

St James' Catholic Primary School



R.E Handbook

Updated Summer 2025

Religious Education Policy

1. Mission Statement

St. James' - where we belong, believe and achieve.

Our educational aims

At St James, we:

Provide opportunities for the whole school community to fulfil their potential.

We do this by:

Offering a broad, balanced, differentiated and enjoyable curriculum, with a variety of extra-curricular activities;

Successfully communicating information to others;

Providing relevant training for the whole school community;

Celebrating all achievements and successes.

Living our lives through Christ

At St James, we:

Follow, as St James did, in the footsteps of Christ.

Witness the gospel values of forgiveness, respect, tolerance, trust,

care and compassion.

We do this:

Through different forms of worship;

By inviting guests to share their faith and beliefs;

By helping others through the support of CAFOD, the Good Shepherd and Shoebox Appeal;

By welcoming everyone to St James.

Being part of our community

At St James, we:

Develop and build upon positive relationships between our home, school and parish communities.

We do this by:

Inviting the parish into school and supporting church and community life; Having an open door policy of welcome.

2. Aims of Religious Education

The aim of Religious Education in St James' School is to promote the Catholic vision of the importance and independence 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 our Catholic school. Within this vision, Religious Education is a journey of formation involving every member of the school community,

together with a pupil's family and parish community. Religious Education is the foundation of the entire educational process.

For all children Religious Education is a proper subject in the school's curriculum. It is a rigorous, academic discipline taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.

The Religious Education curriculum in St James' Catholic Primary School aims to promote:

Knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and life;

Knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to questions relating to awe and wonder;

The skills required to engage in a reflection upon religious belief and practice.

Objectives

At St James' Catholic Primary School, we provide:

A developing knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and Jesus Christ, of the Church, and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold;

A programme for wonder, awe, reverence and imagination for the spiritual development of our children;

Opportunities for celebration through prayer and reflection in implicit and explicit ways;

Children with the language of religious experience through activities, symbols, rituals, places, people and objects.

To foster appropriate attitudes in everyday life, taking into account living in a multicultural, multi-faith society.

Help to enable the adults involved to have some underlying theological and educational principles.

Appropriate materials about other faiths.

The first port of call for many children in our school who do not attend Church on a regular basis. Our school can be the only church that some of our children attend, and so it is vital to provide the children with access to faith and belief at their level.

Support for our RE Coordinator and Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator who in turn are able to advise and assist colleagues about materials available and ideas.

In the words of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, the outcome of Catholic Religious Education in our school is:

“Religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, can who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.” (p.10)

3. The Religious Education Programme

To be fully compliant in fulfilling our aims and objectives we use the Scheme of Work recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. All the content and expected outcomes are as outlined in the programmes of study for the various age groups in the Religious Education Directory – ‘To Know You More Clearly’ model curriculum as mandated by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.

Overview of content

The Spiral Curriculum

The spiral structure of the curriculum enables a build-up, layering a critical dimension each year, deepening pupils’ understanding of the story of salvation, developing a common language, and exploring the ‘memory of the Church’ and her teachings and how these have formed part of the history of ideas in the development of humanity.

The structure invites teachers to expose pupils to the beauty of Catholic Christianity and its shaping influence on culture through art, music, literature, science, and architecture historically and to the present day, which equips young people to dialogue with the beliefs and vision of the Church beyond intellectual remits and exposing them to the transcendent, a powerful pedagogy.

The spiral pathway students follow from their first steps into Catholic education means that teachers can plan for progression, moving through basic questioning and notional understandings to ever deeper levels of engagement with Christianity’s divine and human drama and its significance for humankind

The Curriculum Structures

The model curriculum has six components that will be known as branches.

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.

Branch 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.
- They will explore revelation of the Christian belief that all that is comes from God, the Creation accounts in Genesis, and scientific explanations of the process of Creation.
- They will explore the call of God and his covenantal relationship with his people first through Abraham and Moses, then through the narrative of the Old Testament.

