

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL



DIOCESE OF MENEVIA RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

STATUTORY POLICY

**THIS POLICY WAS REVIEWED/ADOPTED:
Autumn 2025**

This Policy will be reviewed Autumn 2026

MISSION STATEMENT

St Joseph's Infant School is a Catholic School in the Diocese of Menevia. Our Mission is to teach and nurture the Catholic faith, in a community where all may live and work together to achieve the very highest academic standards.

Rooted in Christ we aim to:

1. Provide an education that develops the spiritual, academic, wellbeing and moral aspects of each individual.
2. Celebrate through prayer, liturgy and worship, allowing pupils and staff to develop and grow in their love of God.
3. Foster Gospel values in an environment which encourages the understanding of the needs of everyone.
4. Make Christ and his values known to all and be of service to society.
5. Work with parents as the first educators and continue to develop close relationships between home, school and parishes.

Rooted in Christ we aim to:

1. To love God and be the very best that we can be.
2. Celebrate through prayer and worship our love of God.
3. Love one another.
4. Walk in the footsteps of Jesus, to help others.
5. Work together to make our school the best school it can be.

Headteacher – Barbara Murphy

Subject Leader – B. Murphy/ S.Turner

Link Governor – Father Krzysztof

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years

Signed: Mrs Barbara Murphy

Date : Autumn 2024

Review Date: Autumn 2025

Introduction

The following policy lays out clearly the approach to Religious Education at St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School.

What is Religious Education?

Religious Education is about engaging with the deepest questions of life and finding reasons for hope which is within them (1Peter 3:15).

National Symposium Jan 2000- Expectations of RE in Catholic Schools-

It is about the Christian vision of human person.

It is the core subject which is central to the life of our school.

It is a systematic study:

- of the mystery of God,
- the teachings of the Church
- the lives of the saints,
- the relationship between faith and life.

The Gospel Values underpin all our work in every subject area as we endeavour to 'provide an education that develops the spiritual, well-being, moral and the academic aspects of each individual' as our Mission Statement says.

Subjects are monitored in a planned and structured way by the Headteacher and Curriculum Leaders in an annual cycle. As a result of this, future targets are identified and included in the School Improvement Plan. In this way, a cycle of continuous improvement is very much part of this school's ethos.

St. Joseph's Infant School is established by the Diocese of Menevia in order to support our parents in their responsibility for the academic, well-being, moral, physical, spiritual, moral and religious education of their children.

Expectations of Classroom Religious Education

Excellence in religious education is achieved by:

- clarity of succinct religious learning objectives,
- key content
- by appropriate methodologies
- rigour
- richness of resources

- achievement of identified outcomes,
- accurate methods of assessment

The objectives of Religious Education requires:

- analysis and reflection and critical appreciation of sources,
- marked progression,
10% of the length of the taught week of FP.
- the encouragement of investigation and reflection,
- developing appropriate skills and attitudes which allows for a free, informed response to God's call,
- the use of skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Furthermore, the religious growth and development that takes place in school can only compliment and build on whatever experiences the child has had in the home, parish and wider community. The outcome of religious education in our school should be religiously literate children who have the knowledge, understanding and skills - appropriate to their age and capability - to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

The Religious Education Programme.

Our new Religious Education Directory – To Know You More Clearly will be fully implemented by September 2026.

Titled To Know You More Clearly and published by the CES, the directory sets out the purpose of RE from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 9 and features a programme of study with a model curriculum, corresponding to the six half-terms of the school year.

Based on the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council and rooted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the objective of the curriculum is religiously literate and engaged young people, with the knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically, and recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. This new curriculum will transform our Religious Education lessons and support us to develop Disciples of Christ. The Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools (1996) was published by the Bishops of England and Wales to make the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the four Dogmatic Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council accessible to Catholic Schools. It divides the content of the Catholic Faith into four 'areas of study' based on the Dogmatic Constitutions.

- * Revelation (based on Dei Verbum)
- * Church (based on Lumen Gentium)
- * Celebration (based on Sacrosanctum Concilium)
- * Christian Living (based on Gaudium et Spes)

The Role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator

The Head plays a vital role in the school alongside the Deputy Head in sharing the role of RE Co-ordinator. They lead the staff in developing their teaching of Religious Education through good practice and support.

It is part of their role to develop the Catholic ethos of the school in relation to worship, prayer, scripture, assembly and the school's Mission Statement.

Home, School and Parish Links.

The Church has always taught that parents are the primary educators of their children:

'It is the duty of parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and devotion to God and their fellow men which will promote an integrated personal and social education of their children.' (Gravissimum Educationis, no. 3)

Therefore, we regard links with parents as vitally important for the religious growth of our children. We issue a termly R.E. bulletin which informs parents of the aims of the forthcoming Religious Education topics and dates of special liturgical events which they are encouraged to attend with their children.

Parents are invited into the school three times a year to discuss their children's progress and development in all curriculum area including Religion. At the end of the academic year, parents are given an annual report which comments on children's level of attainment in Religious Education and also their attitude developed.

