St. Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School

"Through Jesus we achieve our very best"

Religious Education Policy
2024-2025

"In the life of faith of the Catholic school, religious education plays a central and vital part. At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed in religious education. Therefore, religious education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school."

The Bishops of England and Wales May 2000

The aims of our School

St Martin De Porres School is a Catholic Primary School whose primary aim is the education of Catholic children. We are set in a wonderfully diverse community which draws many Christian sects and other faiths and we welcome all children to our school (subject to places being available) who wish to receive a Catholic education. We create a welcoming atmosphere for all who come into contact with us and hope that they take away our values with them.

As a Catholic School we have certain duties to:

"... Be more than just places where pupils are equipped with learning and skills for the workplace and responsible citizenship. Rather, they are to be the communities where the spiritual, cultural and personal worlds within which we live are harmonised to form the roots from which grow our values, motivation, aspirations and the moral imperatives that inform our choices and actions as persons."

Christ At The Centre (2012)

- We have a missionary responsibility: To make Christ available to all who wish to know him as part of their lives and offer the opportunity to share the Catholic Faith to all who wish it
- We have an educational role: To provide children with an excellent general curriculum and religious preparation that has Christ at its centre
- We have a spiritual role: To ensure that we work closely with parents as the primary educators of their children, to prepare those children for their religious and spiritual life
- We have a responsibility to our parish community: To ensure that we serve the family that we belong to and make links with the wider Catholic Church
- We have a responsibility to society: To ensure that we are of service to the larger community by the provision of excellence in teaching and learning, an openness to diversity and contribution to social cohesion.

How do we teach RE at ST Martin De Porres?

RE is a Core subject in a Catholic School and as such is allocated 10% curriculum time each week. RE is expected to be taught using as many cross curricular methods as possible and links should be made to RE where appropriate at other points of curriculum delivery.

Whole school collective worship is delivered by the Headteacher, Senior Leaders and Class Teachers. Class collective worship takes place on a weekly basis. It is led by the teachers, children and chaplaincy team (Years 1-6). The children have an active part in planning/preparing collective worship using the visual planner. In KS2 the children take on

more of responsibility by also selecting gospel readings, music, prayers etc. Father Mario, our parish priest or Fr Babu say Mass each week. Parents and parishioners are invited to all Masses and Class Assemblies throughout the year.

In line with the Directives from the Archdiocese St Martin De Porres School uses the curriculum strategy for Religious Education in Catholic schools, "Learning and Growing as the People of God" and the progression of skills document.

This comprehensive scheme is used in all Year groups and provides children with opportunities to access and understand the various aspects of the Catholic Faith:

- Liturgical Year
- Scriptural Knowledge
- Prayer
- Living as Christians
- The Sacraments

These 5 core areas are covered in a differentiated way in each year so that children develop a progressive understanding of the faith during their 7 years at our school. The progression of skills document supports the progression of skills taught/covered in each year group.

On entry to St Martin's our Reception children are assessed through a baseline that examines an entry level of Catholic/religious awareness. The children will be reassessed, using teacher assessment, at the end of their Reception year to measure development after exposure to the programme.

As a Catholic School one of our aims is ensuring the secure foundation of Catholic children in their faith and as part of this we prepare our children for the Sacraments of Initiation into the faith. Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are completed biennially for children in Years 3 and 4. Confirmation is completed biennially for children in Years 5 and 6. We are an inclusive school and see these Sacraments as community acts not individual ones, so in keeping with this when our Catholic children prepare for these special life changing events, the whole class prepares together. Supplementary materials are used for the teaching & preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation in conjunction with the units where these are covered in planning.

Resources are available to support the teaching of RE in all classes. Catholic Bible versions have been provided for all Key Stage 2 children and staff, and appropriate biblical materials are provided for Key Stage 1 classes. Liturgical preparation materials are available from the RE subject leader.

Lesson Planning

In order to ensure continuity and progression from one year to the next it is important that teachers have detailed and precise objectives. This makes planning and assessment easier. These objectives are clearly stated in the Diocesan Planning documents.

