



# St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School Hoddesdon



## R.E. Policy September 2024

Updated: September 2024

Renewal: September 2025



St Joseph's  
Catholic Primary



Sacred Heart  
Catholic Primary School



St Augustine's  
Catholic Primary School



St Joseph's  
Catholic Primary School



St Thomas of Canterbury  
Catholic Primary School



St Joseph's  
Catholic Primary School



St Mary's  
Catholic School



St Cross  
Catholic Primary School

# MISSION STATEMENT

*We come to school to live and learn happily together  
by loving ourselves and each other as Jesus teaches us.*

## **Values**

We believe that the purpose of St. Augustine's Catholic Primary school is to:

- help pupils to live and learn in a Catholic Christian environment leading to acceptance and respect of others in a diverse school community and wider world
- provide an environment in which high expectations will lead to a striving for excellence in all areas of school life
- educate and develop each member of the school community by building on their strengths and supporting their weaknesses
- foster purposeful relationships with those who learn in, work in and visit our school where diverse views and backgrounds are respected

## **Introduction**

St. Augustine's School is a voluntary-aided Catholic School, in the trusteeship of the Diocese of Westminster. The school was founded by the Order of Our Lady to serve the Catholic community of Hoddesdon. St. Augustine's bases its teaching on the Gospel message of God's immeasurable love for us and invites the children to respond by loving God and by loving their neighbour as themselves. The children are encouraged to take Jesus as their model. St. Augustine's School achieves this by teaching the children to know and love God and His creation. This teaching permeates through all aspects of the curriculum and the daily life of the school. This teaching is celebrated in worship and liturgies and rites and rituals of the Catholic Church. Parents are encouraged to uphold and reinforce the fundamentals of the Catholic faith as taught in the school.

St. Augustine's School demonstrates openness to all baptised Catholic children. It endeavours to see all children present in the school may learn happily with others and are given the opportunity to develop their full potential. St. Augustine's School encourages the children to develop self-esteem, self-respect and self-discipline as well as a tolerance of, and respect for, others. St. Augustine's School provides a warm and welcoming environment to all. However, as part of the 'Church ever in need of reform', it recognises that it may occasionally fail in this mission, and will need to reflect and be reconciled in order to become renewed in seeking to fulfil its mission.

## **The Place of R.E. in the School**

St. Augustine's School fully believes that Religious Education is the foundation of all our teaching and the entire educational process. The Christian Catholic beliefs and values inspire and unify every aspect of our school life. They are the basis and essential influence on our school curriculum.

Religious Education is linked to all our teaching and the key areas of the children's learning. This is because we see education as being God's work and so education is religious, in that it concerns discovering the breadth and depth of God's creation and His creatures. Hence, whatever area of the curriculum children are studying they are actively learning about:

- the mysteries and wonders of God's creation
- the challenges and discoveries that are presented to them
- the uniqueness and dignity of individual people
- how they can enjoy God's world.

The planning of our faith teaching, which is at the centre of our curriculum, becomes the foundation for the National Curriculum, with its aims to promote *“the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils . . . and prepare such pupils for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.”* (Education Reform Act 1988)

## **Leadership of Religious Education**

Religious Education is the responsibility of the R.E. subject leader and the Headteacher. Their role is to monitor and assess the R.E. curriculum throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression. They also ensure that the aims and learning outcomes in the Curriculum Directory are identified and fulfilled. A school governor (Father Julian) has specific responsibility for R.E. and liaises closely with the staff of the school to fulfil their monitoring duties.

## **Curriculum Content**

R.E. is a core subject in our school, alongside English, Maths and Science, and therefore we devote 10% of our curriculum time to its delivery. We adhere to the Curriculum Directory guidelines and learning outcomes. This provides a cohesive approach and opportunities for whole school assemblies and celebrations as well as displays which are relevant to every child. The core of our curriculum is based on the Margaret Carswell units of studies for Years 3-6. The content of this R.E. programme is based on the four major Constitutions of Vatican II; these are related to the Church's teaching on Revelation, the Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. These themes are treated and developed each year, though children are introduced to the theme through a variety of different "Life Topics" related to it. [The Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory for R.E. (January, 1997) follows the same structure of the major Vatican II Constitutions, relating them to study of the Trinity, Creation, the Scriptures, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.]

