

Religious Education Policy



Sacred Heart Primary School
Dundrum

(Updated 2017)

The Aims of Catholic Education

- Provide effective education for all our children.
- Develop effective Pastoral Care systems in our school.
- Establish links with the home, the parish and the wider community.

Introduction

In Sacred Heart Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment, in which to realise and celebrate the academic and non-academic potential of all our pupils. We expect our pupils to work hard and for parents to assist us in laying the important foundations for future learning. We recognise that children have a detailed and an intimate knowledge of our school's provision and processes, particularly teaching and learning. We will draw upon this knowledge in order to make improvements.

Aims

In our school we aim to:

- Develop and strengthen each pupil's understanding and love of Catholic values by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school.
- Create a safe, enjoyable learning environment in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided.
- Implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- Help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning.
- Value, respect and nurture every child in our care.
- Encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to support and care for one another.
- Equip our children with the necessary life skills to enable them to participate in a fast changing society.
- Endorse the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child and work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention.
- Involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

Religious Education

Religious Education in Sacred Heart Primary School is available for all children and extends beyond the requirements of the core curriculum agreed by the main churches. The school is committed to the aims, values and teachings of the Catholic faith which influences the whole curriculum and shapes the daily pattern of school life. It prepares each child for participation in the liturgy and Sacraments of the Catholic Church. There is regular corporate worship, instruction by class teachers, class assemblies and visits by the Parish Priest.

In Sacred Heart Primary School Pastoral Care permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic Faith and involves all members of our school community - children, parents and all other adults who contribute to the well being of each child. We strive to create an atmosphere where God's love is experienced by all members of the school community, through their relationships with each other; where Christ is an example to all and where each child is helped to develop to his/her potential.

We believe that our Catholic School is not just an environment for providing a series of lessons; it stems from an educational philosophy which strives to meet the needs of the young people of today in the light of the Church's faith. As a result, all that happens in our school, the curriculum, discipline and our relationships, should speak to us of God's loving care for each individual.

Rights Respecting School

We, the staff of Sacred Heart Primary School, endorse the Convention on the Rights of the Child and are working towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention.

Article 14

Every child has the right to choose their own religion and beliefs. Their parents should help them decide what is right and wrong and what is best for them.

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and Religion

The delivery of the RE Curriculum is greatly enhanced by the presence of PDMU as an area of study in the Curriculum. PDMU has much in common with religion, as it focuses attention on the children's emotional development, health and safety, relationships with others and development of moral thinking, values and actions.

Both areas of study encourage each child to:

- Become aware of their own unique existence.
- Become personally, emotionally, socially and physically effective.
- Lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives.
- Become confident, independent and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

Our Aims

Our aims are directly related to our Mission Statement.

We strive to:

- Enable the spiritual development of each child.
- Facilitate a growth in knowledge of daily prayer.
- Reflect and affirm Christian values and teach the meaning of a Christian community.
- Help children to become familiar with the traditional forms of worship in the Catholic Church.
- Develop an understanding that there are other faith traditions.
- Create a learning environment in which every child is encouraged and enabled to develop to their full and unique potential as human beings, made in the image and likeness of God.
- Form pupils who will unselfishly use their gifts for the common good and are committed to work towards a caring society.
- Be a welcoming and inclusive community which is respectful and tolerant of all religious traditions and beliefs.
- Work in partnership with parents and with the parish community to keep the light of faith which was received at Baptism, burning brightly.
- Provide opportunities for worship through prayer, the celebration of liturgy and the Sacraments.

The concepts we wish the children to develop include:

- Creation - the uniqueness of each of us and our role as caretakers of the earth.
- Family - community, the church community and the world family.
- Symbol - ritual, prayer, celebration and Sacrament.
- Gospel - bible stories, parables and religious language.
- The links between beliefs and values, between religion and life.
- The importance of commitment.

The knowledge we wish to impart includes:

- The historical facts of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Some basic ideas of sacred scripture - Gospels, Revelation and Tradition.
- The value of the human person, loved by God, and loved by others.
- The value of the Sacraments; they enrich each child on his/her journey through life.
- The call to be Christian involves a growing awareness of the rights of others and a sense of duty and commitment to the underprivileged and less fortunate.

Schemes of Work and Learning and Teaching Strategies

The principles of good teaching and learning experiences for children relate just as much to RE as to any other curriculum subject.

Children will study sometimes as a whole class, sometimes working in group situations and sometimes individually. Children can link their learning across subjects. They will be given the opportunity to discuss, question, debate and reflect in small groups. Sharing one's perspective with others is particularly important in Religion.

Our schemes of work are based on the Catholic Religious Education Programme, 'Grow in Love.' The schemes follow many of the same themes each term but at each year group's own level. The content of the Religion schemes is listed in all Teachers' Books.

Collective Worship

We believe that the Collective Worship undertaken in our school community helps to support the shared values expressed in our Mission Statement, those of care and respect for each other, thus deepening our understanding of God and his loving care for each one of us. We value worshipping together as an integral expression of ourselves as a community. Daily Prayer takes place in all classes. Each class has a prayer corner/sacred space. Opportunities are given for participation through singing, reading, praying together and silent meditation. Children participate in weekly assemblies to include drama, readings, singing, dance and prayers. Recognition of pupils' achievements is evident in 'Pupil of the Week/ Month' Awards. All children attend Mass on a weekly basis. Fr Fleck visits the children in the classroom after Mass to develop their understanding of the Scriptures/ Liturgical Events and promote their

spiritual development through prayer, meditation etc. Children also attend Mass to celebrate Holy Days throughout the academic year.

Sacramental Preparation

In collaboration with Fr Fleck, parents and the wider community, pupils are prepared for Sacraments of Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation. The time of preparation for sacraments is an opportunity for all to be renewed and nourished in their own faith journey.

Local Community and the Wider World

The Diocesan Advisor for Religious Education visits the school annually. The staff and pupils welcome this visit and see it as an opportunity to share our knowledge of faith, prayer and the sacraments. The school is aware of the needs of the local community and supports local charities and organisations. Each term, children are involved in a fundraising event to raise money for a chosen charity. Occasionally missionaries from the third world countries may visit the school and enlighten pupils about the needs of children in other parts of the world. In Lent the school undertakes to raise money for those in need. Fund-raising is organised through various activities to raise money for Trócaire.

Resources

Primary 1 to 4 have now received the new 'Grow in Love' programme resources to include Teacher and Pupil Books, CDs, posters and access to a wealth of online resources.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.