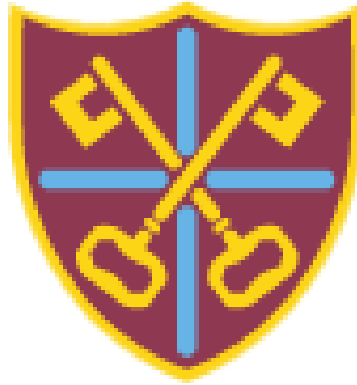


# **St. Peter's Catholic Primary School**



## **Religious Education Policy**

### **Mission Statement**

**St Peter's – building firm foundations for life**  
**We care for others**  
**We achieve our best**  
**We grow in faith**

Approved: Autumn 2026  
Next Review: Autumn 2027

## **All that we do at St Peter's is shaped by our commitment to our Faith.**

Our Mission Statement is reflected in our Religious Education curriculum as the teaching of Religious Education is designed to meet the principles and goals as laid down in the School's Mission Statement.

### **The Importance of the Role of Parents in Religious Education**

St Peter's Catholic Primary School recognises the central role parents have in the religious education of their children. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that

*"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiving, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule."* (CCC 2223)

As the Statement of the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales on Religious Education in Catholic Schools '2000' states,

*"The first educators in the faith are parents. It is they, above all others, who establish in their children the first sensitivity and responsiveness to the presence of God, to the practice of prayer and to the patterns of life in the community of faith, the parish. By foundations of a life-long faith and discipleship in their children are laid down."*

### **Our Catholic School**

It is in the spirit of the above statement that our school works. We see St Peter's School in the partnership with the home and the parish communities to which our children belong. As the General Directory for Catechesis affirms,

*"This partnership between home and parish is enhanced by the role of the Catholic school in which the educational mission of the church finds a particular and important expression."*

This 'educational mission' is our central role.

### **Our Vision for RE**

Religious Education takes pride of place in the school curriculum. It compliments and builds upon experiences children gain in other areas of their academic, social and spiritual development, inside and outside of school.

Through our Religious Education programme, we:

- Promote each child's innate capacity for wonder, awe and reverence and inauguration for the spiritual.
- Deliver a curriculum in accordance with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church

- Foster a spirit of tolerance, respect and understanding of other cultures and traditions represented in the school and in the wider community.
- Encourage individual responsibility for one's own Faith journey by promoting independence in learning.
- Show a systematic understanding of Christ, The Christian event, the message and the "Way of Life".
- Provide a climate where Christ can reveal himself.
- Value the contribution each child makes to the spiritual community.
- Provide opportunities for affirmation and growth of faith.

### **Religious Education offers opportunities:**

- **celebration and worship**
- **prayer and reflection**
- **development of religious language** and literacy – of people, places and objects – through stories, symbols and rituals
- a joyful learning journey, which marks out growth in learning and understanding of The Faith
- an experience and celebration of their success and that of others
- finding evidence of "**Christ in our World**" in their everyday experiences
- working together within a context of mutual support

### **How teachers embed learning**

Faith formation is delivered in three specific ways:

1. R.E. lessons
2. School assemblies
3. Masses, celebrations and liturgies

The **Religious Education Directory** (RED) is taught across all phases and year groups using the "Day by Day" scheme. All teaching staff have accessed the diocesan training.

### **School Assemblies and Liturgies**

The School gathers on a daily basis either as a whole or in year groups or classes. Our daily liturgies focus on prayer and reflection, taking either a Catholic Social Teaching, liturgical year, RED or the weekly gospel readings as content.

Our Tuesday and Thursday liturgies are very special; children and staff look forward to gathering together as a community. Children lead reflections and prayers based on the weekly Gospel reading and under the guidance of their classteachers.

On Wednesdays children are guided by staff to lead class Celebrations of the Word.

Our Friday assembly is a celebration when we give our awards and rejoice in our special talents.

### **Masses and Celebrations**

A programme of liturgies and masses is planned with our parish priests and includes events such as our feast day and Leavers' mass.