These themes are developed with greater depth and breadth each year as the child progresses through the school, and will form the core of our R.E. studies. The purpose of these areas of study is to help the children as follows:

*Revelation: Story, Scripture, Memory and Tradition of the Church*

- a. to explore the importance of story in the human quest for meaning;
- b. to understand the role of Christian Scriptures as expressions of the ways in which humankind strives to understand the nature of God and the nature of human persons;
- c. to reflect upon personal and community response to God invited by Scripture;
- d. to explore the sacred writings of other faith communities.

*Community: Church, Community of Believers, Pilgrim People of God*

- a. to reflect on the experience of belonging to community at various levels;
- b. to reflect on the belief that, as people created in the image of a Triune God, Christians are called to be that community which is the Church;
- c. to develop a knowledge and understanding of people and roles in Church and understand that to be the Church is to witness the Good News of Jesus Christ;
- d. to explore the relationship between the Catholic Church and other denominations and faiths.

*Way of Life: Lifestyle, Morality, Values, Attitudes*

- a. to explore the values which underpin beliefs and actions in the human family;
- b. to understand the following of Christ as a call to holiness/wholeness of life;
- c. to reflect on the values which Christ expressed in his life and teaching;
- d. to explore the values and way of life of other world faiths.

*Celebration: Ritual, Prayer, Sacraments, Worship, Liturgy*

- a. to explore the meaning of celebration which marks the growth and development of every human being;
- b. to understand that spiritual growth and development is rooted in the Church's sacramental life, expressed in sign and symbol throughout the liturgical year;
- c. to reflect on the place of prayer in the life of the Catholic community and of individual Christians;
- d. to develop a knowledge and understanding of prayer in other faiths.

***“To know You more Clearly” – The Religious Education Directory for Catholic Schools and academies in England and Wales.***

This new document, currently implemented from Nursery to Year Two, is intended to embody inspiring objectives: Catholic Religious Education must ensure that Catholic pupils become ever more aware of the faith into which they have been baptised. A Catholic school and the Religious Education it provides, requires its mission to form its pupils in the virtues that will foster their life in Christ and assist them to serve the Church and society.

The essentials of Catholic religious teaching is present in the curriculum in our school, even if only in a simple and elementary way in the early years. Throughout the school years, the presentation of the whole Christian message must grow and develop so becomes ever challenging and central to the lives of our children. Teachers should make the time to read through this document to become familiar with the layout of the Catechism.

### ***The Catechism of the Catholic Church***

The Catechism of the Catholic Church provides an excellent topic index which will assist teachers' own understanding of the faith. This is for teachers to use as a resource.

### **Assessment and Recording**

The assessment of Religious Education at our school is designed to assist our children's learning and to enable them to strive for a feeling of confidence and success in their understanding of the Catholic faith.

Progress is monitored through discussion, questioning, posing problems and giving opportunities to present their knowledge to others in a variety of ways, e.g. class assemblies. Assessments are completed at the end of each half term to show children's levels of understanding. Teachers will assess using teacher assessment, as with Writing and with other Foundation Subjects using age-related expectations rather than levels and sublevels until the final Assessment Framework document has been finalised. This will consist of PKS (Pre-Key Stage), WTS (Working Towards Standard), EXS (Expected Standard) and GDS (Greater Depth Standard).

### **Marking**

In line with the school's marking policy, marking of children's religious work should always be positive and supportive to encourage the child in his/her faith journey. Marking will focus upon religious content and comments, feedback and next steps given will look to enhance religious skills, knowledge and understanding, rather than Literacy skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, inaccurate spelling of important religious key words will be corrected within the children's books.

### **Vocabulary**

Key words and vocabulary will be highlighted each lesson during a drama focused starter whereby the children act out each word and the meaning. They are also provided as part of a half termly knowledge organiser which is stuck into the children's books at the beginning of each half term. This allows children to refer back to the words easily to ensure they are used and understood. These words will also be displayed prominently in the classroom and children will be encouraged to use these effectively and purposefully throughout each lesson, particularly in their written work. This is essential if children are to be levelled with GDS.

