

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School



Religious Education Policy 2024-26

***“We love and learn together by growing in
friendship with Jesus”***

Linked virtues:

‘Learned & Wise’

‘Attentive & Discerning’

Autumn 2024

1. Our School Mission

“We love and learn together by growing in friendship with Jesus”

(Our School Mission)

Religious Education forms the cornerstone of the life and work of St. Augustine’s and permeates the whole Curriculum. Our faith is central to the life and mission of our school. We believe that Religious Education is primarily educative, but for some children it is catechetical in nature in that the commitment of faith that they have already expressed is nurtured, and for others it is evangelical in that they are challenged by the Gospel and express an interest in faith. For us, therefore Religious Education is an essential way in which we can grow in our faith, by learning about and from our faith and thus become the people God is calling us to be and, as a result, fulfil our vocation as mature and whole members of God’s universal family. However, it is not our belief that this process is confined solely to Religious Education, but rather that it encompasses and permeates the school curriculum in its entirety.

2. Aims of Religious Education

“I have come that they might have life and have it to the full”

(John 10:10)

As a whole, the educative process in our school is religious since it is incarnational, in that it is touched by God. It aims to bring each person into a loving relationship with God so that they might come to a growing awareness of themselves, the people around them and their environment, and the relationship that exists between them. In this way, the educative process gives all members of the community the tools that will enable them to discover their gifts and talents, to develop them positively and to use them wisely, thus empowering them to reach their true vocation. At St. Augustine’s, we believe that for all children, RE is a proper subject in its own right as part of a whole curriculum and as such it is regarded as a rigorous academic discipline to be taught, developed, resourced and assessed with the same commitment as any other core subject.

The RE curriculum we provide here at St. Augustine’s aims to develop the children’s religious literacy and full vocation by promoting:

- Knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and life;
- Knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose;
- The skills required to engage in examination of, and reflection upon, religious belief and practice;
- A range of positive attitudes towards all aspects of human life and development.

As we put the curriculum into practice throughout the school, we have our objectives:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of the person of Jesus Christ, of the Church and the central beliefs that Catholics hold;
- To explore the Gospels and the Tradition of the Catholic faith;
- 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;
- To encourage study, investigation and reflection by pupils;
- To be ‘Great for God’;
- To develop appropriate skills, for example, the ability to listen, to think critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically, to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively and to make informed judgements in their everyday life;
- To foster appropriate attitudes; for example, respect for truth, respect for the views of others, respect for the faith of others, awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibilities and of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural society;
- To ensure that the Liturgical Year is reflected in the life and activities of the school;
- To develop the children’s knowledge and understanding of the Virtues and Catholic Social Teaching;

- To develop the involvement within the church community and care for others.

❖ **Entitlement and Provision**

At St. Augustine's we recognise that, as a Catholic school, we must offer to all the children in our care their full entitlement with regard to RE. To do this we recognise that RE forms the core of our curriculum and as such have allocated 10% of the available teaching time to the delivery of RE, each and every week of the school year. This does not include Mass, assemblies, PSHE, Hymn Practice and other acts of class prayer and daily worship. The time allocated for EYFS/KS1 is 2 hours 25 minutes a week delivered over 2 lessons and for KS2 2 hours 35 minutes delivered over a minimum of 2 lessons.

At St. Augustine's we have implemented the Archdiocesan Curriculum Strategy for Religious Education; "Learning and Growing as the People of God" and have incorporated this with other Archdiocesan initiatives such "Walk with Me." The strategy covers the following four areas:

1. Revelation: teaching about God's self-revelation
2. Church: about the Communion of life in Christ
3. Celebration: about living the Christian Mystery in worship and prayer
4. Life in Christ: about the search for holiness and truth

