
- Planning and books trawled by the RE Co-ordinator on a three-week rotation (e.g week 1: Key Stage 1, week 2: Lower Key Stage 2, week 3: Upper Key Stage 2).
- Lesson observations

In addition, the RE Co-ordinator will conduct pupil interviews at the end of each academic year with representatives from Year 1 to Year 6.

5. Catholic Life

Prayer, worship and liturgical celebration are central to the Catholic tradition. The school promotes and develops an appreciation of, and a more active participation in, prayer, worship and liturgical celebration. This must be recognised as a gradual process which takes account of the age and stages of personal, social and religious development of the pupils. Being part of our Catholic school enables the pupils to enter into a deepening relationship with God through a reflective and appropriate understanding of their experience of life. We respect and encourage the potential that children have to explore the spiritual dimension of their experience and to grow in awareness and appreciation of the mystery of God's presence in the world.

The Catholic ethos of the school is reflected in displays around the school.

a) Sacraments

Our school supports the parish in preparing the children for first reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Blessed Eucharist, and for Confirmation. Meetings for children and parents are led by the Parish Priest with the support of school and parish catechists. The aim of parish-based preparation is to secure as full a participation of the whole faith community (children, parents, priest, and teachers) as possible. Parents are offered the opportunity of becoming involved through working with their children during the parish sessions and at home. In addition, the school will recognise and celebrate with children any other Sacraments that they experience, e.g. when they attend a wedding or Baptism etc.

I. Sacrament of Reconciliation

First celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation precedes First Holy Communion.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is seen as a continuing process reaching beyond the first celebration. Catechesis constantly aims to deepen the child's awareness and understanding of this Sacrament.

The teaching of the celebration is generally delivered during the Spring term and concludes with a special service of reconciliation during which parents and children are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

During Advent and Lent, children will, where possible, receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school and will be encouraged to receive the Sacrament in the parish.

II. Holy Communion

Preparation for First Communion takes place for most children whilst they are in Year 3. The preparation is led by the parish priest with the support of the school and parish. Involvement of parents is the first priority and there is great emphasis on the role of parents at all stages. An important part of the children's preparation at school is involvement in worship, celebrations and in prayer. It is important to develop a sense of devotion amongst the children. The children are taught the manner of receiving Communion so that they may receive the Sacrament reverently. The children are also taught about the Eucharistic fast. Children have the opportunity to become altar servers.

III. Confirmation

Children should normally have received Confirmation before the end of their primary school years. Every year the children of Year 6 are confirmed. The reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation takes place within Mass. The Sacrament of Confirmation will be prepared for in school and in the parish. The parish priest has an overview of the programme and its content. Within school, children will learn about the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, the rite of the Sacrament, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, the impact of the Holy Spirit in

their lives and how they can contribute actively to their faith community. Within the parish, these areas will be reinforced with particular emphasis on the active roles the children can become involved in within the parish immediately after their Confirmation as an expression of commitment to their faith.

b) Celebration of Mass

Mass is the centre of liturgical worship in the Catholic Church; it is the “source and summit” of our Catholic life. As such, it has a regular established place in the life of our Catholic School.

Currently, Mass is celebrated in school on a weekly basis. Masses are celebrated as a whole school community, in class groups and as part of the Parish as seen for example on Holy Days of Obligation. Our celebration of Mass in school has a significant part to play in the children’s liturgical formation and involving them in the liturgical life of the Church.

We place children’s needs, age and stages of development at the heart of our shared worship by joining in prayers, responses and gestures. The children are actively involved by composing their own prayers, reading at Mass, involvement in processions and hymns, and serving at Mass.

The celebration of Mass is also an occasion open to families and parish members and we extend a warm and genuine welcome to parents, parishioners and the local community.

Themes for Masses are linked to the liturgical calendar and the Scheme of Work.

c) Collective Worship

All pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship. This takes place as a class, a key stage or as a whole school gathering.