## **Prayer Life**

Prayer forms part of the daily worship in the classrooms. Within each classroom, an area is designated as a prayer focus, equipped with bibles, a candle and other objects which support prayer and liturgy. Each class is also provided with a 'Prayer and Worship Handbook', which is a guide for liturgies, masses, displays, prayer areas, and liturgies. Children take a strong lead in planning liturgies in class, year group gatherings and where appropriate whole school.

In October and May we invite our families to share the Rosary with us.

During Advent, we have a Travelling Crib or Posada which goes from class to class and home with families at the weekend.

Our staff have the opportunity to gather every Monday morning to share prayers and children are able to use our prayer room or prayer garden as a space to pray.

Staff meetings and training start with reflection and opportunities for prayer.

## **Display**

Within the classroom, display is used to enhance the area to encourage children to reflect upon the theme they are currently focusing upon. Displays are a celebration of the children's achievements and play a very important role in the children's development of self-esteem and self-awareness.

In the entrance hall, a prayer focus invites us to pray as we enter the school. It is regularly changed, to reflect the feast days and celebrations.

## **Witness to our Faith**

Each class takes part in a Mission Week where they support a local or global charity and are invited to attend a mass at Our Lady and St Peter's to offer up prayers for this charity.

As a Fairtrade school we have regular assemblies and support this initiative throughout the school.

We also have regular visits from organisations such as CAFOD or Missio.

During Lent all classes prepare a response to the Passion of Christ representing each station and we then have a service where all classes are invited to spend time reflecting on the Stations of the Cross here in school.

## **Contribution to Parish Life**

We attend masses at our local church in Leatherhead, as part of our Mission Week projects and for special intentions. For these occasions, the children are asked to play an integral part.

At other times, our children attend specific services at Our Lady and St Peter's or St Michael's churches.

We launch our year by welcoming newcomers to the school, when Father Michael leads a

special liturgy. The end of year mass for the children who are transferring to their secondary schools is particularly special. At this, we present each child with a cross to take with them as they go forth.

During Lent and Advent, the children in years 4, 5 and 6 attend a reconciliation service. We are blessed with support from our parish priests, which means that any child who chooses may have their confession heard.

Regular contact between school and parish is maintained, with our parish priests being available and willing to come to school to enrich RE lessons with their valued insight.

## **Learning in Religious Education**

At St Peter's Catholic Primary, religious education is primarily based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RED) "To Know You More Clearly" using the "Day by Day" scheme. In line with the Bishop's mandate, this curriculum is now fully implemented across all year groups.

In recognition of the importance of religious education in our school, we devote 10% of the teaching week to religious education lessons. In Key Stage 1 this is 2 hours 15 minutes and in Key Stage 2 this is 2 hours and 30 minutes, not including Collective Worship. In Early Years, the timetable and learning style is more flexible, but teaching of Religious Education is prioritised to give children the opportunity to engage fully with the curriculum.

The Religious Education Curriculum Directory has a clear framework for learning:

Four Knowledge Lenses: Hear, Believe, Live and Celebrate indicate what should be known by the end of each age phase.

Ways of Knowing: Understand, Discern and Respond are the skills through which children progress and develop their thinking during the curriculum journey.

Expected Outcomes set out for each year group what pupils should be able to know, remember and do.

Curriculum Branches divide the model curriculum into half-term units of study which repeat annually, giving a spiral curriculum which allows children to build progressively on the prior knowledge and develop their understanding year by year.

The curriculum branches are:

|                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Autumn 1</b> | Creation and Covenant    |
| <b>Autumn 2</b> | Prophecy and Promise     |
| <b>Spring 1</b> | Galilee to Jerusalem     |
| <b>Spring 2</b> | Desert to Garden         |
| <b>Summer 1</b> | To the Ends of the Earth |
| <b>Summer 2</b> | Dialogue and Encounter   |

The curriculum is firmly founded on building children's knowledge and understanding of Scripture, while providing opportunities to make connections to other faiths and cultures, as well as to their daily lives.

At St Peter's Catholic Primary school, the teaching of religious education is designed to be as varied and creative as possible, to help children to engage fully with the ideas explored, to ask wondering questions and to lead their own learning in discerning their response.