In addition we have made explicit the links with other subjects and maximised the attention given to cross-curricular concerns; for example in 'Citizenship'. We have embraced the Catholic Schools Profile with regard to the Virtues. Each half term a new pair of virtues are introduced and reflected on during the half term, identifying and celebrating children who are displaying these virtues. Each Class also learns about the school mission, saint and also each class learns about their class saint. The children within school also learn about Catholic Social Teaching. We have identified links through the Curriculum that we offer in each year group as well as offering Key Stage and whole school experiences. Each half term we will focus on one of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching as a whole school. Our MTP's start with each classes vocational statement and the virtues and Catholic Social Teaching which are being taught are also included within the MTP's. The resulting RE curriculum is central and pervading in its purpose, appropriate and balanced in its content and vibrant and meaningful in its delivery and works to provide the children with their full entitlement. This is enhanced by the programmes of Sacramental Preparation in Years 3 and 6, assemblies and Masses.

Children are expected to develop a repertoire of prayers appropriate to their year group (See Prayer & Liturgy Policy). We recognise at St. Augustine's that if Religious Education is to make a positive, personal impression and impact upon the children it must be pupil-centred. Its approach must be attuned to the pupil's actual situation and stage of development and it should start from the pupil's own experience.

Our RE curriculum at St. Augustine's acknowledges that the children we teach may come from a wide variety of backgrounds, both in social terms and in the level of practice and understanding of faith they have been exposed to. It highlights the fact that we live in a multicultural society and though our population is predominately baptised Catholics in make up now, we may find ourselves faced with the situation where we are providing for children of other faiths or no faith at all. In undertaking Religious Education, we must trust the Holy Spirit to guide the whole Christian community in this undertaking.

❖ **Sacramental Preparation**

We believe at St. Augustine's that the Sacraments reveal to us in a special way the presence of Jesus Christ. The seven Sacraments permeate all moments of our lives from the moment we take our first steps on our journey of faith to our heavenly home in Baptism to our triumphant entry to the Kingdom of God our Father.

Coming to understand the mystery of the Sacraments is a complex process. The children must come to terms with their own experience of these celebrations. This lifelong process begins at the moment of Baptism and continues as the children start school.

Explicit preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist takes place in Year 3. Parents are invited to a meeting where the program is explained by the School Staff and at least one priest from the parish. The Year 3

section of the RE Curriculum Strategy “Learning and Growing as the People of God” contains units which focus explicitly on Reconciliation and Eucharist whilst the other units continuously highlight and refer to the presence of Jesus and recognising the reality around us. The children make their own booklets containing learning from the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist which is completed in School and also at Home as part of Home Learning. The parents support the children under the direction of the Class Teacher to complete the different units. During the Reconciliation and Communion programme we have workshops in school for parents to work with their children.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation takes place during Year 6 and the children celebrate the Sacrament in the Summer Term. There is a parents’ meeting to explain the programme by School Staff and also at least one of the Priests. We use a variety of different resources to support the children in their preparation for this Sacrament including “Learning and Growing as the People of God.” All the work the children produce is made into a book. This provides a unique record of the children’s preparation. This system is well established and has proven very successful to date.

❖ ***Other Faiths and Religions***

At St Augustine’s we have a Multicultural timetable each year, which identifies the religion/s that different year groups will study throughout the year. The children in EYFS learn about the different religious celebrations. In Key Stage 1 the children learn about different religions and in Key Stage 2 each class has a specific religion they study in detail (See Multicultural Plan in the RE Subject Leaders Folder). Visits are also planned to different places of worship. Links are made to Judaism and Christianity throughout the year.

❖ ***How We Plan Religious Education***

The Diocesan Curriculum Strategy; “Learning and Growing as the People of God” forms the basis of our RE curriculum at St. Augustine’s. This forms the schools long and medium term planning and is used by staff to plan units of work and individual lessons. The long term plan is created by the RE Subject Leader and indicates which units are to be taught, when and for how long. Short term planning is the responsibility of the class teacher and is completed on a weekly basis. The STP sheets can be found W:\A. 2024-2025\Curriculum - intent, implementation, impact\STP documents. The RE Subject Leader along with the Head Teacher, in collaboration with the whole staff, is responsible for monitoring and developing the long and medium term planning to ensure that the need to create continuity and progression is met. The Curriculum Strategy has an inbuilt continuity, but as an individual school we include other aspects, themes and topics in our planning which need to be taken into account. We have adapted the Curriculum Strategy to ensure that there is challenge for our pupil’s in line with the End of Phase Expectations. RE Leads within the MAC have created AT2&3 Planning documents to support Class Teachers in all year groups with planning for AT2&3 opportunities