## **Teaching Staff**

All teachers at St. Augustine's School are either Catholics or are sympathetic to the teaching of the Catholic faith which permeates all aspects of our school life. Through example, commitment and teaching, the children are encouraged to develop a loving and trusting relationship with God, an experience which it is hoped will influence their attitudes to life and their relationship with other people. All teaching staff have the responsibility of teaching Religious Education to the children in their class. All staff are encouraged to regularly attend relevant courses. Our Religious Education subject leader and Headteacher provides information on courses and teachers give feedback to staff at staff meetings. Our diocesan advisor and Parish Priest is invited to contribute to our staff development advice is sought about policy and practice.

## **Home Links**

The school recognises it cannot teach our children without the cooperation of the parents. Parents and carers are the first educators and they are in partnership with the teachers who have the professional skills to help parents in teaching Catholic faith. We endeavour to do this in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. During the year, parents and friends are invited to join us at many celebrations.

At the beginning of the school year we hold a welcome ceremony for new members of our community. At the end of the year we hold a goodbye ceremony to say farewell to anyone leaving us and to thank them for their contribution and commitment to the life of our school. Parents are always invited and welcomed to all our school and class celebrations which include school masses, class masses and assemblies. Every Wednesday, each family is sent a copy of the Wednesday Word, which encourages children to explore the upcoming Gospels with their families as well as each class providing a sentence about what the Wednesday Word means to them.

## **Parish Links**

We recognise that the school stands in the midst of the local community. At parish level, we take an active part in the holy days of obligation masses in the parish church. In addition, a class from KS2 will attend a weekday mass at church every week. We give regular support to CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society enabling our children to become aware of the needs of the wider world. This leads to an appreciation of the diversity of culture, races and faiths within the world.

## **Parish Priest**

The parish priest, who is also a governor of the school, has responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community. The parish priest promotes the spiritual life of the 'school church'. He leads the celebration of liturgies and whole school and joint school Masses. In addition, the parish priest visits the school on a weekly basis to discuss the topics being studied with each class in their R.E. lessons. A visit form is completed by class teachers prior to the visit so the Priest can prepare effectively. He also assists with interviewing potential candidates for the Chaplaincy Team.

## **To love You more dearly – The Prayer and Liturgy Directory for Catholic Schools and Academies in England and Wales.**

The aim of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory (PLD) is to assist school communities in their endeavours to implement the vision of the Church for prayer and liturgy within their local setting. An essential part of the Catholic ethos of the school is the prayer life. The most important aspect of prayer for children is that they realise it is their way of communicating with God. Children are encouraged to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development. Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying:

- quiet reflection / meditation
- praying together
- writing own prayers
- prayers through music
- learning traditional Christian / Catholic prayers

Staff are encouraged to pray with children, and to be an example for them. Through prayer, we endeavour to develop our relationship with God.

All classes have a prayer area which has displays of children's work. This area changes with the liturgical year. School and Common prayers are established throughout the school and each teacher uses prayers set within their specific Key Stage bracket, as identified by the PLD. Further opportunities for prayer are used through our weekly Prayer Through Song gathering as a whole school, as well as using this to reinforce the common prayers expected to be known throughout the school. Candles, pictures and objects are also used as a focus for prayer. Children take part in whole school assemblies where children and staff join together to pray. Children are encouraged to pray their own prayers. Each class has their own prayer book which is sent home with a different child each day and used within the school day the next day. During Advent, as travelling Nativity is sent home to a different family who signs up to receive this special once-a-year opportunity.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Through our R.E. teaching, knowledge of all the sacraments is established, with special emphasis upon Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation. Years 5 & 6 also learn about the Sacrament of the Sick and Holy Orders. The children are prepared through the parish for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion from Year 3. The course of preparation is carried out in the parish and the school works in close consultation and partnership with the priests and catechists. In this way we hope to achieve true partnership between school, family and parish, with the children celebrating their First Communion in their local churches.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also led by the Parish Priest within school. Like the Sacrament of Communion, the preparation for Reconciliation starts at the beginning of the child's school life. It begins with the child's first experiences; teachers and helpers work towards a loving, caring and forgiving atmosphere in school. Pupils in Years 4-6 have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school during Lent.

