

RE DEPARTMENT: CURRICULUM

Intent

As a Catholic school, the Religious Education department curriculum follows the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* syllabus as set out by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales.

The aim of the curriculum within the RE department is to:

- **Serve the needs of pupils from the Catholic tradition, from other faith traditions and those with no faith. In doing so ensure all of our pupils have the knowledge and understanding to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and to be aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life**
- **Ensure that pupils develop spiritually and morally, understanding the school's mission to serve each other through the teachings of Christ**
- **Provide every pupil with high quality Religious Education that meets the needs of every individual pupil as fully as possible**
- **Enable pupils to engage in learning that helps develop their faith as well as acquire the knowledge necessary to make academic progress**
- **Provide a curriculum that presents opportunities to explore values and virtues that support the ethos of the school.**

Implementation

- The KS3 RE curriculum is determined by the Bishops of England and Wales as presented in the *RE Curriculum Directory* (2012). Pupils will follow the *People of God* syllabus that links directly to, and builds on, the *Come and See* curriculum used in Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Cardiff. There is a logically agreed sequence to the topics studied and each one builds on prior learning, as work becomes more challenging as 'terms' progress. There is flexibility within the topics to allow for pupils in our school to develop their own skills and to explore topics of interest to our pupils
- The differentiated curriculum allows for equality of access for all pupils and the sequencing of units are reviewed regularly to match ambition and to ensure a clear rationale for learning and teaching. As a Catholic Christian community, the focus is on Church and Gospel values in our modern world but pupils will also explore other World Religions, namely Hinduism, Judaism and Islam, in recognition of the UK as a multi-faith and multicultural society, and of a Church which looks outwards and not inwards. Regular revision, coupled with mid and end of unit assessments encourage pupils to know and remember more, whilst reflecting on their own faith journeys
- The curriculum at Key Stage 4 builds on the work started at KS3 and, once again, it follows the guidelines laid down by the Bishops of England and Wales. At St Mary's, pupils will start the GCSE in the January of Year 9, thereby allowing enough time for them to explore units in greater depth and to allow for the development of SMSC across the learning experiences. Regular revision coupled with mid and end of unit assessments, encourage pupils to know and remember more, whilst reflecting on their own faith journeys. The differentiated curriculum enables equality of access for all pupils and the sequencing of units are regularly reviewed to match ambition and to ensure a clear rationale for learning and teaching. As a Catholic Christian community, the key focus is on Church and Gospel values but within a modern world. Pupils will also explore Judaism and how this has influenced Christianity today
- A wide range of assessment data helps to identify those pupils in need of support to achieve their potential, and this in turn is used to inform planning. Pupil progress is closely monitored through an on-going intervention programme which targets the entire GCSE cohort through close monitoring, tutorial sessions and parental involvement

Resources and facilities:

‘St Mary’s is proud to house its own chapel. Jesus Christ is central to our school. His revelation, communicated through the Church, provides purpose and direction. Each classroom is equipped with interactive white boards and software. The shared area of the school’s network also includes many helpful resources to aid revision and learning, such as PowerPoint presentations and lists of key words’

Curriculum and Spiritual Enrichment:

- Extra support is regularly available at lunch and after school from teachers for pupils who want extra help or advice.
- There are also targeted revision and catch up sessions. All Key Stage 4 teachers provide after school revision sessions for GCSE classes in preparation for Mock and GCSE examinations
- St Mary’s RC High School has an active pupil Chaplaincy group that lead and contribute to the prayer life of the school. In addition to the academic content delivered in lessons, pupils will be encouraged to observe the liturgical year with special lessons and services. There will also be opportunities for prayer and the Sacraments, as well as time for reflection during retreats or visits from outside speakers

See section below on: [**The RE Department and The Catholic Life of our School**](#)

WHOLE SCHOOL SPIRITUALITY

The RE Department and *'The Catholic Life of our School'*

Our school is founded on Gospel values, we believe that by remaining faithful to Christ's teaching and example, we will continue to serve God and show selfless love to our neighbour in our daily lives.

We believe that each one of us is created in God's image & likeness and is called to perform a special task.

We believe that we must use our God-given talents to fulfil our academic and spiritual potential.

Our Mission Statement is supported by our school values ('Pupil Profile'), which proposes the qualities we wish to develop in our pupils. These qualities are simple, yet challenging, and seek to enable every member of our community to take the message of the Gospels to heart and apply it to their day-to-day lives. We challenge our pupils to be:

- **Grateful** for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and **generous** with the gifts, becoming people of service.
- **Attentive** to their experience and to their vocation; and **discerning** about the choices they make, and the effects of those choices.
- **Compassionate** towards their neighbour, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and **loving** by their just actions and forgiving words.
- **Faith-filled** in their beliefs and **hopeful** for the future.
- **Eloquent** and **truthful** in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.
- **Learned**, finding God in all things, and **wise** in the ways they use their learning for the common good.
- **Curious** about everything; and **active** in their engagement with the world, changing what they can do for the better.
- **Intentional** in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and **prophetic** in the example they set to others'

Heart of the School

At the heart of our school stands our chapel, offering a silent oasis in the midst of our learning environment, a place of sanctuary and encounter with the living God. Here, we can spend time with Christ, present to us in the bread of life, the Eucharist, inside the Tabernacle

The Catholic Life of the school lies at the heart of our education. We aim to nurture the holistic development of all our pupils through provision of a thriving chaplaincy, which is led by the RE Department staff, by our school chaplain, Fr Andrew Berry and supported by our pupil chaplaincy team.

Each weekday morning there is an opportunity for pupils to attend morning prayers in the chapel, during form time on Thursday mornings pupils are invited to the Rosary club and at lunchtime we have Adoration. Masses are provided on all Holy Days of Obligation that fall within term time, and the feast days of each of the patron saints of the school pastoral houses are celebrated: in addition, we celebrate Mass on the first Friday of the month.

Prayer and worship are central to our purpose as a Catholic School and our pupils are encouraged to lead liturgies and elements of assemblies during the year, as well as participating in Form time prayers. Sacred Spaces are designated days for each form to focus on prayer, scripture and reflection, setting up a 'sacred space' in each form room is a key element in establishing an environment of prayer. The visual reminders of our Catholic faith invite pupils to remember to quiet themselves in the presence of the God.

There are numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their faith outside of the classroom, including by undertaking pilgrimages to Rome or Lourdes and residential retreats within England. In March 2022, St Mary's hosted a weeklong exhibition on the Shroud of Turin; pupils were given the opportunity to visit a replica of the Shroud and the exhibition during RE lessons. Over the course of the second half of the spring term all pupils will be encouraged to engage in charity work and fundraising for CAFOD's Big Walk for Lent 2023 campaign.

We consider that helping those less fortunate than ourselves is one way of encouraging our pupils to care and be concerned for others. A variety of events are organised e.g. non-uniform days, pupil led cake sales, raffles and games in order to provide practical ways to respond to the needs of others.

In November 2022, our school launched a Youth SVP group at St Mary's. The aim of this group is to help young people turn concern into action and engage with the community to make a positive difference, as well as learning new skills and developing faith. The Youth group meets weekly and is planning ways to provide support and assistance in practical ways that utilise each of the pupils' gifts and talents.