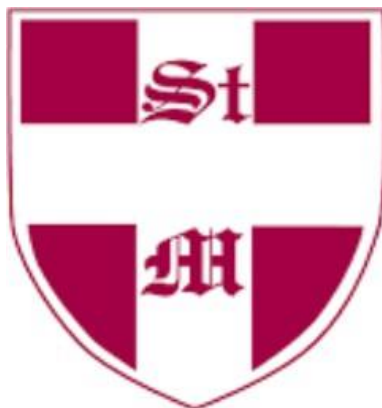


## St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

### Religious Education Policy



*"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10*

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

|                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Policy Date            | September 2026 |
| Signed by Head Teacher | Mrs N Collins  |
| Review Date            | September 2027 |

## Our Core Values

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we hold steadfast to a set of foundational values that guide our mission and shape our community. We believe in:

**Nurturing Faith and Respect:** We are dedicated to creating a nurturing Catholic environment where pupils can grow spiritually, fostering acceptance, and respect for one another. This foundation of faith is the cornerstone of our diverse school community, preparing students for a broader understanding of the world.

**Pursuit of Excellence:** We set high expectations for every member of our school community, inspiring a collective endeavour for excellence in all aspects of school life. Through this commitment, we cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and lifelong learning.

**Individual Growth and Support:** Recognising the unique strengths and challenges of each pupil, we are committed to their holistic development. We build upon strengths and provide unwavering support to overcome weaknesses, fostering an environment where every individual can thrive.

**Inclusive Collaboration:** We actively cultivate purposeful relationships with students, staff, parents, and visitors. Embracing a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds, we create an inclusive environment where everyone's voice is valued and respected. Through collaboration, we enrich our collective experience.

## Introduction

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School stands as a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic institution under the benevolent trusteeship of the Diocese of Southwark. Rooted in the profound teachings of the Catholic Church, our school embraces the Gospel message, emphasising the boundless love that God holds for each of us. We extend an invitation to every child to reciprocate this love by cherishing God and treating their neighbours with the same love and care. Central to this endeavour is the emulation of Jesus as a guiding model.

Through a curriculum infused with the essence of knowing and cherishing God and His creation, this sacred teaching seamlessly interweaves with every facet of our daily school life. The vibrant tapestry of worship, liturgies, and rituals of the Catholic Church further illuminate this core belief. We wholeheartedly encourage parents to fortify the foundational beliefs of the Catholic faith instilled within the school's walls.

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we champion an inclusive ethos, welcoming every child into our fold. Our commitment is not only to ensure that all students learn side by side with joy, but also that they are provided ample opportunities to develop their full potential. Here, children are nurtured to cultivate self-esteem, self-respect, and self-discipline, while simultaneously fostering an environment of tolerance and respect for one another. Every pupil, regardless of background, is embraced in the warm and inviting embrace of St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School.

## Embracing the Foundation: Religious Education at St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we firmly believe that Religious Education serves as the bedrock of our entire educational endeavour. Catholic beliefs and values infuse every facet of our school life, uniting us in purpose and guiding our collective journey. These sacred principles form the very essence and primary influence upon our specially designed school curriculum.

Religious Education is seamlessly woven into the fabric of our teaching methodology, intimately connected to the core areas of children's learning. This integration is born from our conviction that education is, fundamentally, a divine endeavour. It is an exploration, a revelation, and a celebration of the expanse and intricacies of God's creation, as well as a profound understanding of His countless creatures.

In every discipline and subject, whether it be mathematics, science, history, or the arts, children are actively engaged in a profound journey. They delve into the mysteries and marvels that constitute God's creation, rise to meet the challenges and revelations presented to them, and come to recognise the singular dignity of each individual, learning how to cherish and revel in God's wondrous 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)*

Incorporating Catholic Social Teachings (CST) into every facet of our curriculum in RE is paramount in fostering a holistic education that aligns with our school's deeply rooted values. CST provides a moral compass that transcends academic subjects, guiding our students towards a profound understanding of compassion, justice, and the dignity of every individual. By infusing CST principles into subjects ranging from science to history, we not only impart knowledge but also cultivate a sense of responsibility towards society. Through this integrated approach children learn to view the world through a lens of solidarity, prioritising the well-being of the marginalised and vulnerable. This holistic educational experience empowers our students to become not only knowledgeable scholars but also compassionate advocates for positive social change, ensuring they carry the transformative teachings of CST into their lives beyond the classroom.