## **Liturgy and Celebration**

These are important moments in the life of St. Augustine's School. Masses reflect the liturgical year and other notable occasions such as our start of the school year, First Holy Communion celebration and our leavers' mass. On holy days of obligation, pupils attend church to celebrate as a whole school alongside another of our Academy Trust schools, St. Cross. All children, irrespective of their church affiliation, are involved with the celebration. Masses encourage participation in the music, processions, gestures, readings and prayers.

Once a year each class leads an assembly to which their parents are invited. Assemblies are occasions for celebrating the children's work and are experiences of worship when all the children are actively involved. The theme of the assembly is based on the class topic or on the liturgical year. Class assemblies generally last about twenty minutes and may contain prayers, Bible stories, modern stories with a biblical message, children's prose and poetry, drama, music, dancing and singing.

## **Chaplaincy Team**

A group of pupil volunteers in Year Six assist with Prayer Through Song every Thursday. This Chaplaincy Team is designed to give the children more ownership and understanding of this central aspect of their faith. They are selected after completing an application form and being interviewed by our Parish priest and our Religious Education subject leader. They receive their Chaplaincy Team badge at a special commissioning service in church as well as a commemorative Chaplaincy badge awarded at a service gathering of all our Academy Trust Schools.

## **Discipline and Relationships**

We believe that children learn best when they are safe and happy. Good relationships between staff and children are paramount. We encourage open, honest discussion with children. *(Please see School Behaviour and Equal Opportunities Policies)*. Particular care is taken when teaching R.E. to ensure that there is consistency between teaching and practice.

## **Spiritual and Moral Development**

The religious character of our school is seen as giving shape to every aspect of school life, and especially the spiritual and moral development of our children. Spiritual development is understood as the development of all those aspects which enable us to appreciate goodness, beauty and truth. Through our teaching, we enable children to reflect on their experiences of life. Through their awareness and understanding of themselves, they recognise God's action in their lives. In addition, pupils are taught about the importance of the mission of the Church. Helping children to make their moral decisions is a crucial part of the formation of a moral conscience. Through our teaching, we aim to help children to have an understanding of the Gospel of Jesus and through self-awareness enable them to come to good moral judgements. Our Behaviour Policy is based on love and respect for the individual.



## **Multi-Cultural and Multi-Faith**

As a Catholic school we encourage tolerance, respect and care for all people, regardless of colour, race or creed. Whilst Religious Education is specifically of the Roman Catholic tradition, we welcome input from other faiths and denominations. We appreciate how the beliefs and values of other faith communities can enrich our own spiritual existence. We teach and learn about the other major faiths each year.

## **Environment**

It is our intention that the environment of our school reflects our mission statement and that we are providing a caring, well ordered and stimulating environment that reflects our Christian beliefs. Work is displayed in a variety of ways throughout the school. Each classroom has an R.E. area with a display board and prayer area, where the children's mission statement is displayed. The display board will reflect the colour theme of the liturgical year. Bibles, candles, artefacts and pictures are all used to enhance and present our Catholic faith.

## **Resources**

- Resources, books, posters and pictures are stored in the Year 5/6 corridor cupboard.
- The school library has a variety of religious books.
- Musical instruments are in the music cupboards by the school library.
- The mass box and altar cloths are stored in the Year 5/6 corridor cupboard.
- A class set of Bibles in each KS2 class.
- A copy of the Catechism is available in every classroom for reference (YouCat)
- Coloured cloths for the prayer table covering the liturgical calendar.

## **Health & Safety**

The school's Health and Safety Policy applies to all aspects of R.E. teaching. Staff should note:

- when using candles, it is important that children must never be left alone with lit candles or allowed to light them or blow them out unsupervised.
- incense and scented candles add greatly to a quiet meditative environment, but it must be remembered that children with asthma may find this uncomfortable.