The Curriculum Strategy highlights very clearly the cross curricular links that exist within the Strategy with Literacy, speaking and listening, drama and art, and as a result the resources that we have purchased in school reflect this. As a school we make use of other cross curricular links and these are also taken into account, for example Science and Citizenship; the former being linked primarily through “Life to the Full.”

❖ ***How We Teach Religious Education***

The staff at St. Augustine’s are highly committed and very professional. They have a wealth of experience and expertise and they draw on this to deliver the RE curriculum in their own classrooms. Individual staff members make their own professional decisions about the best method of delivery for a particular topic or class group, but across any unit of work a wide variety of organisation and strategies will be used including whole class, group or individual work, investigation, research, evaluation, writing, role-play, art, discussion and computing. There is a shared lesson structure which all year groups follow. Our work on Thinking Skills supports the RE Curriculum. Staff also make their own professional judgements about the needs of individual children and accommodate these by altering the curriculum appropriately either by providing greater challenge or further reinforcement. It usually follows that with regard to recording work differentiation needs to be made for those children with identified educational literacy-based needs, but more generally this does not necessarily apply. Therefore, judgements about differentiation are made on the basis of performance in RE and not Literacy. STP is completed weekly by the Class Teachers and monitored by the RE Subject Leader.

Prayer has an important role in the scheme and is taught both as an integral and a discrete area of study. Each Classroom and the School hall must have a religious focal point. The prayer table includes drapes appropriate to the liturgical season. Staff complete the prayer focus on their STP for each unit.

❖ ***Assessment, Recording and Reporting***

At St. Augustine's we expect and encourage the same high standards and expectations in RE as we do for all our curriculum subjects. Our LTP states these high expectations and identifies the spellings for each year group that need to be spelt correctly and if these are not then the children need to practise them. Marking in RE follows the school's marking policy. AFL in RE is evident on the STP.

Assessment in RE at St. Augustine's follows the same pattern as in other subjects. For the children in EYFS we Baseline assess the children on entry to Nursery and new children starting in Reception. At the end of Reception we use the EYFSP and we also reassess a group of children against the Baseline on entry in both Nursery and Reception. At the end of Reception, Year 2, 4 & 6 we track the children's progress using the End of Phase Expectations. The Subject Leader scrutinises the progress of the children and classes and speaks to individual staff where appropriate.

In addition to this we also assess the children against 3 units each year from the Curriculum Strategy as directed by the Diocese. The children are assessed against the 4 strands and therefore we work on a 4 year cycle – The Liturgical Year, Scripture, The Sacraments and Living as Christians. The assessment criteria for these units has been taken from the units themselves which recognise what most children will achieve and also identifies how some children will achieve further, and others will not achieve as much. Individual staff use their professional judgement about the methods of assessment that are used but, they will include observation, written work, art, computing. The attainment of the children is recorded on the RE Class Assessment sheets which are scrutinised by the Subject Leader.

Parents are invited to school twice a year to meet with the teaching staff in order to discuss their progress, development and attainment in all areas of the curriculum, including RE. Parents also receive a report at the end of each year which explains what their child has been learning about and can do in RE as well as an effort grade.

❖ ***Resources***

The school has a range of Bibles and Bible storybooks which are suited to the varying age ranges and abilities within the school. We have a variety of posters, prayer books, teaching resource books, multicultural resource boxes, power points for meditation / art, big books which are held centrally in "St. Augustine's Room" or the RE Resource Room. All resources are continually reviewed and updated.