At our school, our lightbulb questions serve as a beacon of enlightenment, deeply rooted in the profound principles of Catholic Social Teachings (CST). These questions are designed to do more than just illuminate a subject; they offer a pathway to profound comprehension, consolidation, and ethical justification. By integrating CST into our inquiries, we ensure that

students not only gain factual knowledge but also engage in thoughtful reflection on how their learning aligns with values of justice, compassion, and the inherent dignity of every person. These questions encourage children to delve deeper Religious Education, prompting critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the subjects at hand. In doing so, we foster a learning environment that not only nurtures intellectual growth Religious Education but also cultivates a strong moral foundation, empowering our students to apply their knowledge in ways that positively impact society and uphold the teachings of CST.

### **Leadership of Religious Education: A Collaborative Endeavor**

The stewardship of Religious Education lies in the capable hands of the R.E. subject leader and the Head teacher at St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School. Together, they shoulder the vital responsibility of overseeing and evaluating the R.E. curriculum across all levels, guaranteeing a seamless continuum of learning and growth.

Their collective effort extends to ensuring that the objectives and learning outcomes outlined in the Curriculum Directory/Religious Education Directory are not only identified but also effectively met. Through meticulous oversight, they safeguard the integrity and efficacy of our faith-based education, nurturing an environment where spiritual development flourishes.

In tandem with this dedicated team, a governor holds a distinct and integral role in overseeing

Religious Education. This governor works closely with the school's staff, fostering open lines of communication and collaboration to diligently carry out their monitoring duties. Together, they form a collaborative force, ensuring that the ethos and objectives of Religious Education at St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School are upheld with diligence and purpose.

### **Curriculum Content**

Religious Education (R.E.) occupies a central role in our educational framework at St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, standing shoulder to shoulder with English, Maths, and Science. It receives more than the dedicated time and attention it merits, aligning rigorously with the Curriculum Directory guidelines and learning outcomes. This deliberate approach not only fosters a comprehensive understanding but also affords opportunities for collective gatherings and commemorations through school-wide assemblies and relevant displays, tailored to resonate with each child.

At the heart of our R.E. curriculum lies the carefully designed scheme, "Lighting the Path." This inspiring programme provides a clear and progressive journey through the Catholic

faith, enabling children to develop their knowledge and understanding of Scripture, the Church and the Catholic worldview. Rooted in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, the scheme encourages pupils not only to learn about their faith but also to reflect on how it shapes the way they live their lives.

Lighting the Path is structured around six annual themes, or “branches,” with each branch linked to a term of the academic year. Through these branches, pupils encounter the Bible and explore the Catholic worldview as it is lived and celebrated within the Church. They are given opportunities to reflect on what they learn and consider how their faith connects with their own experiences, choices and relationships.

The six branches follow the liturgical cycle, allowing children to make meaningful connections between their learning and the wider life of the Catholic Church. This approach enables key celebrations, seasons and traditions to become an integral part of their R.E. journey, helping pupils to recognise that faith is not simply something they study, but something that is lived and celebrated throughout the year.

Building upon this foundation, the Lighting the Path curriculum widens in both scope and complexity as children progress through the school. Each year builds upon previous learning, developing and deepening pupils’ knowledge through carefully sequenced encounters with Scripture, art and music. This layered approach ensures that children revisit important concepts while continually extending their understanding, encouraging both progression and thoughtful reflection.

The six branches therefore provide the backbone of our R.E. curriculum, creating a rich and coherent journey of spiritual, moral and religious development. Through Lighting the Path, we seek to guide our children towards:

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

- exploring the importance of story in the human quest for meaning;
- understanding 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;
- reflecting upon the personal and community response to God invited by Scripture;
- exploring the sacred writings of other faith communities.

