

María Fidelis Catholic School FCJ

Religious Education Policy



Vision Statement

The vision for María Fidelis is to create an inclusive school equipped for the 21st Century which will enable all young people to maximise their potential in order that they leave school as educated, confident and courageous Catholics, prepared to challenge injustice and care enough to 'live life to the full'.

Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge but also includes emotional and affective learning. It is in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of what it is to be human truly becomes clear. Without religious education, pupils would be deprived of an essential element of their formation and personal development, which helps them attain a vital harmony between faith and culture."

([Religious Education Curriculum Directory](#), p4).

Mission Statement

María Fidelis Catholic School FCJ is a learning community ***"growing together, through Christ, with courage, confidence and dignity"***

Vision Statement

Our vision is that FCJ schools are communities of personal and academic excellence.

Strong in companionship, the unique giftedness of every person in these faith communities is recognised, nourished and celebrated.

Our hope and expectation is that, through God's grace working in us all, each young person grows into their best self, with zest for life and the generosity and confidence to use their talents and gifts in the service of others.

The importance of Religious Education important at María Fidelis

At María Fidelis, we uphold the view that, "Religious Education is the core of the core curriculum" ([Pope St John Paul II](#)). Placing RE at the core of our curriculum helps the school to fulfil its mission to educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of one's existence. Furthermore, religiously literate children and young people are able to engage in a fully informed critique of all knowledge, "leading, for example, to an understanding of the relationship between science and religion or history, and between theology, sport and the human body." ([Religious Education Curriculum Directory](#), p4).

The aims of Religious Education at María Fidelis Catholic School

At María Fidelis, we believe that RE should:

- Develop in the pupils a knowledge and love of God and Jesus Christ
- Encourage a love of others
- Give pupils and staff the opportunity to experience the love of God and Jesus Christ in their lives
- Develop an awareness of all of our uniqueness and value as individuals
- Encourage an appreciation of the wonders of creation

- Provide pupils with occasions and opportunities to experience love, care, concern, co-operation, respect, trust, honesty and truthfulness
- Provide, as a school community, an example of Christian witness and, through this, reverence for God and respect for each other
- Develop opportunities for contemplation, reflection and the growth of a personal prayer life
- Help pupils explore the beliefs, values, way of life of the Catholic tradition - the origins of the Faith, most specifically Jesus Christ, the Bible, the liturgical year, the mass, sacraments, traditional prayers, the lives of the saints and other people who have made a difference in the world because of their faith
- Foster links with families to encourage commitment to the Catholic faith

Pupils should be able to:

- Work within a variety of learning situations – individual, group, class
- Develop ways of thinking, feeling, acting which will lead them to be reflective, open and enquiring

In order to achieve these aims we will:

- Take into account the Catholic nature of the school
- Be a vehicle for promoting FCJ values
- Be in line with Diocesan policy and guidelines
- Be realistic and achievable
- Be known and supported by all
- Be suited to the age and development of the pupils
- Be sensitive to the religious background and experience of pupils and families and to other faith traditions
- Encompass and include all pupils in the school and class
- Reflect cross-curricular links where possible
- Be reviewed and evaluated regularly by all concerned

Content of the Religious Education Curriculum

RE has 10% of the curriculum time at KS3 and KS4 and Core RE is taught for one lesson a week at KS5 (5%). The content for RE is provided in the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools which is itself based on the Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The Curriculum Directory distinguishes four principal *Areas for Study*:

Area of Study	Content
Revelation	God's Self-Revelation
Church	Communion of life in Christ
Celebration	Living the Christian Mystery in worship and prayer
Life in Christ	The search for holiness and truth

Programmes of study for all key stages have been written to ensure that pupils are able to develop their knowledge and understanding in these areas.

Teaching about other religions

All Catholic schools are required to teach about other religions as part of the Religious Education curriculum. This is a feature of Catholic RE in all stages of a child's development, from the beginning of primary school until the end of secondary school.