The following represents a guide about planning and delivering RE at St Martin De Porres:

- Planning should be completed by the Unit
- The Learning Objective or Outcome can be taken directly from the 'learning and growing' document or devised by the class teacher using the 'progression of skills' document

- Each lesson must also have a skill focus. These are at the top of the medium term planning sheet and have been taken from progression of skills document
- A medium term planning sheet must accompany each unit being studied. This will give details about vocabulary, resources to be used, differentiation, assessment criteria and links with Catholic Pupil Profile and Catholic Social Teachings.
- Teachers should make informal observations of their class during RE lessons to look for evidence for greater depth to assess areas in RE. These may include the moral awareness, higher order questioning that explores the nature of God and our relationship with Him.
- RE is not about quantity but about coverage quality and understanding. The work in the books should show that each child has done their best at their level of ability. Children doing the same task may therefore have a variety of recorded responses depending on what they can do – it is acceptable for a child to draw, speak or write their responses to the same LO.
- Thinking skills, drama, speaking & listening, art and music should be integrated into RE teaching

Assessment in RE

Owing to its nature, R.E. is difficult to evaluate, because we cannot judge a child's relationship with God with regard to their faith. However it is the School's policy to assess children's knowledge and understanding against key learning objectives in the Archdiocese Scheme. In keeping with the trend in other subjects we look at RE assessment in two ways:

- Assessment of Learning (Attainment Bands)
- Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning is an ongoing tool used by teachers to ensure that their class are receiving what they need and are able to make judgements about their own learning. This method of ongoing peer/self/teacher assessment means that children will be involved in decisions about what they learn, when, how and where to go next. The use of unit markers means teachers can assess what the pupils know and what they wonder about for each unit covered.

There is a 4 year cycle for assessment in place at St Martin De Porres and the children are assessed on 3 units per year. Each year the focus of the assessment will change.

The Diocese directs schools about the key focuses for assessment in each academic year.

Prayer is an ongoing area of assessment in each unit, in each year. This is not done in any formal way as we recognise the personal spiritual growth that occurs during prayer.

During this formal assessment of learning staff look at the key LO's of the unit and the progression of skills document in order to measure which children have attained a full, partial or no understanding of the concepts, vocabulary etc. Teachers will have three tracked children (WTS, EXS and GDS), and work from each assessment unit will be assessed using the progression of skills document. At the end of the academic year the RE Lead will collect the books for evidence.

Staff will assess children's work using the updated 'progression of skills' document. There will be two attainment targets for KS1 and three attainment targets for KS2:

- AT1: Learning about Religion (KU)
  Knowledge and understanding of beliefs, teachings & sources, celebration & ritual, social & moral practices
- AT2: Learning from Religion (ER)
  Reflection on and response to their own experiences in the light of religion, engaging with questions, engaging with own and others beliefs
- AT3: Application of skills (AE)
  Analysis and evaluation

Staff moderate work samples each term to support a better understanding of the levels that children are working at in our school. It is hoped that the majority of children will make the acceptable levels of progress over their 7 years at St Martin De Porres so that by the end of each academic year the majority are at Age Related standards or better.

Children with SEND at our school are still fully involved in accessing the RE curriculum. Teachers may show on their planning the activities that they intend to adapt and which methods of support will best enable understanding to be developed. We would expect to see scaffolding, peer support, small group work, 1:1 support with a teaching assistant, differentiated worksheets, lower reading age materials, differentiated outcomes etc. as methods to support the learning and attainment of children who have learning difficulties. Those children with specific learning and physical needs will have their RE needs met on an individual basis appropriate to them.

We routinely teach and check that children know and learn the prayers appropriate to their age, know the Mass responses and follow a simple formula for Confession.

Observation of children's behaviour plays a major part in the evaluation process; for example: changes of moral behaviour are monitored.

Conduct within and outside of school is encouraged to be one of dignity and respect, growing from inner joy and happiness. In the end of year reports to parents teachers specify and comment on the child's knowledge and understanding of our faith in the RE section, but moral behaviour will be included in the general comment section.

Marking Books/Work in RE

The marking of RE books should be completed in accordance with the general assessment rules as outlined in the Marking and Presentation Policy.

