

## St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School

### Religious Education

In the light of our mission statement, Religious Education is put at the heart of the curriculum, so that it becomes the starting point of all other experiences. Together with the parents and the parish of St Edward's, we work in partnership towards educating our pupils within a Catholic context.

We wish our school to be a community of faith, in which each member participates, fully aware that all our work and aspirations derive from Jesus Christ.

### Policy for the teaching and learning of Religious Education

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School teaches the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum 2014.

Staff at St Thomas More are responsible for providing a curriculum that is broad, balanced, flexible, stimulating, relevant, inclusive and well planned. They endeavour to provide a curriculum matched to individual need, providing the context for in-depth learning. The curriculum enables children to make a significant contribution to their school community and the wider world and supports and develops effective transition. The curriculum will equip our pupils with a breadth of knowledge and skills that are underpinned by our Catholic Aims of 'Learn, Love, Pray and Play' and celebrate our location within the wonderful historical town of Kettering.

The curriculum should enable all young people to become:

- successful **learners** who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- **loving** individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- team **players** who make a positive contribution to society
- **prayerful** individuals who are able to recognise God's love and support to drive them forward.

### Statement of Intent

Religious Education provides an opportunity to foster in our children a reverence and love for God, an understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to help them identify themselves as Christians in the Catholic Church, developing traditions of our Catholic faith.

### Learn:

Children continue on their spiritual journey, whilst being enabled to express themselves and their faith creatively using a variety of communication - prayer, song, written forms. They develop an understanding and knowledge of their own faith and others, being confident to ask and answer questions and share their own big ideas. The children should develop an understanding of events that have shaped our world.

### Love:

Children develop their own personal identity, recognising how special they are. They feel safe to explore their own emotions and know the impact their emotions can have on them and others and what makes them feel a certain way. The children should be respectful of themselves and others and also feel that they can celebrate their own values and beliefs. They identify right from wrong and will challenge injustice to make the world a better place. They recognise they have their own God given talents and celebrate and share them.

### Pray:

The children know that they are made unique in God's image and recognise the love that God has for them. They celebrate their own faith and the faith of others, understanding that they are part of a wider community. The children are able to recognise the benefits of prayer and are able to access it in a variety of contexts. Through their developing spiritual journey, they gain confidence in asking philosophical questions. Throughout their journey, they will continue to develop their relationship with themselves, others and God, feeling excitement and inspiration from God's word.

### Play:

They celebrate that they are part of a diverse and multicultural community. Developing life skills to support their ongoing religious journey. Celebrating their environment, God's creation and striving to make things better, not being afraid to make changes for good, especially when it supports them to strive to live in peace with others.

### We aim to promote:

- Knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life.
- Knowledge and love of Christ within the Sacraments.
- The skills needed to engage in examination or reflection upon religious belief and practice.
- The needs of all our children knowing that some of them will be from committed Catholic homes while others will not.
- The celebration of Religion for our pupils through shared assemblies, liturgies, worship and prayer.
- A spiritual dimension to the lives of the pupils and the liturgical year is reflected in the life and activities of the school.
- Positive attitudes towards people of other faiths and other religious traditions in relation to God.

## Principles of Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

Our Religious Education curriculum is designed:

1. To present engagingly a comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
2. To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society;
4. To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them;
5. To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life;
6. To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum;
8. To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture.

## Statement of Implementation

### Curriculum delivery:

Religious Education is regarded as the heart of the curriculum, enriching and informing all areas of learning. Religious Education must always deepen pupils understanding of Catholic belief and contribute to their education in the Catholic faith.

Underpinned by our school values (including British Values), curriculum drivers, learning habits, our Religious Education curriculum uses the Come and See Programme as the basis for content and expectations. Alongside this, we have enhanced our curriculum through a subject disciplines progression grid (see below or document in appendix). This grid enables us to ensure that we are inspirational, broad and balanced.

Our Religious Education curriculum has been designed in a way that allows our children to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory, increase storage and increase retrieval strength. Through careful planning of content for each year group, we ensure that new learning builds on knowledge and skills previously taught. Children revisit themes yearly and have the opportunity for ongoing deepening. Retrieval practice happens through a variety of strategies:

- Recaps at the beginning of lessons
- Learning journeys shared
- Questioning and challenge
- Assessment (see below for a more in-depth explanation)

Cognitive science tells us that working memory is limited and that cognitive load is too high if children are rushed through content. This limits the acquisition of long-term memory. Cognitive science also

tells us that in order for children to become creative thinkers, or have a greater depth of understanding they must first master the basics, which takes time. This is why we follow a mastery approach, enabling our pupils to go deeper and apply the knowledge and disciplines they have acquired.