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

- reflecting on the experience of belonging to a community at various levels;

- reflecting 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;
- developing a knowledge and understanding of people and roles in the Church and understand that to be the Church is to be a witness of the Good News of Jesus Christ;
- to explore the relationship between the Catholic Church and other denominations and faiths.

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

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

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

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

### **Assessment and Recording**

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, our approach to assessing Religious Education is meticulously crafted to serve as a beacon of guidance for our students' spiritual and intellectual development. It is tailored not only to illuminate their path towards a profound understanding of the Catholic faith but also to instil a sense of confidence and achievement in their journey.

Progress is vigilantly tracked through our internal system (Sonar Tracker), observations, pupil voice and book look. Engaging discussions, thoughtful questioning, and the presentation of challenges afford our students the opportunity to transition from foundational knowledge and comprehension to higher-order thinking, encompassing evaluation and analysis. Moreover, we provide platforms for them to share their newfound wisdom with others, notably through avenues such as class assemblies.

To ensure a comprehensive record of each child's growth, attainment level assessments are meticulously recorded at the conclusion of every half term. These records stand as a testament to the strides made in their understanding, offering a tangible testament to their evolving comprehension of the Catholic faith.

## **Marking**

In accordance with the school's established marking policy, Religious Education assessments are conducted adhering to (AT1 and AT2) 'Knowledge and Understanding, Engagement and Response and Spiritual Reflection'. These evaluations are meticulously designed to incorporate and mirror the specific learning objective being imparted.

To enhance comprehension and retention, pivotal vocabulary crucial to the lesson is distinctly highlighted in green, in keeping with the school's marking protocol. This aids in providing a clear reference point for the children, fortifying their grasp of essential terminology. Furthermore, any deviations in spelling of subject specific vocabulary or misconceptions are conscientiously addressed, always with a discerning focus on the core tenets of Religious Education.

Feedback is a crucial aspect of our assessment process. In Religious Education, it encompasses a meticulous consideration of keywords and vocabulary, with any pertinent spelling errors being highlighted for revision if deemed necessary. This approach not only ensures linguistic accuracy but also underscores the significance of precise language in expressing faith-based concepts. Central to the marking process is the teacher's commentary. It is crafted with an eye towards stimulating high order thinking, fostering deeper contemplation and understanding. By posing thought provoking questions and providing insightful prompts, we strive to inspire our students to engage with Religious Education in a profound and meaningful manner.

## **Teaching Staff**

Every member of the teaching faculty at St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School is united by a shared commitment to the Catholic faith. They are either Roman Catholics or hold a deep respect and empathy for the teachings of the Catholic Church, which infuse every facet of our school's vibrant life.

Through their unwavering dedication, both in the classroom and by setting an example in their daily lives, our teachers endeavour to guide the children towards fostering a relationship with God, one built on love and trust. This personal connection is seen as

pivotal, influencing not only their outlook on life but also shaping their interactions with others.

Religious Education is a shared responsibility among all teaching staff. Each educator takes on the role of imparting these invaluable lessons to the children in their care, ensuring that the foundations of faith are woven into the fabric of their academic journey.

Open dialogue and the exchange of ideas among our teachers are deemed crucial. Regular discussions at both staff and departmental meetings provide a platform for collaborative exploration of teaching approaches. Moreover, all staff members are strongly encouraged to partake in relevant courses, fostering continuous growth and deepening their understanding of faith-based education.

### **Home Links**

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we wholeheartedly acknowledge that the education of our children is a collaborative endeavour, one that requires the active involvement and support of parents and the parish community. Parents and guardians stand as the primary educators, forming an essential partnership with our dedicated teachers, who possess the professional expertise and training to assist them in the vital task of imparting the Catholic faith.

This shared responsibility is nurtured within an environment of mutual trust and confidence. Throughout the year, we extend warm invitations to parents and friends, encouraging them to join us in various celebrations. These occasions serve as cherished moments for our extended community to come together in unity and rejoice in the richness of our faith.

We wholeheartedly invite and welcome parents to partake in the multitude of school and class celebrations. These include uplifting school masses, intimate class masses, and engaging assemblies, all of which serve as meaningful expressions of our shared faith journey.