All marking should contribute to the teachers understanding of what a child has achieved during the session/unit and where they need to go next to consolidate or develop the learning. Marking must contribute to a child's understanding of how they have achieved and what they need to do to improve or develop. Where appropriate targets/questions will be set.

Work that forms part of the assessment cycle must be comprehensively marked.

Environment and display in RE

Each classroom is expected to have a display board dedicated to RE which can display sacramental preparation material or can be changed on a unit by unit basis to show each new unit being covered. Attention should be paid to the school display policy regarding the content and procedures. It should be apparent to all visitors to St Martin De Porres that we are a Catholic School and this is partially achieved in the use of art and display to show the core values that drive our school.

All classes should have a prayer area and/or a focal point that draws the children's attention during moments of reflection and contemplation.

Class Saints should be prominently displayed, and the children must have opportunities to find out about the lives of the Saints in RE lessons and during Saint Celebration days.

We have a Prayer Garden. This is an area of reflection and contemplation and can be used at any time.

Prayer Life at St Martin De Porres

Developing a good prayer life is integral to maintaining Christ at the Centre and at St Martin De Porres we look for opportunities to use prayer and create prayer that will support Sacramental preparation, units being studied, liturgical preparation and personal spirituality. There is a legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship in school and we ensure that there is a mix of individual, class and whole school prayer.

Prayer is when we engage in communication with God and it can take many forms and styles – no one-way to pray is correct. We pray daily in class at the start and end of the school day, before and after meals, at appropriate times dictated by the liturgical calendar (Rosary, Stations of the Cross).

It is important that we create an environment conducive to Prayer for it to be done with meaning. Teachers should use all of the senses in making prayer accessible and valuable.

Prayers are used for the following reasons:

- Traditional/Formal Prayers: Shared by everyone
- Adoration: When before the blessed Sacrament
- Thanksgiving: Showing thanks to God for all he has done for us
- Contrition: Sorry prayers
- Intercession: When we want God to intervene for us
- Imaginative Prayer: Meditations and scripture based prayer

We do not assess Prayer as a separate unit at St Martin De Porres as we believe it is so important a component to all RE units being studied. Children are expected to write, say, act, think prayers and to contribute to the preparation of the Liturgy through prayer. Teachers shouldn't make corrections to children's written prayers as they are personal reflections and the intent is important.

For more information please see our Prayer & Liturgy Policy.

Sacramental Preparation

Both Parish Schools, SS John & Monica and St Martin de Porres, work together to prepare our children for their Sacraments, in co-operation with the Parish. The schools co-operate in preparation of the Liturgy for the Sacramental Masses, choosing the hymns and readings together. The readings are shared equally between the two schools. Children and their families are expected to make a commitment to their faith in order to begin the formal preparation for the Sacraments. This involves attending meetings with the staff who will prepare their children and attending meetings with Father Mario and/or Father Babu. Children are expected to attend all preparation Masses and complete all necessary work to ensure that they are mentally and spiritually prepared for their Sacraments.

Catholic children are offered opportunities during the school year to make their Confession (typically Advent and Lent).

Catholic Celebrations and Liturgy

Christmas and Easter are the two significant Christian celebrations of the year. All the children are involved in preparing performances and Masses for the whole community. There is a general festive spirit shown in appropriate displays and the making of cards and the organising of parties etc.

During Holy Week (or the week preceding if we are not in school), each teacher has a specific focus day from the events of Holy Week that they plan for and deliver activities. Children experience 4 key events in the build up to the death and resurrection of Jesus during the day.

All classes in school prepare Masses. The RE Coordinator timetables each class so that over the course of a year each will prepare and lead Mass. Masses are themed based on the Feasts and Solemnities that occur during the days that we are in school. Masses are held on Tuesday mornings in the school hall and all members of the community are welcome to attend. On Holy Days of Obligation, where possible, some of our children are taken to St John & Martin's Church to worship there.

Class Saints & House Teams

Each class has chosen a Saint that will form the basis of some class based study into exploring the lives of important Catholic characters and how they have helped to shape our faith. Each class will hold some sort of celebration when it is their class saints feast day.
Our class saints are as follows:

- Year R: St Francis
- Year 1: St Bernadette
- Year 2: St Juan Diego
- Year 3: St Padro Pio
- Year 4: St Alphonsa
- Year 5: St John Bosco
- Year 6: St Maximilian Kolbe

Our children are divided into 4 house teams and these are named after different English Martyrs – St Edmund Campion, St Thomas More, St John Wall and St Margaret Clitheroe.