We also recognise that to enable our pupils to become active and successful learners and to provide spiritual growth in Religious Education, preparing them for the future, we need to support them to becoming metacognitive learners. This enables them to use a process of analysis, planning, new actions and review in a continuous cycle as they work. This maximises their efficiency and increases their outcomes. Metacognition is taught through:

- A focus on process over time
- High effective modelling of the learning process
- The effective use of strategies and resources

Progression of subject knowledge taught:

THEMES & TOPICS	YEAR 1 & FS 1	YEAR 2 & FS 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
<b>Domestic church family</b>	<b>Families</b> God's love and care for every family	<b>Beginnings</b> God at every beginning	<b>Homes</b> God's dream for every family	<b>People</b> The family of God in Scripture	<b>Ourselves</b> Created in the image & likeness of God	<b>Loving</b> God who never stops loving
<b>Baptism/confirmation belonging</b>	<b>Belonging</b> Baptism an invitation to belong to God's family	<b>Signs &amp; symbols</b> Signs & symbols in Baptism	<b>Promises</b> Promises made at Baptism	<b>Called</b> Confirmation: a call to witness	<b>Life choices</b> Marriage commitment and service	<b>Vocation &amp; commitment</b> The vocation of priesthood and religious life
<b>Advent/Christmas loving</b>	<b>Waiting</b> Advent a time to look forward to Christmas	<b>Preparations</b> Advent; preparing to celebrate Christmas	<b>Visitors</b> Advent: waiting for the coming of Jesus	<b>Gift</b> God's gift of love & friendship in Jesus	<b>Hope</b> Advent; waiting in joyful hope for Jesus; the promised one	<b>Expectations</b> Jesus born to show God to the world
<b>Local church community</b>	<b>Special people</b> People in the parish family	<b>Books</b> The books used in Church	<b>Journeys</b> Christian family's journey with Jesus	<b>Community</b> Life in the local Christian community: ministries in the parish	<b>Mission</b> Continuing Jesus' mission in diocese [ecumenism]	<b>Sources</b> The Bible, the special book for the Church
<b>Eucharist relating</b>	<b>Meals</b> Mass; Jesus' special meal	<b>Thanksgiving</b> Mass a special time for saying thank you to God for everything, especially Jesus	<b>Listening &amp; sharing</b> Jesus gives himself to us in a special way	<b>Giving &amp; receiving</b> Living in communion	<b>Memorial sacrifice</b> The Eucharist the living memorial of Jesus' sacrifice	<b>Unity</b> Eucharist enables people to live in communion.
<b>Lent/Easter giving</b>	<b>Change</b> Lent a time for change	<b>Opportunities</b> Lent; an opportunity to start anew in order to celebrate Jesus' new life	<b>Giving all</b> Lent a time to remember Jesus' total giving	<b>Self discipline</b> Celebrating growth to new life	<b>Sacrifice</b> Lent a time of aligning with the sacrifice already made by Jesus	<b>Death &amp; new life</b> Celebrating Jesus' death & resurrection
<b>Pentecost serving</b>	<b>Holidays &amp; holydays</b> Pentecost: feast of the Holy Spirit	<b>Spread the word</b> Pentecost a time to spread the Good News	<b>Energy</b> Gifts of the Holy Spirit	<b>New life</b> To hear & live the Easter message	<b>Transformation</b> Celebration of the Spirit's transforming power	<b>Witnesses</b> The Holy Spirit enables people to become witnesses
<b>Reconciliation inter-relating</b>	<b>Being sorry</b> God helps us to choose well Sacrament of Reconciliation	<b>Rules</b> Reasons for rules in the Christian family Sacrament of Reconciliation	<b>Choices</b> The importance of examination of conscience Sacrament of Reconciliation	<b>Building bridges</b> Admitting wrong, being reconciled with God and each other Sacrament of Reconciliation	<b>Freedom &amp; responsibility</b> Commandments enable Christians to be free & responsible	<b>Healing</b> Sacrament of the Sick
<b>Universal Church world</b>	<b>Neighbours</b> Neighbours share God's world	<b>Treasures</b> God's treasure; the world	<b>Special places</b> Holy places for Jesus & the Christian	<b>God's people</b> Different saints show people what God is like	<b>Stewardship</b> The Church is called to the stewardship of Creation	<b>Common good</b> Work of the worldwide Christian family

For further information, see the Knowledge, discipline and vocabulary document.

