



ST.THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Religious Education Policy

School Mission Statement:

We are a Roman Catholic Community committed to:

- Mutual respect, positive encouragement and participation.
- Recognising the different personal and educational needs of all pupils.
- The delivery of the full national curriculum together with a religious education syllabus approved by the Catholic Church.
- The highest standards of teaching, learning and performance.
- Maintaining a supportive partnership with parents, the parish, and the wider community.
- The professional development of all staff.

Aims

At St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary we aim to educate the whole person based on the belief that the human and the divine are inseparable.

We provide:

- A way of life based on Gospel values.
- A sense of belonging to a community that places Jesus at its centre and therefore demonstrates the Christian values of respect, trust, honesty and cooperation.
- A celebrating community which accepts prayer, assemblies, liturgies and worship as a vital part of everyday life, thus enhancing our pupils' experience of and witness to Christ's presence in today's society.
- Opportunities for our pupils to grow in their awareness of what it means to be a member of the Catholic Church.
- An understanding and sympathetic appreciation of the faiths of others.
- A familiarity with the religious language, signs, symbols and gestures of worship and prayer.
- Opportunities for our pupils to move from an inherited faith (or non-faith) to a personal faith.

The teaching of Religious Education

The foundation of religious education at St. Thomas of Canterbury is the “Come and See” programme. The three themes are based on the main teachings of the Vatican Council and explore Church, Sacraments and Christian Living.

Week 1: EXPLORE

The life experiences of the children are explored. Key questions raised, shared, investigated and their significance reflected upon.

Weeks 2 & 3: REVEAL

This is the heart of the scheme where knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith is revealed through the Word, in scripture, Tradition, doctrine, prayers rites and Christian living.

Week 4: RESPOND

This is where the learning is celebrated and final assessments made.

The teaching of others faiths and religions is part of the ‘Come and See’ scheme. Judaism is studied by everyone and is taught every year for one week’s. It gives us the opportunity to learn more about our Jewish sisters and brothers. Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism rotate on a three year cycle with one weeks teaching time.

Collective Worship

Our assembly programme is:

- A whole school assembly is on Wednesday morning led by the Senior Management Team.
- A class assembly every other week, led by a different class each time and presented to the whole school and parents on Friday afternoon.
- Reception and Key Stage 1 assembly on Tuesday morning, shared between all infant staff with an emphasis on child led prayer.
- Key Stage 2 assembly on Monday morning shared between all KS2 staff, with a focus on child led prayer.
- Daily morning, lunchtime and evening prayers/ celebrations in the class room.

School Masses

Each child will take part at least one service/ Mass every term on Thursday morning.

It is a discussion between the priest and class teacher to choose the Mass and Assembly themes, although they are usually linked to their “Come and See” topic.

On Holy Days a whole school Mass is celebrated in the hall to which all members of the School Family and parish are invited.

Year 6 attend a special leavers' Mass with their teachers at Aylesford Priory; this enables them to reflect upon their years at St. Thomas of Canterbury and prepare for the next stage on their journey towards adulthood.

Parents, clergy and friends are regarded as an integral part of the School Family. They are always invited to share the School Family's acts of worship on Thursday morning, Holy Days and Friday afternoons.

FS1, FS2 and KS1 perform Nativity plays. Year 6 present the Stations of the Cross. The staff present the Christmas Service to the school. Year 4/5 will lead the annual passion service.

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

In accordance with the Diocesan Guidelines for the preparation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist, preparation begins when the children are in Year 3 i.e. 7+ years.

There are various celebrations during the year including a family celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in early spring, culminating in the celebration of the Sacrament of Eucharist in June. The children also have an additional celebration in school at Corpus Christi or thereabouts.

Equal Opportunities

Through the delivery of R.E. we aim to actively promote, in the light of the Gospel values that we teach, an understanding of the importance of equal opportunities. The R.E curriculum encourages the children to learn, discuss and consider other cultures and their religions and evaluate their own spirituality.

Special Educational Need

A variety of tasks in keeping with the skills and abilities of the children is offered.

Assessment and Recording Keeping

Assessment is an integral part of the Respond element of "Come and See". We encourage children to review what has gone before, to make their own assessment of what has recently been explored/ discovered, and to look ahead with the confidence of knowledge gained from past or present. Pupils work undergoes whole staff moderation and pupils self-assess their achievements. The children progress is mapped on a whole school Target Tracker system.

Responsibility

"Teachers are responsible for what goes on in the classroom. Staff, along with the school governors and clergy, are responsible for the Gospel atmosphere of the school. These have the unique task of marrying together their sphere of life with academic and religious spheres." (Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School.)

The Head and the R.E. coordinator are responsible for the leadership of religious education within the school.

Our children are also supported by our Growing in Faith Together (G.I.F.T) team, who are able to lead and organize liturgical events. They are democratically elected.

The Right of Withdrawal

The school recognises the right of parents to withdraw their child from participation in Catholic worship and instruction in the Catholic faith. However, in spite of having children from different faith backgrounds from within the school family, the right of withdrawal has not, as yet, been taken up by any parent or guardian.

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