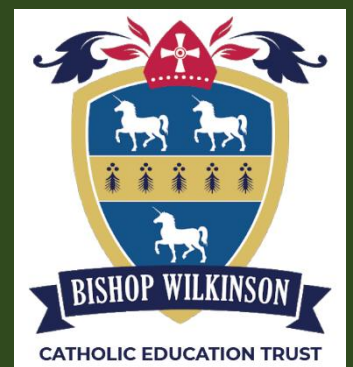




**St. Joseph's Catholic
Infant & Junior Schools
Birtley**

Religious Education Policy

April 2026





St. Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, Birtley believe that every child has the right to the best possible education. We aim to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential and gain the skills and knowledge necessary to lead successful lives.

This strategy provides a summary which is aimed towards ensuring high-quality Religious Education and should be read in conjunction with the schools' Prayer, Liturgy, Celebration of the Word and Meditation Strategy.

OUR MISSION

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone, to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

All are welcome in this place.

OUR VISION

Lord, in our daily lives, may we:

Love and serve like St. Joseph, care and protect like St. Joseph, work and teach like St. Joseph, show compassion and loyalty like St. Joseph, have trust and faith like St. Joseph.

We follow St. Joseph's virtues and remember our significance in God's world. Amen.



Rationale of Religious Education

- Religious Education is central to the educative mission of the Church.
*'At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education.'*¹
- Religious Education is 'the core of the core curriculum.'
*'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 have the right to receive an overall 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. Religious Education is, then, the core subject in a Catholic school.'*¹
- Religious Education is the systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of Christ and is a rigorous academic subject in its own right. *Religious Education is regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines.*² As such it is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.
*"Excellence in religious education, then, will be characterised by a clarity of succinct religious learning objectives and of key content, by appropriate methodologies, rigour, richness of resources, achievement of identified outcomes and accurate methods of assessment. Classroom RE will be a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material."*³
- The outcome of Classroom Religious Education is:
*"religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life"*⁴
- Whilst evangelisation and catechesis are happening in our school for some pupils, the specific contribution Religious Education makes to the Catholic Life of the school is primarily educational and will be planned, taught, assessed and monitored with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects.

The Aims of Religious Education as stated in the RE Curriculum Directory are:

- *To present engagingly a comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;*
- *To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;*

¹ Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 4

² Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.3

³ Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000, para 7

⁴ Religious Education Curriculum Directory, Department of Catholic Education and Formation, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2012, p.6

- *To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society;*
- *To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;*
- *To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;*
- *To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;*
- *To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;*
- *To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.⁵*

Religious Education - Curriculum Time Allocation

10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. While the 'Come and See' RE scheme recommends 3 x 50 minute lessons, St. Stephen's School understand that this equates to 2.5 hours and it may be necessary to teach Religious Education for longer periods (e.g. 2 hour afternoon block and at least an additional 30 minute session) in order to achieve the challenging objectives that the scheme sets. In most KS2 classes, six hours of Religious Education takes place across a two week block.

The 10% of curriculum time does not include Collective Worship.

Programme of Study

The 'Come and See' programme is used as recommended by the Diocese as way to fulfil the above aims and to address the four areas of study outlined in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012): Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ.

Methodology

A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used from across the curriculum adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of pupils.

Inclusion and Equality

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme.

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

Right of withdrawal from RE

Parents have the right of withdrawal from RE for their children. The school has a separate Policy for the Withdrawal from RE.

Other Religions

Two other religions are taught from EYFS to Year 6 following the programme of study in 'Come and See'. These are Judaism, which is usually taught in the Autumn, and Islam*, which is taught either in

the Spring or Summer. At least one week's teaching and learning time per year is given to each. *If you are covering a different World Faith please amend to show this.*

Assessment, Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

- Assessment of standards is carried out using the Age-Related Standards in Religious Education (3-19) interim document agreed by Bishops' Conference.
- Each teacher keeps a class record of assessed work and records of pupils' progress.
- An in - house moderation of pupils' books occurs regularly.
- Pupils' books are externally moderated with the CET and at diocesan RE Coordinators' Moderation meetings in the summer term.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning occurs via work scrutiny, pupil voice activities and lesson observations/learning walks.
- Progress and achievement is recorded and tracked in the following way – twice-yearly via our Trust-wide data system.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.
- Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to Governors in a written report at the end of each academic year – or by other arrangements, if requested.

Management of the Subject

The Religious Education Co-ordinator/Subject Leader has responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by *the LGC every 2-years.*

Appendix I

What does St. Joseph's do to promote the Catholic Life of the school?

- Attend pilgrimages and residentials e.g Year 5 Saint Vincent de Paul Camp at Holy Island
- Mini-Vinnies
- Allow pupils to attend the Diocesan Festival in June
- Attend the Primary Diocesan Festivals
- Work with Cardinal Hume re: transition days
- Charitable Giving via: CAFOD Family Fast Days; St. Cuthbert's Care 5p bus appeal; Harvest Festival for Refugee Campaign and The Peoples' Kitchen
- Rainbow Bereavement programme/Emotional Literacy Support Assistant – dependent upon staffing
- Promotion of Gospel values through our behaviour policy
- Monthly Bible story from Mr Taylor for KS1 and KS2 – with a focus on Old Testament biblical passages
- Celebrating pupils' achievements both in and outside of school through our Awards Assembly programme, where certificates are given for achievements in: Agent of British Values and Community Ambassador

What does St. Joseph's do to promote liturgical prayer in school?

- Monday afternoon's whole-school collective worship delivered by a year group from: Year 2 to Year 6
- Attendance at Mass with Fr. Martin Wheaton
- A half-termly Mass at St. Joseph's Church
- Allow pupils access to high quality resources and books to enhance worship e.g. Stations of the Cross, an altar, book of the Gospels, lectionaries, missals, Stations to live by
- Choir who are able to lead and cantor Responsorial Psalms and Gospel Acclamations
- Engage pupils in the musical provision of the Mass and liturgy by allowing them to use their instruments (violin, woodwind, brass) to accompany hymns and songs
- Class prayer books
- Teacher facilitated worship
- Pastoral care groups with a pupil-facilitated liturgies
- Meditation
- Daily prayers
- Carol Services in school and church
- Nativity plays
- Travelling cribs at Christmas time and the travelling Advent Calendar story book
- Easter Liturgies for each day of Holy Week
- Liturgical dances

What does St. Joseph's do to promote Religious Education in school?

- Devote at least 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education (excluding collective worship)
- Create exciting, inspiring and academic lessons, which seek to meet the attainment targets derived by Bishops' Conference

- Use supplementary resources e.g. John Burland CDs for music/scriptural understanding; Welcome to the Mass resources; Prayer Spaces in Schools; Come and See RE website to support teachers
- Attend all staff training delivered by the Diocesan Department for Education
- Deliver the Sacramental preparation programme for St. Joseph's Parish after-school and allow pupils from neighbouring schools (Catholic and non-Catholic schools) to attend the sessions. We also attend and facilitate the First Holy Communion preparation Masses
- Enhance the quality of our delivery by organising educational outreach visits to places of interest including (but not exclusively): St. Mary's RC Cathedral, Durham Cathedral, Bede's World, Lindisfarne (Holy Island); Jewish Synagogue as well as the Muslim Mosque.

For more information please visit:

www.rcdhn.org.uk or www.edurcdhn.org.uk