EYFS are following the new RED curriculum:

Branch 1	Branch 2	Branch 3	Branch 4	Branch 5	Branch 6
Creation and covenant	Prophecy and promise	Galilee to Jerusalem	Desert to Garden	To the Ends of the Earth	Dialogue and Encounter

Progression of disciplines taught:

See the Knowledge, discipline and vocabulary document.

Religious Education is taught for 10% of curriculum time in all classes. EYFS and KS1 - 2 hours and 15 minutes a week and KS2 - 2 and a half hours a week. All teachers are responsible for developing the Religious Education of the pupils in their class. All staff use the Medium Term Planning documents from Come and See and RED to create Short Term planning powerpoints. The Religious Education Subject Lead and the Chaplaincy Team will support all teachers with planning and in preparing lessons. As well as this teaching time, Religious Education is also enhanced within the school's Worship cycle and other daily opportunities for enhancing the Catholic Life of the school.

Come and See explores the same topic at the same time, though of course at the appropriate level of the year group. It also incorporates pupil's learning about other faiths. Visits from speakers representing other Christian denominations and other faith groups will be encouraged in order to strengthen links with the wider community.

Each classroom has resources that are available to support independent learning and learning at a deeper level.

#### St. Thomas More's Pedagogical Approaches within Religious Education:

At St. Thomas More, our staff have an understanding of a range of pedagogical approaches, which have been intentionally selected to help our children learn in the best way for them. Teachers will facilitate the teaching and learning of Religious Education in lessons through the selection of specific pedagogical approaches to achieve the intended outcomes of a lesson. Not all pedagogical approaches will be evident in every lesson.

The main pedagogies which underpin our classrooms are as follows:

- Constructivism
- Behaviourism
- Social constructivism
- Liberationism
- Integration
- In the moment

- **Constructivism in Religious Education:**

Constructivism is a theory that children learn through experiences and reflection. A Constructivist pedagogy puts the child at the centre of the learning. This approach in Religious Education could incorporate project work and inquiry based learning, for example, researching questions linked to areas of interest about another faith or physical experiences within the Parish.

Constructivism is based on the pedagogical research of Piaget. Piaget wrote extensively about schemas, an idea that learners come ready to learn with certain ideas, and the teacher must build activities to facilitate their learning.

A lesson in Religious Education might include individualisation, a slower pace, hidden outcomes, the mantle of the expert (children become the teacher) and less teacher talk. Religious Education can be a very personal journey and this enables children to explore new concepts and reach their spiritual potential.

- Behaviourism in Religious Education:

A behaviourist pedagogy uses the theory of behaviourism to inform its approach. A behaviourist pedagogical approach would say learning is teacher led.

In a Religious Education lesson using behaviourist pedagogical approach, you could expect to see a mixture of teacher led teaching, including: lecturing, modelling and demonstration, rote learning (stem sentences) and choral repetition. However, during the course of the lesson, the shift may come where our children are the centre of the activity, and demonstrate their learning.

- Social constructivism in Religious Education:

A social constructivism pedagogy is a blend of two priorities: teacher guided (behaviourism) and student centred (Constructivism) The main idea behind this approach being used in Religious Education teaching at St. Thomas More, is that we believe that learning for our children is often best achieved with collaboration. Not only does this approach help with learning key knowledge and disciplines but also develops our children's oracy skills and ability to work well with others, outlined in our Core Aim: Play.

In a Religious Education lesson, a teacher would use group work elements, but would use smaller group sizes, and limit the choice in topics. The teacher might also use questioning and a mixture of individual, pair and whole class instruction. Our children are given the opportunity to work as teams, sharing roles, responsibilities and build on or challenge other's ideas. They develop communication skills and capitalise on working together.

- Liberationism in Religious Education:

Liberationism is a critical pedagogy developed by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. A liberationist approach is one where the student voice is placed at the centre, and a democracy is put into the classroom. Value is placed on having the teacher as a learner, where our children and staff discover subjects together.

In a Religious Education lesson at St. Thomas More, this could look like: the teacher facilitating opportunities for the children taking on the role of the teacher and deciding upon the journey of the lesson. The teacher will provide space and opportunity for our children to showcase their learning through 'Presentational Talk' activities such as, performance, speech or presentation.

- Integration in Religious Education:

An integrative approach (cross curricular) approach leads to integration of skills and subjects, maximising on our children making links across the curriculum.

In our Religious Education lessons, the learning might be organised around a real-life problem, be without many academic content barriers, and combine two or more subjects (Enhancers) This approach develops generic learning and thinking skills, including, metacognitive thinking skills, self-regulated learning skills, thinking and reasoning skill, communication skills and effective social skills.