❖ ***Spiritual Development***

At St. Augustine's we believe that spiritual formation and development is of primary importance since it is through a growing relationship with God that we are truly able to reach our potential. From our experience we believe that this is achieved primarily through the celebration and reception of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and other liturgies that will, in turn, lead to the development of an atmosphere of prayer, joy and celebration. Such an atmosphere will permeate through the school and beyond. The school participates in the celebration of Mass at various times each term including all Holy Days of Obligation. Parents, parishioners, governors and other members of the community are warmly welcomed to Phase and Whole School Masses and many attend, thereby enhancing the unity of the communal celebration. Class Masses are also planned during the year. More generally, prayer forms an integral part of the school day at St. Augustine's and children are given various opportunities to lead and participate in times of prayer. Prayer shapes the school day with each session beginning and ending with some form of collective and individual prayer. Individual lessons may also include some form of prayer. Assemblies take place at the start and end of the week and on other days there are class / key stage Prayer & Liturgy within the school community as follows:

Monday – Whole School Assembly (Gospel Based)

Wednesday – Hymn Practice for EYFS/KS1 and KS2

Friday - Celebration Assembly

The Whole School Assembly and Celebration Assembly are led by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head in her absence. During the year specific classes lead an assembly. On days when a particular group do not participate in assembly, during the day there will be Prayer & Liturgy in the Classroom, which the children lead at different times. The themes for these reflect very closely the Liturgical Calendar.

Children are taught a variety of prayers, both traditional and contemporary, including the responses of the Mass, as is appropriate for their age and stage of development, in order that they can express in an authentic way their love of and praise for God. They are also taught the structure of prayer and the types and uses of prayer, are encouraged to use this to be spontaneous in their own prayer, both verbal and written. In the prayer area, near the hall, children can come and reflect on the prayer focus and pray for their own intentions during playtimes and lunchtimes. The variety of prayers that the children learn reflects the liturgical Seasons and school activities, for example greater emphasis on the Rosary in May and October, prayers to the Holy Spirit are recited around Pentecost and Confirmation. This is done both in class and during assembly. The children are also given opportunity to reflect quietly during moments of stillness and silence.

❖ ***Moral Development***

At St. Augustine's we believe that moral education and development flows from faith and is an essential element of a broader education. As such it has a central place in the curriculum of our school. For us, it is not one subject amongst many, but rather it touches every subject. Moral education and development at St. Augustine's is not limited to a discussion of a few 'moral issues' such as telling the truth and lying, but rather children are encouraged to reflect upon their attitudes, beliefs and actions in light of the Catholic teachings.

At the heart of all education, including moral education, is the fundamental truth that every person is made in the image and likeness of God. This means that we all have the ability to know the difference between right and wrong, and the ability to freely choose what is right, good and life-giving, and reject what is wrong, destructive and leads to death. It also means that there is nothing more precious on earth than a human person. Each person is of infinite value and is to be treated with the greatest respect. It is our aim that the children should sense this in the way that they are treated by members of staff and by the way the children are encouraged to treat each other.

At St. Augustine's we believe that morality should not be presented simply as a set of rules or arbitrary commands, but as a call to a personal growth and responsibility. By developing a growing sense of responsibility and making life-giving choices the children can grow into the person God has made them to be. We recognise that children learn about, and develop a sense of, morality both by exploring the teaching of the Church and by the example of their parents and teachers, through their attitudes and actions. For this reason our belief about moral education and development informs all aspects of our school life, including the way we manage the behaviour of the children in our care. At all times the children are treated with respect, as befits their dignity, whatever they have done.

❖ ***Vocational Development***

At St. Augustine's we believe that developing the children's sense of vocation is crucial. Each class has their own vocational statement which is pertinent to their year group. The vocational statement is introduced at the beginning of the year and is reflected upon during the year. The LTP and MTP begins with this Vocational Statement. The children's understanding of vocation is developed from EYFS, with the understanding that God is calling everyone to serve him in a special way and that everyone has a special vocation. The school reflects on different virtues and also the principles with Catholic Social Teaching. This leads the children to reflect on these with regards to their own life. Each class within the school has a different Class Saint which they learn about the life of the Saint during the year, including how this relates to their own lives and the impact the saint has on others.