Learning within the classroom may include:

- Whole class discussion and teaching
- Group discussion and feedback
- Drama and role play
- Independent research
- Exploration through music and art
- Godly Play
- External speakers / workshops

Learning in religious education cannot always be recorded and does not begin or end in the classroom. Learning from religious education will also flow into other curriculum areas as pupils make links between their learning. We aim to give children the opportunity to connect their formal learning with their wider understanding through regular opportunities to reflect and respond.

Learning beyond the classroom may include:

- Following the example of a role model in daily life at home or in school
- Participation in charitable activity and fundraising
- Inspiration through reflection in prayer and liturgy
- Conversations with clergy or parishioners in school
- Response to catechesis in the parish e.g for Reconciliation or First Holy Communion
- Engagement with programmes based on Catholic social teaching e.g. Faith in Action Award.

We work closely with parents and with the ecclesiastical areas of Hersham and Walton-on-Thames to support children's progress in understanding and developing on their curriculum and faith journey.

## Other World Views

Catholic education seeks to form pupils who are well prepared to play a positive role in society and to follow Jesus' teaching to "love your neighbour". We therefore embrace learning about other world views with ***"a willingness... to try to understand better the religion of one's neighbours, and to experience something of their religious life and culture."*** (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales)

The Religious Education Directory includes a branch called 'Dialogue and Encounter' which focuses specifically on exploring other world views and recognizing the connections with the Catholic faith. Opportunities for dialogue and encounter are sought throughout the academic year and especially focus on broadening pupils' experiences and on real-life encounters with those of other faiths or none, to enable connections and develop understanding. Examples may include:

- Opportunities for families in our community to share their faith and experience
- Conversations with invited visitors about their beliefs and experiences
- Q&A with faith leaders online or in person
- Visits to places of worship
- Guided exploration of artefacts from other faiths
- Independent reading, research and discussion

External speakers are always checked in line with the CES checklist for external speakers, to ensure safe and constructive dialogue and encounter opportunities for our pupils.

### **Feedback, Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Developmental feedback is given in Religious Education to support children's progress and to challenge their thinking. This follows the school's Feedback Policy and may be given verbally.

Assessment follows diocesan and national guidelines, assessing against the expected outcomes for each branch in the Religious Education Directory. Pupil attainment is recorded half-termly on the school's assessment recording system and progress is tracked regularly by the RE Lead and SLT in line with the school's Assessment Policy.

The RE Lead moderates outcomes in Religious Education both internally and with local Catholic schools, to ensure consistency of expectations with other schools in the diocese.

Outcomes for Religious Education are shared in line with other core curriculum subjects, both during parent consultation meetings and in end-of-year reports.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating**

RE Leaders and SLT monitor every aspect of Religious Education in line with other core curriculum subjects. Monitoring is conducted at least termly and feedback is given to individual staff. Outcomes may inform further training at staff meetings or actions for the subject action plan.

Self-evaluation of Religious Education is the responsibility of the Headteacher, the RE Lead, Governors and the Senior Leadership Team, with further input from all teachers of religious education, from families and from pupils. This process ensures a culture of continuous improvement, so that teaching and learning in Religious Education remains the best it can be.

## **Staff Formation**

All staff support the Catholic ethos of our school and strive to develop children's progress and understanding in matters of faith. There are regular opportunities for all staff to engage in personal prayer and reflection which may support their professional role.

All teachers involved in planning and delivering Religious Education lessons have attended half-termly diocesan training on the curriculum directory resources. The RE Lead collaborates with other local schools to share best practice more widely.

## **Assessment**

See Assessment Policy for specific information.

## **Specific resources used**

The subject leader is responsible for ensuring that resources are relevant and ensuring that teachers utilise them to enhance learning. Key resources that help to embed children's understanding of RE further:

- Year group sets of Bibles
- Other books that support the understanding of bible stories, Catholic traditions and devotions e.g. Youcat.
- Prayer stations
- Travelling cribs
- Stations of the Cross