We use this approach at St. Thomas More through our 'Enhancers', as research has shown us that integrating Religious Education with reading comprehension and writing lessons, improves standards in both Religious Education and English.

- In the moment in Religious Education (specific to EYFS and Year 1):

Anna Ephgrave supports this approach and recognises that it is underpinned by interlinking skilled observations, quality interactions, understanding of child development and a supportive environment (physically and emotionally). The focus is on our children rather than the activity. Alistair Bryce Clegg documents that for children to learn, they need to be inspired and their curiosity needs to be sparked.

In our Religious Education lessons, you will see our adults being led by our pupils' interests and needs. Using quality interactions and questioning, staff are supporting pupils to move their learning forward. The room allows pupils to access resources and provide opportunities to learn.

- Reading and Oracy in Religious Education:

We ensure that in every lesson there is an element of Reading and Oracy, as we understand the importance of not only developing our children's abilities in these subjects but through using pedagogical approaches such as, 'Exploratory Talk' and 'Presentational Talk' our children's subject knowledge of Religious Education is strengthened.

- 'Choice' in Religious Education:

Research shows us how important 'choice' is for children. It makes lesson more meaningful to children, providing them with a purpose, control and develops their metacognition. Therefore, within our Religious Education lessons, teachers will facilitate opportunities for choice. This could look like: represent a concept using art, write a prayer, role play part of a Bible story, storyboard etc.

### Enhancement in Religious Education:

Religious Education and the ethos of the school is linked to the whole curriculum; every part of it is ultimately related to God. We teach to further children's faith development not only through lessons and activities relating to a formal programme but through prayer, worship, example, reflection and discussion.

Our Curriculum has a 'School Faith' week planned in at the beginning of the year to ensure that the school community remain focused upon, and learn about, the systems in place at the heart of the school and how they can contribute to our school ethos. This includes; school saint, class saint, Mission, Core Aims, Values and the School Prayer. Planning for this ensures progression for children as they move through the school.

Other enrichment opportunities include: visitors to school, scheduled attendance at Parish Mass, regular opportunities for Reconciliation, experiences and performances linked to the liturgical calendar, child led spiritual groups plus opportunities for parents to engage with the Catholic Life of the school through newsletters and experiences.

Two 'Diversity' weeks are embedded across the school year to ensure that the children are able to learn about, and build an understanding and respect of, other religions within our school. Judaism and Hinduism are the chosen two other faiths as these are well represented within the school context.

Across the school, there are areas for spiritual reflection and prayer. Every classroom has a prayer table and focus area. The children take part in daily Sacred Space and Mission Ambassadors act as role models across the school.

#### Formative Assessment and Feedback in Religious Education:

At St. Thomas More, we use our three-tiered formative assessment approach to regularly assess the progress and attainment of our children in Religious Education:

Shute (2008) and Butler and Winne (1995) have identified that the timing of feedback is central to its effectiveness. Consequently, feedback at St Thomas More takes three forms:

- Tier 1: Immediate - feedback given to children based on 'live' in the lesson misconceptions/ errors. Teacher scaffolds thinking.
- Tier 2: Reflect (next lesson whole class feedback) - Using our 'Assessment and Feedback sheets', verbal feedback is given to children facilitating children to reflect upon their achievements, misconceptions and next steps from the previous lesson. At the end of every lesson, the pupils reflect on a post it how they can take their learning into their every day life.
- Tier 3: Review (checkpoints for all) - children will review the key learning (knowledge and disciplines) and using the '54 Ways to Formative Assessment' document to create ways to assess knowledge retention. In Religious Education, the children answer the 'Big Question' at the start and the end of unit, enabling progress to be captured.