❖ ***Social Development***

At St. Augustine's one of our aims is to help the children to develop as mature Christians whose lives are shaped by the example of Christ. This then cannot remain on a purely knowledge-based level and must impact on their lives and the lives of those around them. The RE Curriculum then must allow the children to integrate and assimilate the 'learning about' aspects from AT1 and the 'learning from' aspects of AT2 and lead them into action. For this reason we engage, as a school, in a variety of fund raising initiatives, but much of the responsibility for this, the whys and

wherefores, are handed to the children who rise to the challenge on every occasion. They make decisions about how the money is raised.

We have formulated an RE council at St. Augustine's which enables a group of children to evaluate and develop the RE provision in school and the Catholic Life of the School. The children in Year 6 are encouraged to take on jobs around the school for a variety of purposes including family leaders, Active Play Heroes, Peer Listeners etc. The children in Year 6 are also Prayer Friends to the children in Reception. Some children in Year 5 also train to be Active Play Heroes. All of these initiatives allow the children to become responsible, mature Christians who have a growing sense of their place in the world and the Church primarily because it is grounded in the truth of the Gospel and because it allows the children to take responsibility for themselves and others whilst allowing them to see the broader picture of community living.

❖ ***Cultural Development***

At St. Augustine's provision is made for educational visits, which support the cultural development of pupils through Religious Education by visits to St. Chad's Cathedral, local Churches etc.

The school has resources that reflect the different cultures around the world and these are constantly being added to when funds are available. In addition there is a wealth of resources within the school to support the teaching about other world religions. As part of the curriculum the school budget supports children visiting places of worship / exhibition centres about other religions. School resources also support exploration of how the faith has been, and continues to be, expressed through a range of different cultural forms and media since the time of Christ. These include painting, sculpture, architecture, music, etc.

❖ ***Prayer and Liturgy***

At St. Augustine's all children take part in a daily act of worship; this may be whole school, key stage or class. Whole School assemblies generally take place on a Monday and Friday. The children's skills are developed from EYFS to lead prayers / plan and deliver Prayer & Liturgy within classes. The content of an assembly should be of a religious or moral nature (See Prayer & Liturgy Policy for more details).

❖ ***Inclusion and Equal Opportunities***

Given our Mission Statement, which states that "In our school family we are all valued..." we have developed an Equal Opportunities Policy to promote this. This policy deals specifically with variation in academic ability, gender and multicultural issues, as defined special educational needs are dealt with elsewhere.

At St. Augustine's we aim to provide an RE Curriculum and an environment which:

- Encourage children to recognise their infinite and incomparable value as being made in the image of God;
- Encourage children to first recognise, and then seek to fulfil, their individual God given vocation;
- Emphasise individual worth rather than encourage competitive comparison;
- Celebrates diversity in all its positive forms, regardless of the representative population of the school at any one time;
- Encourage both genders to view their contributions, as having equal value;
- Show the achievements and attributes of both genders and across a range of cultures, both past and present;
- Enhance students' self-esteem through males and females of a variety of cultures being seen and make valuable contributions, play important roles and have positions of authority;
- Aim to be inclusive of different cultures, and encourage students to appreciate and value a variety of different cultural groups.

All children within a year group follow the same Scheme of Work from the Diocesan Curriculum Strategy that incorporates the above principles with regard to gender and multicultural issues. However, since individuals may work at different rates and may engage with the material with varying levels of understanding, it is necessary to differentiate

the curriculum to allow the opportunity for some to study more extension and/or reinforcement work than others. Whatever the apparent academic ability of the children, all children should encounter a variety of experiences and activities during a course of study, and within individual lessons where possible. Staff should provide opportunities for individual and group activities (where the groups are of varying compositions), project work and practical investigations, some of which encourage students to pursue a piece of work over a period of time.

❖ ***The Role Of Parents And The Parish***

It is our belief at St. Augustine's that teaching is an act of service, not only to the children in our care, but also the parents, who are their first teachers, to the Church and, most importantly, to God. We recognise how important the family is in the educative process of handing on the faith, and are committed to encouraging a close co-operation between school and home in this task.

