

Religious Education Policy

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Our Mission Statement

At Holy Cross, we are very proud of our school motto and our Catholic ethos; **Loved, Valued, Challenged**.

Loved: We love one another as Jesus taught us – our friends, our families and those who we may never meet.

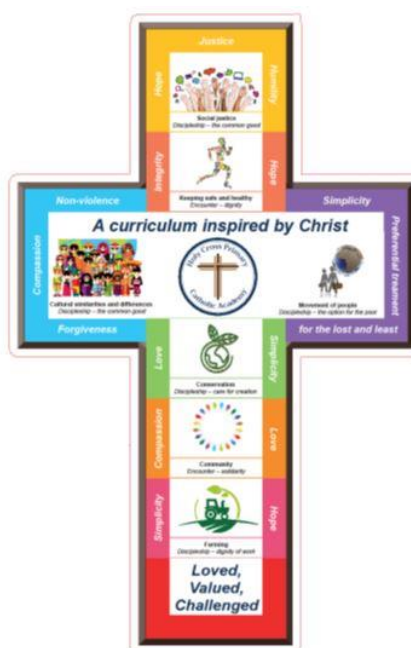
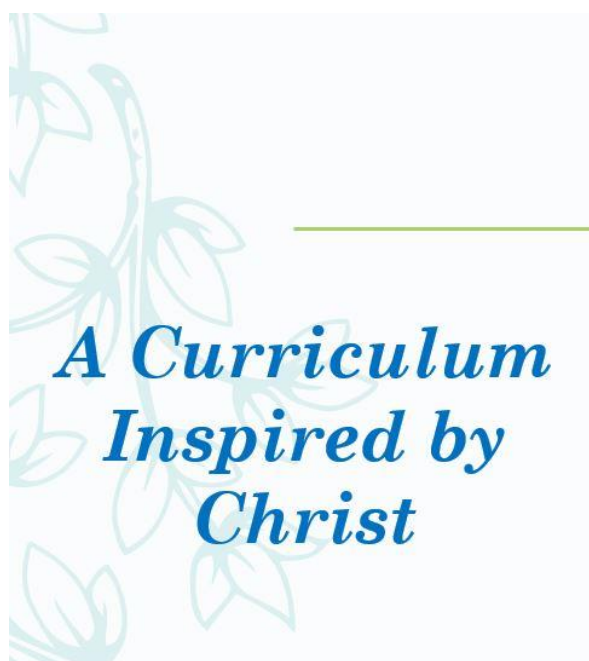
Valued: We value everyone – everyone is important; pupils, staff, parents, governors, and members of the community– no matter their race, religion ability or need. We try to live like Jesus taught us.

Challenged: We challenge each other – not only with our learning but challenge each other to be more merciful to others, have a little more understanding of others' needs and challenge each other to be better people.

Our Vision

At Holy Cross, we aim to develop a caring Catholic community based upon the life and example of Jesus Christ, which envelopes the life and lives of everyone and everything in our school. It is through Christ's message of love and forgiveness that the children, staff, both teachers and ancillary, parents and governors, preserve the essential Catholic ethos of the school.

The school aims to provide a challenging curriculum that reflects our philosophy, broadly balanced and relevant, and to support the development of the whole child to his/her full potential. At Holy Cross, everybody matters, therefore we encourage all to show respect to each other and the environment.



Statement of Intent

The Governors are committed to `inclusion` in education: this involves minimizing barriers to learning and participation. We believe that each child is unique and has unique needs *'belief in the individual leads Catholic schools to have the duty to care for the poor and to educate those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged'* (Catholic Bishops' Conference May 2014).

Equal Opportunity Statement

The Governors and Staff at Holy Cross believe that all people are entitled to equal opportunities, respect, and consideration regardless of race, colour, creed, gender, disability, or personal circumstances. Therefore, we are opposed to any form of prejudice or discrimination which denies people this equality. This principle applies to both adults and children in our school.

Rationale

In the life and faith of the Catholic School, Religious Education plays a vital and central part. At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education. Therefore, Religious Education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic Religious Education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school.

All pupils, therefore, have the right to receive an overall Religious Education, which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope, which is within them. (1 Peter 3:15) Religious Education is then the core subject in a Catholic school. *Catholic Schools have a distinctive nature of education* (Catholic Bishops' Conference 2014).