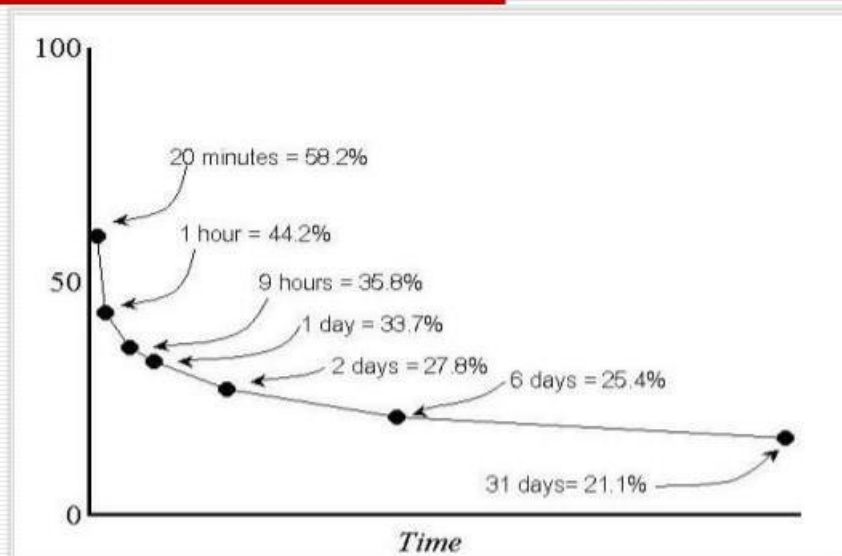
The 'Tier 3' element of our approach is crucial in ensuring that children's retention of knowledge and disciplines 'sticky knowledge' is facilitated by the teacher.

The 'forgetting curve' developed by Hermann Ebbinghaus shows how the human brain struggles to retain information (the knowledge and disciplines taught each day to our children) over time.



# Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve

## Retention of Information Over Time



### Progress Checks in lessons:

Throughout all Religious Education lessons, regular, timely and effective 'progress checks' will be made both formally and informally by the teaching staff in order to assess our children's current progress and understanding and inform next steps within the lesson or intervention.

### Assessment questions:

Assessment questions can be used at the beginning of lessons in order to differentiate the teaching and learning within the lesson to ensure that all children's learning is scaffolded or appropriately challenged.

### Self-assessment:

Opportunities for self-assessment are used throughout the teaching of Religious Education. E.g. exit slips, hands up/thumbs up, red/green cards.

### Statement of Impact

The successful approach at St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School results in an engaging, spiritual and high-quality education of Religious Education that provides our children with the appreciation of God's world, love and themselves.

Children will develop a passion for Religious Education and understand its importance in all areas of their lives. Children will develop an awareness of the skills, taught through Religious Education such as empathy and kindness, and an understanding of how they can apply them independently in any area or subject. Children learn the possibilities for careers that Religious Education promotes as a result of our community and academy trust links and visitors within school. Pupil voice is used to further develop the Religious Education curriculum, through questioning of pupil's views, practices and attitudes towards Religious Education to support the children's enjoyment and to motivate learners.

Pupil's work is recorded in a variety of ways e.g. pictorial, written, wall displays and an RE floor book. Feedback is given positively and sensitively, especially due to the personal nature of some Religious Education work.

The Religious Education Lead will assess the impact the teaching and learning of Religious Education through regular informal learning walks and more formal collaborative enquiries, lesson observations, gathering pupil voice and the analysis of the summative assessment on Insight.

Teachers assess pupil's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Catholic belief and practice appropriate to their age and development, their knowledge of scripture, understanding of God's message and their moral development and attitudes. Teachers use a range of formative assessment strategies (Tier 1 - 3) to assess children's progress and attainment in Religious Education to ensure that children 'keep up' as opposed to 'catch up'. Teachers identify next steps in teaching and learning and implement these with urgency.

Children complete a 'Big Question' at the beginning and end of every Come and See unit of work and this helps to inform teacher assessment. The same question is revisited at the end of the unit to identify new thinking, knowledge and skills.

Next steps are recorded at the end of the unit to summarise what learning pupils will take from the unit into their own life. Children in KS2 are given the opportunity to reflect regularly throughout a topic and self-assess their learning.

The Religious Education lead and senior leadership team monitor the impact of the teaching and learning termly using the teacher assessed summative data on Insight and use this to identify teaching and learning priorities.

Staff use Insight to continually assess children's progress and level them. Moderation staff meetings provide staff with opportunities for professional dialogue to support judgements. Staff also liaise across the Trust.

Pupil's progress is reported to parents informally during parent's evenings and formally at the end of the year in pupil's annual reports.

### **Further documents to support the teaching, assessment and monitoring of Religion**

These documents are available from the Religion Subject Lead.

- EYFS Curriculum documents for the 7 areas of learning

- Come and See planning documents from EYFS - Y6 (long term and medium term)
- School Faith week planning document
- Progression of subject disciplines and vocabulary document in Religious Education (Knowledge is covered in Come and See and RED)
- Religion Guidance - September 2022
- Cross-curricular links document
- Enrichment document
- Whole School Curriculum overview
- Formative and summative assessment approaches document for Religious Education.
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- School assessment schedule
- Chaplaincy Policy
- Liturgy and Prayer Policy
- Home School Parish Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- Parent Page for Religious Education
- Insight tracking data for Religious Education