The school participates in the celebration of Mass at various times during the Academic Year including Holy Days of Obligation (see School Calendar). The Deputy Head plans the Masses and the children take the responsibility for readings, bidding prayers, offertory and serving. Class Teacher's plan when their Class is preparing a Mass with the support of the RE Subject leader as appropriate. Parents, parishioners, governors and other members of the community are warmly welcomed to these Masses and many attend, thereby enhancing the unity of the communal celebration. During the year parents in all years are also invited to attend workshops which begin with a prayer and for the parents in Years 3 & 6 there are also Sacramental meetings.

The school works closely with the Parish. The children read at Mass on a Sunday at the 9am Mass at different times during the year (See the School Calendar). They also visit the Church for a Parish Mass, Confession & Stations of the Cross (KS2) during Lent. Father comes into school to talk to the children at different times of the year to support the Curriculum (See Timetable), to celebrate Mass and hear confessions (Advent). The parish also runs a series of Sacramental Meetings for the parents in Years 3 to attend.

❖ ***The Role of the Head Teacher***

The role of the Head Teacher is crucial to the life of the school in general and, in a Catholic school, the delivery of the RE Curriculum. The situation is no different at St. Augustine's. The Head Teacher takes an active role and works very closely with the RE Subject Leader to ensure that the Religious Education policy is put into practice through frequent discussions, both formal and informal. Naturally, this also forms part of the RE Subject Leaders professional development review.

The Head Teacher also reports on a regular basis to the Governing Body on the implementation of the Religious Education policy, delivery of the curriculum and the Catholic Life & Mission of the School.

Through liaison with the RE Subject Leader, the Head Teacher ensures that the resources for Religious Education are comparable to the core subject resource budgets.

❖ ***The Role of the RE Subject Leader***

The role of the RE Subject Leader is four-fold. To **maintain** the Catholic life, character and ethos of the school where as a school community we are called to be affective and dynamic witnesses of the Gospel as it is expressed in the school's Mission, to **reflect** and embody the school's Mission and ethos in relationships established, the example given and the responses made, in order to **contribute** to the Catholic nature of the school by being a living and tangible sign of God's love through a clear, sacramental witness to Christ and to **ensure** that the RE curriculum is central and pervading in its purpose, appropriate and balanced in its content and vibrant and meaningful in its delivery.

To achieve this oversight of RE throughout the school the RE Subject Leader must work very closely with the Head Teacher, the other members of staff and the governors in four main ways.

First, to lead and guide the staff in terms of:

- Maintaining the Catholic ethos of the school;
- Creating an atmosphere of prayer, joy and celebration;
- Planning, teaching and assessing the RE curriculum;
- Preparing and conducting prayerful liturgies;

- Making explicit the links with other subjects and maximising the attention given to cross-curricular concerns.

Secondly, to monitor and support colleagues in their tasks by:

- Offering advice and being open to consultation;
- Leading RE staff meetings;
- Investigating INSET opportunities;
- Providing resources and sharing good practice and ideas.

Thirdly, by evaluating and assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness of the procedures, policies and programmes that are in place to then

Fourthly, envisage and consider what is necessary in order to move forward.

The RE Subject Leader will also be instrumental in developing the links within the triangular relationship of home, school and parish. In this way will a truly Christian community be built up, united in the love of Christ.

❖ **Health & Safety**

Health and Safety in RE is concerned mainly with the use of candles in the Classroom. Each Class has a prayer focus and care is taken by the teacher to ensure that the candles are lit / held by the children under careful supervision.

❖ **Link Governor**

At St. Augustine's there is an RE Link Governor who meets termly with the Subject Leader to discuss the SDP, updates and relevant information regarding SSE, Assessment, progress etc. The Subject Leader also discusses updates termly during the FGB Curriculum Meeting with regard to RE.

This policy was reviewed and agreed by staff

And Affirmed by the Full Governing Body at their meeting on: 01.10.24

Review date: Bi Annually