Worship in school creates among pupils and teachers a sense of belonging to the Community of Faith. Pupils are introduced to a diversity of experiences of worship through opportunities for:

- Praise
- Asking (intercessions)
- Sorry (Contrition)
- Thanksgiving
- Adoration
- Reflection on God’s Word
- Silent prayer
- Music
- Meditation

Assemblies reflect the Catholic ethos of the school and further strengthen children’s understanding of the liturgical year and children’s knowledge of the responses for the new translation of the Mass.

Children are actively encouraged to participate in activities such as St Edmund’s Feeder Schools’ Carol Service, CAFOD deanery Masses and the Good Shepherd Mass.

d) Prayer

Prayer occupies an important role in the child's expression and growth in faith. Prayer reflects a personal relationship with God. Children are helped to discover a variety of approaches to prayer: formal and informal, private and communal. The programmes of study for particular year groups contain an explicit section on prayer. All units of study make links with prayer. Opportunities for prayer can occur across the curriculum. The school sees prayer as an important part of daily life and creates opportunities for the children to offer their own prayer. Every child will begin and end each day with prayer as well as saying Grace before and after each meal.

Traditional devotions e.g. the Rosary in October and May and Stations of the Cross in Lent are also experienced by the children. Other occasions for prayer are:

- Mass responses

- Advent

- Christmas

- Lent

- Easter

- Pentecost

- Harvest celebrations

- May procession

- Saints days/special feast days

- * Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be available when the school Chapel is completed.

It is important to give children an awareness that they can pray at any time and in various times and situations. Prayerfulness also includes an attitude of stillness, quiet and openness to the presence of God. Each classroom has a religious focal point linked to the liturgical year. All Staff meetings, Senior Management Team meetings and Governors' meetings begin with a prayer.

e) A Culture of Vocation

Links will be made within assemblies, liturgies, Religious Education lessons, Sacramental preparation sessions and across the wider curriculum of the school with the intention that, from a very early age, all children are aware that God has a purpose for their life and that they should listen and discern what God is calling them to be. The school arranges for a day retreat (Year 3) and a residential retreat (Year 5) at Alton Castle each year during which children have the opportunity for reflection and prayer. The school seeks to strengthen a spirit of vocation within its young people and wherever possible, arrange for pupils to meet people of differing, religious vocations (e.g. visit to Carmelite convent, Oscott College).

f) Parental Links with the Catholic Life of the school

Parents have chosen to send their children to a Catholic school. Our school seeks to support their Catholic family life.

Parents are always strongly encouraged to participate in the Catholic life of the school through:

- Sacramental preparation
- attendance at school Masses
- invitations to school liturgies such as harvest festival, May procession
- attending Rosary after school each day in May and October
- preparing tapestries for the school Chapel
- fundraising through the PTA for leavers' Bibles, Mass artefacts etc.
- charity fundraising
- weekly gift of Wednesday Word from school to Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils
- * time for parents to use the Chapel will be included in its weekly timetable.

g) Parish links with the school

Links with the parish are essential to the continual development of the Catholic life of our school community. The links between school staff and the parish priest are at the heart of successful links between school and parish. Sacramental preparation programmes form a strong bond between pupils, parents, staff, parish priest, parishioners and parish catechists.

School Masses and festivals are advertised on the parish bulletin.

Each family at school receives a weekly copy of the parish bulletin.

School attends Mass at the parish Church on Holy Days of Obligation and on the feast of St Michael.

Services of enrolment into the Sacramental programmes takes place during weekend Masses. Children receive their first Holy Communion during weekend parish Masses too.

h) Charity fundraising

Children are given many opportunities to become more aware of the needs of others and to participate in fundraising activities. Children raise funds to support people within our city, country and around the world. Each year, pupils support Fr Hudson's Homes, Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd, CAFOD, Operation Christmas Child, an orphanage in Eleru (India), Comic Relief, Children in Need and other charities suggested by the children.

* Please also refer the SRE Policy.

Adopted by the Governing Body 16 October 2012

Signed _____ (Chair of the Governing Body)