Each house has a House Captain and a Vice Captain. These are Year 6 pupils who are elected by all the children in the school. As part of their election manifesto pupils will include information on their saint to share with their house member. House points are counted each week and results are shared in our celebration assemblies.

Multi- Cultural Development

One of the core aims of a Catholic school is to be inclusive and prepare children for taking their place in a cohesive society. We have a very diverse pupil roll and we like to take opportunities to reflect the many cultural and faith experiences that these children bring to our community.

This is a Catholic School and our aim is to deliver a Catholic based spiritual education to all pupils, however we do acknowledge the presence of other faiths in our community and we give the children an opportunity to find out about these faiths in our planning. Our 10% RE allocation is purely for the delivery of the Strategy and all other discovery about other faiths is done through the wider curriculum and RHE.

Each year the school will hold a 'World Faiths Week', where children find out about a variety of world religions. Visits to places of worship are organised.

Curriculum Skills to be developed through RE

Religious Education is cross curricular and means the pupils do not only acquire knowledge and develop understanding in RE, but also improve their general educational skills.

Investigation skills

Children should be taught to:

- Identify and ask relevant questions.
- Observe accurately.
- Listen carefully.
- Follow procedures.
- Know where to look for evidence.
- Gather information from a variety of sources e.g. texts, artefacts, photographs, art, symbols, customs etc.
- Read a variety of prose and poetry.
- Find references in texts e.g. the Bible.
- Recognise sequence.

Interpretation skills

The children should be taught to:

- Categorise and classify.
- Interpret the language of religion, signs and symbols.
- Develop hypotheses.
- Reflect on and interpret their own experiences.
- See life from other peoples' point of view.

Communication skills

The children should be taught to:

- Make a sensible and ordered presentation of information.

- Use a variety of means to express ideas.
- Express themselves through factual and creative writing.
- Express themselves through drawing and painting.
- Design diagrams, charts or models.
- Know religious language and use it appropriately.
- Exercise imagination through role play.

Critical Skills
The children should be taught to:
- Question their own point of view.
- Form reasoned opinions based on evidence.
- Express these opinions in debate.
- Weigh evidence.
- Assess arguments.
- Make connections between life and faith.
- Differentiate between objective and subjective judgements.

Affective and Social Judgements
The children should be taught to:
- Relate well with others.
- Work in a group.
- Exercise empathy.
- Participate in community prayer and celebration.
- Accommodate social, cultural and faith differences
- Be aware of national and global issues.

Evaluation skills
The children should be taught to:
- Distinguish between rules, opinions, principles and beliefs.
- Make reasoned value judgements.
- Make responsible choices.

The programmes of study help to develop an awareness of right and wrong, and encourage the ability to make right choices. They help to develop other essential social skills, such as empathy, and the ability to sympathise and express other emotions such as love, and help to develop a strong sense of responsibility.

Curriculum Links with Catholic Pupil Profile

As Catholics we desire to follow the teachings of the Gospel revealed through the Church. We look to scripture for revelation from God which will guide us in the way he wants us to live. In the Gospels and our Church tradition we find the person of Jesus, through his teachings and interactions with people, showing us the way to live our lives.

We endeavour to make links in our lessons and planning to the Catholic Schools Pupil Profile. The Catholic Pupil Profile, is a series of statements based on the Virtues which describe what a child at our school is growing to be and how our school community is consciously and deliberately nurturing this.

Please see Appendix 1 for more information.

Curriculum Links with Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching is 'an aspect of the life and the thinking of the Catholic Church.' It concerns what the Church has to say about social issues and the way in which Catholic faith should be lived out within society. These teachings are rooted in Scripture and especially in the teachings of Jesus found in the Gospels. At St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School, Catholic Social Teaching underpins our curriculum and day-to-day school life, we endeavour to make references to these teachings in our lessons and our day-to-day activities.

Please see Appendix 2 for more information.