## **Special Needs**

The R.E. curriculum, as with other areas of the curriculum, is scaffolded to meet the needs of our children through our planning. In the classroom we intend:

- to provide a happy, caring environment so all children achieve their potential
- that plans should indicate a variety of learning styles for all children
- that children's work should show a variety of recording to suit all abilities
- that teaching focuses on learning outcomes
- to build on the child's strengths to allow maximum participation in all activities
- children grow spiritually and develop a strong sense of the value of God's world.

**I.C.T.**

All classes have access to laptops and other ICT equipment which will be used to enhance R.E. teaching and learning where appropriate.

**Review**

The school undertakes an annual review of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school with input from the governing body, staff, parents, pupils and our diocesan adviser. Outcomes are used to plan training and development needs for the upcoming year and prioritise actions in the following school development cycle.

## **Appendix 1 Sacramental Preparation**

The sacramental preparation of children of St. Augustine's School is the special role of the parish catechists. First Holy Communion is commonly celebrated by children in Year 3, although children from other classes may join in with the programme. Reconciliation is celebrated as well. The school encourages children in their steps in faith through the R.E. curriculum by the emphasis given to aspects of that curriculum at these important times.

### **Eucharist**

The school encourages all children to take part in Eucharist celebrations, within the school community and within the parish. Special roles are given to particular school years in these celebrations, and all children are asked to take part in hymns, prayers and readings. However, we lay special emphasis on:

- Welcoming, at the start of the year/term/ week and at the start of celebrations.
- Recognition of the Eucharist as sharing, of giving thanks for gifts, especially bread and wine as gifts of the earth.
- Recognising that we are a community, of the past and present, and that as members of that community we need to take care of each other.
- Developing, through celebrations of the liturgical seasons, the need to accept responsibility for sin and put matters right: the recognition of special meals shared by Jesus with his friends, knowing that he gave his life for us.
- Going forth to follow Jesus at the end of the celebration and the end of the year.

### **Reconciliation**

We encourage our children in celebrating this sacrament by emphasising the following aspects of our R.E. syllabus:

- Taking responsibility - in school for younger pupils, for the school environment, for their own behaviour.
- Developing awareness that their actions affect others - their rights are others' responsibilities.
- Through stories of famous people/saints to recognise that through repentance and forgiveness lives can be changed.
- The celebration of repentance and reconciliation in services in Advent and Lent and at the start of every Mass.
- The idea of new starts / new life at Easter.
- That Jesus is with us every day as we move on in our lives and in our faith.

We are a worshipping community; all our children take part in that worship. We are a part of the worshipping community that is the parish. We encourage parishioners to take part in the life of the school, to join us for assemblies, mass, to visit on open days, to volunteer their services to help with art / craft / literacy. We work to develop our links with the parish so that children can be fully involved in the life of the parish primarily in sacramental preparation and celebration.

## **Appendix 2 – Prayer and Liturgy Directory**

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be daily Prayer and Liturgy for all pupils. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single Prayer and Liturgy for all pupils, or separate Prayer and Liturgy in school groups).

The Prayer and Liturgy is distinct from R.E. lessons. It forms an integral part of school life and is central to the Catholic tradition. In our Catholic School, responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing body after consultation with the Headteacher.

Those responsible will ensure that Prayer and Liturgy are in accordance with the school's instrument of governance and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

As a Catholic school, we hope that parents will be fully supportive of our approach to prayer and liturgy as part of living out our mission statement. However, we recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their children from prayer and liturgy and in such circumstances appropriate supervision arrangements will be made.

Prayer and Liturgy is celebrated in a variety of ways including: whole school worship; class worship; worship through hymns; class mass or liturgy; whole school masses during the year, including holy days of obligation during term time.

Prayer and Liturgy in our school community provides opportunities to: deepen our relationship with God; grow in spiritual, moral and liturgical understanding; grow in understanding of our living faith tradition; develop a sense of wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ; reflect upon our own individual faith journeys; develop the skills of prayer.