Teaching about other religions is important for several reasons:

1. Learning about the religion and cultures of those who do not share the Catholic faith is one of the ways in which Catholic schools embody the call to love one's neighbour. As the Church says, "The love for all men and women is necessarily also a love for their culture. Catholic schools are, by their very vocation, intercultural." ([Congregation for Catholic Education](#) p61).
2. It is required by the Bishops, who state that the Catholic nature of our school's entails "a willingness...to try to understand better the religion of one's neighbours, and to experience something of their religious life and culture." ([Catholic Bishops' Conference](#) p3).
3. Many of the children in our school are practicing members of other faiths and so our school needs to be a place of hospitality for these children. It is an act of respect and courtesy that our curriculum helps them to reflect on the nature of their own religious identity. As the Church says, "All children and young people [including those of other faiths in our Catholic schools] must have the same possibilities for arriving at the knowledge of their own religion as well as of elements that characterize other religions." ([Congregation for Catholic Education](#))
4. It prepares the pupils in our school for life in modern Britain, giving them an understanding of the beliefs of others. This in turn will improve social cohesion and contribute to the common good by increasing mutual respect between those of different religions.

Religious Education Teaching Syllabus

a) KS3 (Years 7-8)

In Years 7-8, pupils follow a structured, progressive and developmental programme that has been approved for use in Catholic Schools by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The structure comes out of our FCJ values of Justice, Excellence, Hope, Companionship, Gentleness and Dignity.

The values are broken down and spread across KS3. Each term pupils will focus in on a particular value through a depth study of Christian faith in Revelation, The Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. For each year material for a study of two major world faiths is included (year 7, Judaism & Sikhism. Year 8, Judaism & Hinduism). They are studied either as a distinct component or integrated into the year's work.

The programme encourages pupils to:

- Grow in the awareness of our collective FCJ & Gospel values and begin to implement them into their daily lives.
- Explore their own experience, shared human experience and the experience of traditional belief and value systems, especially religious traditions.
- Analyse and reflect on these experiences in a climate of participative and active learning, in partnership with their teachers and other members of the community.
- Make a smooth transition from the primary to the secondary school phase of their religious education.
- Establish a firm foundation for the development of the concepts, skills and attitudes demanded by the GCSE in particular time is given each week to scriptural study.
- Become religiously literate.

Homework is set on a half termly basis and takes the form of an extended project. The homework project is based on the topic being studied but gives pupils to explore this topic beyond the realms of Christianity.

b) KS4 (Years 9, 10-11)

In year 9, pupils begin the year with a thematic study of Islam. They are then given an introduction to Philosophy and Ethics before starting their GCSE after February half term.

Years 10-11 follow the Edexcel Spec A GCSE syllabus comprising of three papers:

- Catholic Christianity
- Judaism
- Philosophy & Ethics (Catholic Christianity) or Marks Gospel (Year 9 & 10)

Homework is set on a half termly basis and takes the form of weekly exam questions that extend and consolidate the work completed in class. Pupils are also expected to learn a set number of key terms on a weekly basis.

c) KS5 R.E.

At A-Level, those pupils who opt for the course follow the OCR Religious Studies syllabus. Over the course of two years, they study the following components:

Philosophy of Religion

Religious Ethics

Developments in Christian thought

Pupils then sit three two hour exams at the end of year 13.

Homework takes the form of weekly reading from set texts as well as at least one extended essay.

Pupils are also expected to deepen their knowledge through independent study and show evidence of wider reading in their written work.

d) Sixth Form Core R.E.

Those pupils in the Sixth Form not taking the course in Religious Studies follow a Core RE course. The contact time for pupils is one lesson (50 minutes) per week. The aims and objectives of the Course are as follows:

- To support and advance the religious and moral education of the students.
- To inspire Gospel values in the hope that students will be motivated by a positive self-image as they attempt to come to terms with their advancement in wisdom, age and grace.
- to enable students to develop critical thinking skills, independence and moral growth.
- To afford a forum which 'combines educational rigour with the necessary freedom for spiritual enquiry'.
- During the course learners are provided with opportunities to apply personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS) as well as specialist enquiry and research skills. The reflect on the ethical and moral dimensions of society and link their learning into their experience of the Catholic faith.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school. The school will review this policy biennially and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The efficacy of the policy will be discussed annually as part of the Head of RE's report.

September 2019

Signed by Chair of Governors:.....

Modesto Tondelli

Date:.....

Date of Review:.....