### **Parish Links**

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School is deeply rooted in the heart of our local community, and we recognise the significance of this connection. At the parish level, we actively engage in the holy days of obligation masses held in our parish church. Our involvement extends to providing music and readers, contributing to the vibrant spirit of these sacred gatherings.

In tandem with the liturgical year, we meticulously plan the Mass schedule for the children on a termly basis. This thoughtful approach ensures that our students are not only academically enriched but also spiritually nurtured, aligning their educational journey with the rhythms of the Catholic calendar.

Beyond our immediate community, we foster a sense of global responsibility. Through consistent support of organisations like CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society, we empower our children with an awareness of the needs of families and children in distant corners of the world. This exposure fosters a deep appreciation for the diverse cultures, races, and faiths that enrich our global tapestry.

We forge meaningful connections within our school community and its surrounding neighbourhoods. Initiatives such as 'Medway Food Bank', and 'Acorn House' are testaments to our commitment to actively engage with and support those in our immediate vicinity.

### **Parish Priest**

In our close-knit community at St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, the parish priest holds a dual role as both a valued governor and the guardian of our pastoral care. With a steadfast commitment to nurturing the spiritual well-being of our school, the parish priest plays a pivotal role in fostering the spiritual life of our cherished 'school church'.

Under his capable guidance, our community gathers to partake in a multitude of sacred observances. He leads us in the celebration of liturgies, presides over masses, guides us through penitential services, and presides over the solemn Ash Wednesday service. Through his profound insight and unwavering devotion, the parish priest provides a spiritual foundation that resonates deeply within the hearts of our school community.

### **Prayer**

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, prayer is an integral part of our Catholic ethos, woven into the very fabric of our daily life. It serves as the cornerstone of our gatherings, with both staff and Governor's meetings commencing with a moment of prayer, uniting us in purpose and reflection.

For our children, prayer is a deeply personal endeavour, a cherished means of communicating with God. We emphasise that this sacred moment is first and foremost an intimate occasion, where each child can express their thoughts, hopes, and gratitude.

As children progress through our educational journey, 'Lighting the Path' program provides a structured pathway for their spiritual growth. This progression encompasses various approaches to prayer, tailored to their age and personal development:

- Quiet reflection and meditation
- Collective prayer sessions
- Crafting individual prayers
- Engaging with prayers through music
- Learning and cherishing traditional Catholic prayers

Our dedicated staff members are encouraged to pray alongside the children, setting a powerful example of faith and reverence. Through prayer, we endeavour to deepen our connection with God, fostering a sense of spiritual closeness and understanding.

Within each classroom, a designated prayer area stands as a testament to our collective devotion. Adorned with displays of children's work and reflective of the current liturgical season, it serves as a focal point for contemplation. Candles, images, and meaningful objects further guide our collective thoughts during these moments of reflection.

Through participation in infant and junior assemblies, as well as whole-school gatherings, children and staff come together in communal prayer. Children are encouraged to articulate their own intentions, which are woven into our school Masses, forming a tapestry of shared aspirations and reverence.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, our Religious Education curriculum is purposefully designed to instil a comprehensive knowledge of all the sacraments. While each holds significance, we place special emphasis on Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Holy Communion.

In Years 5 and 6, students delve deeper, exploring the profound meaning of the Sacrament of the Sick and Holy Orders, enriching their understanding of these sacred rites.

Beginning in Year 3, children embark on a dedicated journey of preparation for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion. Guided by our parish priest within the sacred confines of the Church, this course of preparation is a transformative experience for our young learners.

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we hold the celebration of First Holy Communion in the highest regard. To mark this momentous occasion, we gather together in special Masses, enveloped in the reverence and joy that this sacrament brings to our faith community.

## **Liturgy and Celebration**

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we cherish the moments when our community gathers around the Lord's table, finding sustenance and strength in our shared faith. Our Masses are special occasions, intricately woven with the tapestry of the liturgical year and marked by significant milestones such as the start of the school year, the celebration of First Holy Communion, and our poignant leavers' Mass.