We also recognise that our children come from a range of backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities and that our teaching of Religious Education will reflect this. Holy Cross is committed to inclusion and equal opportunities, regardless of race, gender, disability, and special needs.

Aims and Objectives

At Holy Cross Primary, the **intent** is to offer a knowledge-rich curriculum which is broad and balanced and ambitious. Our curriculum will build on the knowledge and understanding of all children, whatever their starting points, as they progress through each Key Stage linked to Luke's "Gospel Values" of Compassion, Gentleness, Justice, Integrity, Simplicity, Humility, Preferential option for the lost and least, Love, Forgiveness and Hope and to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The following documents have been used to support the design of the curriculum and to ensure we are delivering a 'Curriculum Inspired by Christ'.

The Catholic vision of education promotes the dignity and freedom of every person as created in the image and likeness of God. This vision inspires and encourages the beliefs and values which are lived out in the daily life of the Catholic school. Within this vision, religious education is very much a journey of formation, involving every member of the school community, together with a pupil's family and parish community.

It is in this context that the three elements of religious education, catechesis, and evangelisation, co-exist, providing mutual support and reinforcement. For all children Religious Education is a proper subject in the school's curriculum. It is a rigorous academic discipline, and as such it is to be taught, developed, and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject. For those already engaged in the journey of faith religious education will be catechesis, and for some children and young people religious education will be evangelisation, the first opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel.

Curriculum religious education in Catholic schools aims to promote:

- knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life.
- knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose.
- skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.

The objectives of curriculum religious education in catholic schools are:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ, of the church, and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold.
- To develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and of the vital relationship between faith and life, life, and faith.
- To encourage study, investigation, and reflection by the pupils.
- To develop appropriate skills: for example, ability to listen; to think critically, spiritually, ethically, and theologically; to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively; to make informed judgements.
- To foster appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth; respect for the views of others; awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural, multifaith society.

Religious Education in the Classroom

The role of religious education in Catholic schools is primarily to contribute to the baptised, increasing in their understanding of the faith which they have received. Although it exists in a relationship complementarity to both, learning how to worship God in spirit and truth through prayer and liturgy and forming to live in conformity with the pattern of human goodness and truth that we find in Jesus Christ. It is the place where faith seeks understanding and at the same time where all pupils, whether they are believers or not, can increase in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. It requires 10% of the length of the taught week for each Key Stage of Education.

Programmes of Study

Holy Cross Primary has been trailing a new curriculum since 2023, using the Religious Education Directory (RED). Last academic year each class had half a term being taught from Come and See and half a term being taught from RED and alternating 50% on each. EYFS were taking part in a Diocese trial project of planning units for the new RE. Now we are in a position to teach purely from the new

curriculum using the Religious Education Directory throughout year Nursery- Year 6. The aims of religious education are:

1. To engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life.
2. To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively.
3. To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society.
4. To give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own.
5. To develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.
6. To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith.
7. To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

Other Faiths should be taught, in line with the thinking of the Church which appreciates the holiness and strengths of these other faiths which "often reflect a ray of that truth, which enlightens all people." So, while living out our Christian faith we are called to listen in dialogue and be ready to learn from other faiths, many of whom may be our neighbours. Formal teaching of other faiths takes place five times a year in the school year. 1 week is set aside for the discrete teaching of Judaism Hinduism, other Christian denominations, Sikhism, and Islam. In EYFS other religious festivals throughout the year are celebrated.

Process of Teaching

The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the human search for meaning, God's initiative in Revelation who comes to meet us and our response of faith. This pattern guides the structure of the programme and informs the process of each topic, opened through; understand, discern, and respond. The RED programme also uses 6 lenses: hear, live, believe and celebrate, dialogue and encounter to explore.

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). Each lens contains progressive expected outcomes for each year group.

The model curriculum has six components that will be known as branches which map onto the six half-terms of the school year. Each one has a core theme and invites pupils to learn about an aspect of Revelation, Scripture, life in Christ, and life in the Church, and to discern what their learning means academically and experientially enabling them to see, judge, and act through a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith.

1. Creation and covenant: ‘The heavens are telling the glory of God’ (Ps 19:1). In this branch, pupils will encounter the God who creates and calls a people.

2. Prophecy and promise: ‘In many and various ways, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets’ (Heb 1:1). In this branch, pupils will explore the Christian understanding of the teaching of the prophets as they point to the fulfilment of God’s promise in a messiah, Jesus Christ.