St Joseph's Infants is a welcoming school and parents, Governors and friends are warmly invited and encouraged to attend our class assemblies, Masses and Liturgies.

St. Joseph's Infant School is also part of the wider context of parish life serving St. Joseph's Port Talbot, Our Lady of Margam and Our Lady of the Assumption Briton Ferry. We regard our links with the parishes as vitally important to provide a context for the children's religious development. Following a Liturgy meeting between the Headteachers of St. Joseph's Infant, Junior and Comprehensive schools, the Parish Priest and representatives of the Parish meet to prepare a Family Mass in St. Joseph's and Our Lady of Margam Churches where the children are greatly involved in reading, singing and the offertory procession. Our priests from the feeder parishes visit the staff and pupils and support us in our journey of faith.

Prayer and Worship at St. Joseph's Infant School.

Since our school sets out to guide and encourage our young children to grow in faith, prayer and worship, which are essential parts of religious experience, these are an integral part of school life.

The celebration of the Mass, Liturgies, Collective Worship, Assemblies and Prayer are an integral part of our teaching.

Prayer

Children are assisted to explore a variety of methods of prayer from private, individual prayer to group prayer in both formal and informal settings. As with Religious Education it is not compartmentalised. It is often most appropriate when it is a spontaneous response to whatever is happening at the time. The opportunity for prayer is taken many times during the day. Children are taught formal prayers including the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, our School Prayer and others. The children are encouraged to compose their own prayers in developing their conversation with God. The children are also given opportunities for whole school Guided Meditations led by Teachers.

Liturgy

This includes non-sacramental as well as sacramental forms of public prayer. Assemblies are held each morning Monday to Thursday and Friday for our Celebration Assembly. The whole school assemblies are led by Head, Deputy Head and Staff. Monday assembly led by the Head teacher focuses on the Readings and themes of the previous Sunday, thus following the Church's year. Pupil led Collective Worship also takes place weekly. Collective Worship celebrations are led by both pupils on special themes and shared with the class and whole school. In particular, opportunity is taken to celebrate the Religious Education Directory topics such as Creation and Covenant, and the Feasts and

Seasons of the Church's year. During Holy Week the classes take an assembly to help us remember, focus on and reflect on the events of Holy Week and perform an Easter Service reflecting Jesus' Death and Resurrection.

Sacraments

Sacramental worship is the high point of Catholic worship and is therefore an integral part of school life. The Sacrament of journey is supported by the Headteacher and staff as Year 2 pupils prepare to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Every half term, the whole school (excluding Nursery Pupils) celebrate Mass in St. Joseph's Church, Port Talbot taking an active part in the various ministries and whole school Masses are celebrated on special occasions, for example the Welcome Mass in September and the Leavers' Mass in July.

Opportunities are also taken for St. Joseph's Infant School and St. Joseph's Junior School to celebrate together during the liturgical year, these occasions include the Feast of St. David, the Feast of St. Joseph and the annual service in honour of Our Blessed Lady in May when children pray the rosary and participate in Benediction.

Assessment

Recording of children's work takes many forms - pictorial, written, wall displays, digital work and assemblies, etc. Each classroom has a Collective Worship area with display boards and tables as a focus for prayer. The NBRIA levels are used as the framework of content to match our religious syllabus and to provide an outline of the knowledge, skills and attitudes which should be evident in our teaching, as part of our evaluation process. Marking follows the marking code for foundation phase used across the curriculum and care is taken to include driver words from the RED when marking and giving feedback in R.E.

Staff Training and Involvement

- * R.E. Co-ordinator attends Diocesan led meetings, cluster meetings for moderation and other relevant courses and reports back to the rest of the staff.
- * Teachers and support staff undertake the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) if not held already.
- * Each year one INSET day is devoted to Religious Education.

Conclusion

The underlying reason for the establishment of Catholic Schools is the belief that 'Christ's incarnation has changed our world, making of God's good creation a sacramental means by which He reveals Himself to us'. (Evaluating C1). Every human life is filled with God's presence. The teacher's role is to help the children experience through every moment of the day, that God is at the centre of our lives and is total and absolute love.

Bibliography

1. Bishop's Conference of England and Wales; Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools: Catholic Education Service: London: 1996
2. Bishop's Conference of England and Wales; Department of Christian Doctrine and Formation, Co-ordinating Committee for Inservice, Evaluation and Appraisal in Catholic Schools; Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School: Catholic Education Service; London ; 3rd Edition.
3. Bishop's Conference of England and Wales , What are we to teach ? Catholic Education Service; London 1994.
4. Byrne, Anne and Malone, Chris et al; Come and See : Harper Collins; London 1992.
5. Flannery, Austin(Ed); Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents: Fowler Wright Books, Leominster; 1981
6. Libreria Editrice Vaticana: The Catechism of the Catholic Church: Geoffrey Chapman; London 1994
7. National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers; Broad Areas of Attainment in Religious Education; Rejoice Publications; London; 1994