Inclusive of all, regardless of church affiliation, these Masses ensure active participation from every child, allowing them to feel a deep connection with the proceedings. Engaging children in various aspects like preparation, music, processions, gestures, readings, and prayers, we ensure that the language and symbols used resonate appropriately with their respective age groups. Additionally, we endeavour to extend warm hospitality to families and friends attending these moments of celebration, offering tea or coffee whenever possible.

Once per year, each class assumes a leading role in an assembly, an event to which their parents are warmly invited. Assemblies serve as a platform for celebrating the children's achievements and talents, focusing on elements of worship and active involvement from every child. Rooted in the theme of the class topic or shared interests, these assemblies unfold with a blend of prayers, biblical and modern stories, prose and poetry, drama, music, dancing, and singing. Post-assembly, parents are encouraged to share their thoughts and reflections in the 'We Love Our Community' book, fostering a sense of communal engagement.

On a daily basis, we extend a warm invitation to parents to join us in the Reflection Area, where together, we say the rosary and offer prayers for our collective intentions.

## **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. 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 hope to enable children to reflect on their experiences of life and grow in knowledge of their feelings, needs and reactions. Through

their awareness and understanding of themselves, they will recognise God's action in their lives and come to an inner peace and contentment. In addition, pupils are taught about the importance of the mission of the Church and the school's contribution to the 'common good'.

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 understand the Gospel of Jesus and through self-awareness and self-confidence enable them to come to good moral judgements.

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

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School is a Roman Catholic school and therefore by the very religion that causes its existence, it must be a school that encourages tolerance, respect and care for all people, regardless of colour, race or creed.

Whilst Religious Education at St. Michael's is specifically of the Christian 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 within our scheme of work, 'Lighting the Path'.

### **Environment**

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we are dedicated to ensuring that our physical environment harmoniously echoes our mission statement. It is our endeavour to provide a nurturing, well-organised, and stimulating space that embodies our Christian beliefs.

Throughout the school, the work of our students is showcased in creative ways. In each classroom, a designated area is dedicated to Religious Education, featuring a display board and a sacred prayer space. This sacred space serves as a sanctuary for reflection and communion with our faith.

Harmonising with the liturgical year, the display board resonates with the colours that mark the liturgical seasons, creating a visual tapestry that mirrors our shared journey of faith. At the entrance of the school, a prominent prayer area is set where parents and children alike can reflect and post their prayer intentions.

Within these spaces, we adorn our surroundings with meaningful elements. Bibles, candles, sacred artifacts, and evocative images are thoughtfully placed, enhancing the ambiance and offering tangible representations of our Catholic faith.

## Resources

Posters and pictures are stored in the RE leads classroom

### The following resources can be found within the school:

A class set of Bibles in each KS1/KS2 class

A selection of candles

Crucifix

Class rosary

Praying basket

Wonder tree/wall

Other faith resources in each class room

## Special Needs

At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School our Religious Education curriculum, much like other facets of our academic program, is thoughtfully differentiated to cater to the unique needs of our students. This differentiation is a product of our meticulous long-term, medium-term, and short-term planning, ensuring that every child is provided with a learning experience tailored to their individual growth.

In the classroom, our intentions are clear:

- We strive to cultivate a joyful and nurturing environment, one where each child is empowered to reach their full potential.
- Our lesson plans are designed with a variety of learning styles in mind, acknowledging the diverse ways in which children absorb and process information.
- Recognising the range of abilities within our classroom, we aim for children's work to reflect a spectrum of recording methods, allowing every student to shine in their own unique way.
- Teaching is focused on tangible learning outcomes, and opportunities for both individual and collaborative group work are incorporated into our instructional approach.
- We are committed to identifying and leveraging each child's strengths, ensuring they can actively participate and excel in all activities.
- It is our unwavering aspiration that every child experiences spiritual growth and nurtures a profound appreciation for the inherent value of God's creation.

Additionally, we have equipped all our classes with state-of-the-art technology resources, including laptops, iPads, and other ICT equipment. These tools are leveraged to enrich the teaching and learning experience in Religious Education, enhancing the depth and breadth of our students' engagement with the subject matter.