3. Galilee to Jerusalem: ‘God’s only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known’ (Jn 1:18). In this branch, pupils will experience the ministry of Jesus, the Word of God. They will learn about the call of the disciples and the nature of being a follower of Jesus.

4. Desert to garden: ‘Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day’ (1 Cor 15:3). In this branch, pupils will study the season of Lent and its culmination in the events of Holy Week. They will learn about the Paschal Triduum at the heart of the Catholic Church’s Liturgy and life.

5. To the ends of the Earth: ‘Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 28:19). In this branch, pupils will study the events that flowed from the Resurrection and Ascension in the coming of the Holy Spirit and the work of the apostles and early Church.

6. Dialogue and encounter: ‘For “In him we live and move and have our being”’ (Acts 17:28). In this branch, pupils will learn how Christians work together with people of different religious convictions and all people of goodwill towards the common good, respecting the dignity of all humanity.

Lessons

Each lesson contains the same components and follow a similar pattern of teaching, to ensure that all lessons are knowledge rich and focus on the understanding, whilst also including room for spiritual reflection. Each lesson contains:

1. Feedback from the previous lesson
2. Retrieval from previous learning
3. Prayer focus
4. New learning
5. Independent tasks to embed new learning
6. Self-assessment opportunities

“Religious Education learns from evangelisation and catechesis that learning and growth involve active participation and response. For this reason, personal experience plays a significant part in the exploration, discovery, and assimilation of the saving truth of God’s revelation.” Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012

Feedback




Feedback should be given in a timely manner, have an impact upon the pupils' learning and be in line with the Feedback Policy. It is expected that written and verbal feedback is only given for the benefit of the pupils, one lesson per week should be recorded using the whole class feedback sheets.

Children should assess their learning at the end of each lesson using the topic pages, then whilst marking the work, teachers should all assess the child's learning, as well as highlighting the LO green or orange. Each lesson should open with general feedback from the previous lesson.

High frequency spellings should be highlighted in yellow and key religious vocabulary should be corrected to age expectations.

Assessment and Monitoring

Pupils are assessed against the expected end of age-phase outcomes from the Religious Education Directory. Each component will open with a title page which lists the expected end of age-phase outcomes for that component. The page will have opportunities for pupil self-assessment and teacher assessment. Children will assess their knowledge at the end of each lesson, then a teacher will assess the child's knowledge at the end of each lesson.

	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
	The following list gives an indication of the ways in which these skills develop through the use of 'driver words and phrases' that are applied progressively as pupils move through the different age-phases of the curriculum content:		
Driver words and phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise... texts, beliefs, rites, ways of life. • Name... • Remember... • Recall... • Retell... • Describe... • Make links... • Explain... • Show understanding... • Interpret within a historical context... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions. • Say what they wonder about. • Recognise similarities and differences. • Point out what is the same and what is different. • Express a point of view or a preference. • Listen to different viewpoints. • Support a preference with reasons. • Explain differences. • Construct arguments. • Weigh strengths and weaknesses. • Arrive at justified conclusions. • Recognise complexity with reference to different interpretations and historical context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about their own feelings and experiences. • Respond personally to questions that are difficult to answer. • Make links between their own feelings and beliefs and their behaviour or way of life. • Compare their own and other peoples' responses. • Explain differences of belief and ways of life with reference to religious commitments. • Critically reflect on their own beliefs and ways of life in response to dialogue with others. • Respond with integrity to personal conclusions about questions of value and meaning.

Driver words and phrases are used to direct the children's thinking and outcome. The pupils must know where they are working at the end of each unit: working towards expectations, working within expectations, working at expectation, or working above expectations.

Each component ends with a knowledge capture which is a task that allows each pupil to showcase the knowledge they have gained and developed throughout the half term. Teachers will use their judgement to assess whether each child is working below the expected standard, working towards the expected standard, working at the expected standard, or working above the expected standard.

The Role of the Religious Education Leader

1.0 Exercises Religious Leadership in the implementation of the Religious Education curriculum and developing the Catholic life of the school by:

- 1.1 Giving leadership to the Catholic identity, life, and culture of the school within the evangelising Mission of the Church and to the agenda for World Youth Day program and event.
- 1.2 Developing students and staff to be active participants and leaders in the planning and implementation of the liturgical and sacramental life of the school.
- 1.3 Facilitating the development and implementation of policy in relation to Religious Education.
- 1.4 Working with staff to ensure the integration of Catholic values in the curriculum, policies, and procedures of the school.
- 1.5 Providing a vision for and articulating expectations regarding quality teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- 1.6 Encouraging and supporting teachers in developing the religious environment of their classrooms.
- 1.7 Working with the Executive Team in the spiritual development of staff and regular staff prayer.
- 1.8 Giving leadership to and coordinating opportunities for the faith development of students, including prayer and retreats.
- 1.9 Liaising with Pastors and communicating with parents concerning the Religious Education and the sacramental programs.