Links with the Parish and Other Schools

We have our sister school of SS John and Monica within the Parish. It is a similarly small school, with a mixture of intake, so we have a lot in common, although each school has its own identity and ethos. We communicate with each other regularly, are supportive of each other and share Sacramental preparation together.

We belong to the Birmingham Catholic Partnership which allows us to get to know other Catholic Schools and enables us to work together in our common purpose of educating all our children to the highest standards academically, socially, morally and spiritually.

We participate in sporting events arranged by BCSSA (Birmingham Catholic Schools Sports Association) which enables us to create partnerships with schools within our consortium and across Birmingham. Additionally, we are in partnership with our local Catholic Secondary School; Bishop Challoner, where we attend regular School Games Competitions with local Catholic Primary Schools, all of which is arranged by our sports leader.

We keep contact and good relationships with the feeder Secondary schools to which our children transfer. We welcome teachers from those schools and we sometimes attend events to which we are invited at those schools. We have especially close links with Bishop Challoner School.

We are actively involved with Parish initiatives and fund raising. All staff support Parish events.

RE Leader Roles & responsibilities

- Supporting the planning of Religious Education content using the Diocesan strategy as the key planning tool.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and looking at ways to develop this.
- Overseeing the delivery of RE by others in the school through observation, book trawls, moderation meetings, planning scrutiny, analysis of assessment data etc.
- Overseeing the delivery of internal and external INSET for RE.
- Holding regular staff meetings for those delivering RE in the school to support all aspects of the strategy and spiritual development.
- Liaising with the schools RE advisor (David Harris) about developments in RE teaching and assessment.
- Liaising with Father Mario and Staff at St Martin De Porres about Sacramental Preparation.

- Designing, writing and maintaining the policy documents for RE.
- Preparing a long term strategic action plan for RE
- Monitoring Assessment, Reporting and Recording of RE in the school.
- Keeping the Governing Body informed about teaching and learning in RE.
- Supporting the SLT in completion of the Catholic Schools Evaluation Document (CSED)
- Auditing, organising, maintaining and replacing stock as necessary.
- Making sure that the delivery of RE contributes to the school's aims.
- Supporting the religious education and spiritual development of staff and students;
- Promoting the liturgical life of the school
- Encouraging prayerfulness in the school community
- Reporting developments in all the above areas and being accountable for all the above to the Headteacher

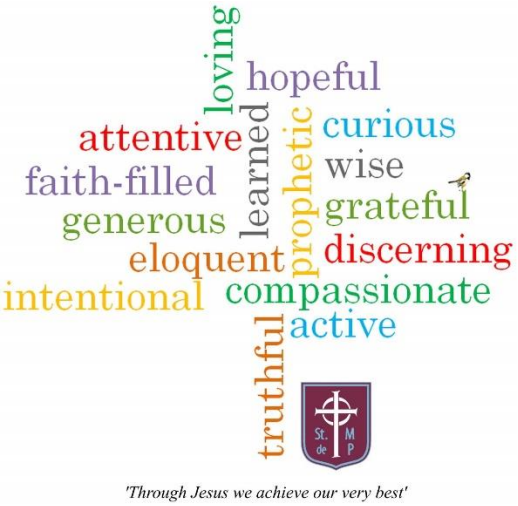
Created: September 2024
Review : July 2025

Appendix 1: The Catholic Pupil Profile

The Catholic Schools Pupil Profile is a series of statements based on the Virtues which describe what a child at our school is growing to be and how our school community is consciously and deliberately nurturing this.

The Catholic Pupil Profile is represented as a tree as shown in the image below.

The tree is symbolic of the growth of the virtues. Within its branches comfortably resting is the goldfinch which has been used in art since medieval times to symbolise Christ and the Passion.



In the profile are eight sets of words which have been paired together because of their complementary and harmonising relationship to one another: from the development of one virtue springs another.

2024-2025 Catholic Schools Pupil Profile Schedule

Autumn 1	**Curious & Active**
Autumn 2	**Intentional & Prophetic**
Spring 1	**Grateful & Generous**
Spring 2	**Attentive & Discerning**
Summer 1	**Compassionate & Loving**
Summer 2	**Faith-filled & Hopeful**