Branch 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 learn that the prophets speak of God reaching to his people, calling them back into a relationship with him.
- 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.
- They will explore the expectant waiting for the Messiah through the Advent season and how this speaks to Christians today as they wait for Christ.
- Pupils will encounter the story of the nativity of Jesus and the mystery of the incarnation.

Branch 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 life of Jesus and his revelation of the Kingdom of God through parables, encounters, miracles, and teachings.
- They will learn about the call of the disciples and the nature of being a follower of Jesus.

Branch 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.
- The title of this branch points both to the liturgical journey from the desert of Lent to the garden of

Resurrection, but also to the Paschal journey from darkness to light, barrenness to fruitfulness, death to life.

Branch 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.
- They will also learn about the Catholic Church today as the apostolic Church and how its liturgy and structures flow from the early Church.

Branch 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.
- They will also encounter other pathways of belief drawing on the teaching of the Church about intercultural dialogue.

4. The approach chosen

Knowledge Lenses – set out the object of study for pupils, they indicate what should be known by the end of each age phase:

The study of the Catholic Religion

- o Hear
- o Believe
- o Celebrate
- o Live

The study of other Religions and Worldviews

- o Dialogue
- o Encounter

The Sacraments – these are taught within and across branches. Pupils encounter scripture and what the Church teaches about scripture and what this means for a life lived in Christ as part of the Catholic faith.

The approach taken should encompass a variety of teaching and learning styles, which enable the needs of individual pupils to be met through a broad and balanced, cross-curricular, creative lessons.

Ways of Knowing – set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey. The **three** ways of knowing are: understand, discern, and respond.

5. Planning

Senior Leadership Team responsibilities:

To allocate 10% of curriculum time

To monitor timetables to ensure quality time for Religious Education.

Long-term planning

Long-term planning is the responsibility of Senior Leadership Team. The RE Coordinator provides teachers with a plan for each term, with topic titles, starting dates, and relevant information such as class Prayer and Liturgy.

Medium-term planning

The Overview is the medium term plan and is found in the Religious Education Directory (To know you more clearly) at the start of each topic. The coordinator will ensure that all teachers have the opportunity through staff meetings to reflect on the theme pages at the start of each topic.

6. Expected outcomes (Assessment)

Expected outcomes are a synthesis of the content outlined in the Knowledge Lenses and the skills described in the Ways of Knowing see page 40 Religious Education Directory. Each age phase will have a prescribed set of outcomes that will indicate what pupils are expected to know, remember and be able to do using the language of the Ways of Knowing and applying it to the discrete knowledge within each lens. Each branch and Year group will have its own discrete expected outcomes. See pages 36-38 Religious Education Directory

In our school it involves

Informal Assessment – The children are assessed during whole class and group activities by the comments that they make and contributions to discussions, along with any written work. Religious Education evidence is recorded in the form of RE Books in Key Stage 1 and 2 and online floor books for EYFS. Supporting photographic and video evidence is also encouraged. Marking reflects the different study of catholic religion with H, B, C, L symbol next steps are given when possible and completed in purple pen to help with progression towards it. We have a high expectation of presentation in all subject areas.

Formal Assessment – For ‘To Know You More Clearly’ teachers assess children at the end of each term on insight. This is informed by ongoing lesson assessment which is recorded on school traffic light system.

7. Tracking Data

In St. James’ we use insight tracking system to record our children’s progress at the end of each term. We track children as below, just below, on track and greater depth; we discuss this with S.L.T. at pupil progress meetings.

8. Reporting

Our reporting is in line with Liverpool Archdiocese recommendations, that Religious Education is reported first in the children’s termly and end of year report.

9. Evaluation of teaching

Monitoring and Evaluation contribute greatly to the development of Religious. We have a yearly planner that indicates when areas are to be assessed and monitored. R.E. coordinators do termly learning walk, book scrutiny, website check, prayer and liturgy observations and working wall assessment. Evidence is gathered, analysed and acted upon.

10. Evaluation of Learning

Children are continually encouraged to evaluate their own thinking and learning through the targeted questions asked by teachers.