2.0 Exercises Leadership for Learning in developing policy, programs and pedagogies in Religious Education that enhance outcomes for students by:

- 2.1 Giving leadership to syllabus interpretation, programming, implementation practices, assessment, and evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum in the school.
- 2.2 Promoting the development and maintenance of a culture and school environment based on the foundation statements and key elements of the *Learning Framework* (CEO 2005), particularly in relation to Religious Education.
- 2.3 Facilitating the ongoing development of effective and contemporary pedagogy in Religious Education, including the effective use of assessment and evaluation data.
- 2.4 Supervising the implementation and teaching of the Religious Education curriculum, ensuring compliance with SACS Board, CEO and BOS requirements.
- 2.5 Contributing to improved teaching and learning in Religious Education by modelling good teaching practice and by facilitating continuing professional development in content and pedagogy.
- 2.6 Encouraging and facilitating appropriate forums for co-operative planning, the sharing of ideas and decision-making.

- 2.7 Coordinating the development and implementation of assessment and reporting procedures in Religious Education.
- 2.8 Supporting Religious Education teachers in their relationships with students in classroom management.

3.0 Exercises Human Resources Leadership in support of workplace related processes by:

- 3.1 Promoting and supporting the spirit, values, and principles of *Workplace Realities in the Catholic School* (SACS Board 2002) and related practices.
- 3.2 Taking responsibility for the induction, mentoring, performance management and overall leadership of RE teachers.
- 3.3 Leading the PPPR process with nominated teachers, including support for professional development goals and integrated career path planning.
- 3.4 Identifying and encouraging staff with leadership potential and taking initiatives, including delegation, to further develop this potential.
- 3.5 Encouraging and supporting staff in gaining accreditation to teach Religious Education.
- 3.6 Promoting teacher professionalism and encouraging positive staff morale by contributing to and initiating processes for team building.

4.0 Exercises Strategic Leadership in implementing the school's Strategic Leadership and Management Cycle and the School Review and Improvement process by:

- 4.1 Collaborating with the Executive Team in developing a culture of continuous improvement and the development and implementation of school improvement initiatives.
- 4.2 Giving leadership to aspects of the development, implementation, and evaluation of relevant aspects of the Annual Development Plan and the development of the Annual Report.
- 4.3 Promoting and supporting the role and involvement of parents and pastors in the life and practices of the school.
- 4.4 Promoting the vision, mission, and image of the school with an emphasis on its Catholic life and Religious Education program in the community.

5.0 Exercises Organisational Leadership to support effective and efficient administration of the school by:

- 5.1 Overtly supporting and implementing school and system policies.
- 5.2 Establishing and maintaining effective lines of communication and follow-up processes that support the information needs of the Leadership Team, colleagues, and members of the school community.
- 5.3 Managing a budget within funds allocated.
- 5.4 Maintaining records related to the Religious Education program, BOS requirements and other areas of responsibility.
- 5.5 Promoting and facilitating the use of RE Online and available Religious Education resources.
- 5.6 Facilitating the forward planning of and provision for the organisation of Religious Education resources.
- 5.7 Collaborating with the Executive Team in aspects of school organization and administration.

6.0 The Personal Dimensions of Leadership are exercised in the development of relationships and community by:

- 6.1 Giving witness to the teachings of the Gospel and to Catholic values in personal interactions and in carrying out the day-to-day duties of the position.
- 6.2 Taking a leadership role in creating an environment that is welcoming, hospitable, life-giving, and just.
- 6.3 Facilitating collaborative processes that build relationships and promote shared commitment, partnership, and a sense of achievement.
- 6.4 Facilitating the appropriate involvement of all groups of stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- 6.5 Continuing to develop personal, professional and leadership capabilities in the six Foundations with priority given to scripture, theology, spirituality, and Religious Education.

This policy is monitored by the Religious Education Lead. It is evaluated and reviewed annually by the school Governors, and the whole staff.