

# St. Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

**St Alban's Catholic Primary School will educate our young children within a happy caring environment and Christian atmosphere, thus their whole lives may be inspired by the Spirit of Christ they experience.**

**“Learning together, side by side with God.”**

The Catholic school shares in every aspect of the Church's life, but in particular her duty to preach the Gospel by evangelisation and catechesis. Throughout the centuries, the Church has educated young people and adults as part of her life, handing on the Deposit of Faith and working for the common good of all people. The witness of faith in Jesus Christ lived in the Catholic way of life, by staff and pupils alike, is itself a teaching and learning experience.

In school, Religious Education is, in the first instance, formation in the Catholic faith:

Religious Education is central to the curriculum of the Catholic school and is at the heart of the philosophy of Catholic Education. Religious Education has developed in a way that reflects the particular identity of our Catholic schools in England and Wales. It teaches about the faith in the context of a school which proclaims the Gospel, and invites the individual to respond to the message of Christ. As the individual responds to this invitation, growth in faith and knowledge helps the pupil to respond to the call to holiness and understand the fullness of what it is to be human. For some, then, Religious Education will also be received as evangelisation and for some, catechesis.<sup>1</sup>

Religious Education has its own content, methodology, assessment and culture. The broad areas it covers, which reflect the four constitutions of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and cover the teaching of the Church as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, are God's self-Revelation in Jesus Christ, the Church, celebration and worship, and life in Christ. As the core subject par excellence of the Catholic school, Religious Education should be accorded the same status and taught with the same rigour as the core subjects of the National Curriculum. It is open to inspection and assessment by public examination and at diocesan level. It is an important contributory factor to the passing on of the Deposit of Faith from one generation to the next.

Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Nottingham is required to teach, develop and resource Religious Education with the same commitment as any other core subject, because

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, the following requirements apply to Religious Education in all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Nottingham: <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1 BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND & WALES, Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales, London 2012, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.6.

- Whole school Religious Education is to provide for a lived faith experience through the celebration of Mass, other acts of worship, assemblies, retreats, charitable work and action for social justice. The Religious Education subject leader in primary schools and the Religious Education Department in secondary schools contribute to this whole school direction.
- Religious Education is to be resourced as a core subject and allocated 10% of teaching time in Key Stages 1-4 and at least 5% at Key Stage 5.
- The Religious Education curriculum is to be delivered in accordance with the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales* approved by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 2012 and any guidelines issued by the Apostolic See, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Diocese of Nottingham.
- The *Come and See* programme of study should be used in all primary schools.
- All primary schools are required to dedicate one week within the autumn term to the teaching of Judaism. In addition, primary schools are required to dedicate a further week in the summer term to the teaching of another religion, namely, Islam, Hinduism or Sikhism.
- At Key Stage 3, any scheme which meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* may be used, e.g. *People of God*. The focus on Catholic Christianity does not exclude the study of other Christian traditions and world religions and cultures, as long as this is carried out appropriately and does not detract from the distinctive nature of Catholic Religious Education and its core focus on Catholic Christianity.
- At Key Stage 4, the study of Catholic Christianity must be a 50% study in order to gain a thorough understanding of the richness and breadth of Catholic theology and culture. This will include the study of Catholic doctrines, the Catholic understanding of revelation, the importance of sacramental life, the moral demands and the cultural expressions of Catholicism. Only a 50% study of Catholicism which covers all four of the topics in the subject criteria (Beliefs and Teachings, Practices, Sources of Wisdom and Authority, and Forms of Expression) delivers this richness and depth. Given that Religious Education departments in Catholic schools primarily exist in order to provide an education in Catholic theological understanding.
- The second religion studied must be Judaism because an understanding of the scriptures and history of Judaism are necessary for a proper understanding of Christianity and Catholicism. A study of Judaism provides students with a very thorough understanding of the context of Jesus' ministry and hence a fuller understanding of the significance of his life, death and resurrection for Christians. There is a particularly close relationship between Judaism and Christianity, such that Pope John Paul II spoke of Jewish believers as our 'elder brothers in the faith'. Judaism is the principal other religion in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and is referred to more often than any other faith, for all of the reasons stated above.
- For Key Stage 5 students not following an A Level programme of study, a general RE programme of weekly taught lessons should be provided for a 5% allocation of the timetable.
- Religious Education is to be assessed in accordance with the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges* approved by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 2007.

- Religious Education will be inspected according to the diocesan inspection framework in force at any given time.

The Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service will support all Catholic schools in their delivery of the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and other norms of the Bishops' Conference and provides guidance in this regard. Guidance related to the diocesan canonical inspection framework, school self-evaluation and useful curriculum resources can be found on the NRCDES website.

This policy was approved by the Right Reverend Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham on the feast of St Thomas Aquinas, 28th January 2017 and comes into effect immediately.

+ Patrick McKinney

**Signed:**

**Date:** 28th January 2017

**Right Reverend Patrick McKinney**  
Bishop of Nottingham