St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
Religious Education Policy

Mission
We are inspired by Pope Francis, who said, "We must live the Faith, not only with our words but with our actions." We are committed to nurturing compassionate, knowledgeable and active citizens of the future, who will have the confidence to serve others, using their gifts and talents for the common good.

School Motto
'Do all that you do with Love.'
Inspired by 1 Corinthians 16:14, "Let all that you do be done in love."
Our motto reminds us of the powerful message rooted in scripture that actions, even the smallest, should be infused with love and compassion.

Aims
Together with staff, parents, parish and community, we work together with children to:

- Develop an informed Christian faith
- Develop enquiring minds and a spirit of curiosity
- To stretch and challenge themselves, enabling them to achieve their maximum potential in all areas of the curriculum
- Have high self-esteem, respecting themselves, others and the environment
- Become highly motivated life-long learners
- Embrace change positively in the rapidly advancing world they are growing up in
- Be able to work independently and collaboratively
- Gain technological skills for the modern world
- Care for others and respect individual differences

St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a caring school which values each member of the community. This is encompassed in our School Mission Statement. Expectations of care and concern for the well-being of all children, staff and families are central to our ethos. Gospel values and motivation are cultivated in all subject areas and indeed, in all the various activities in the school.

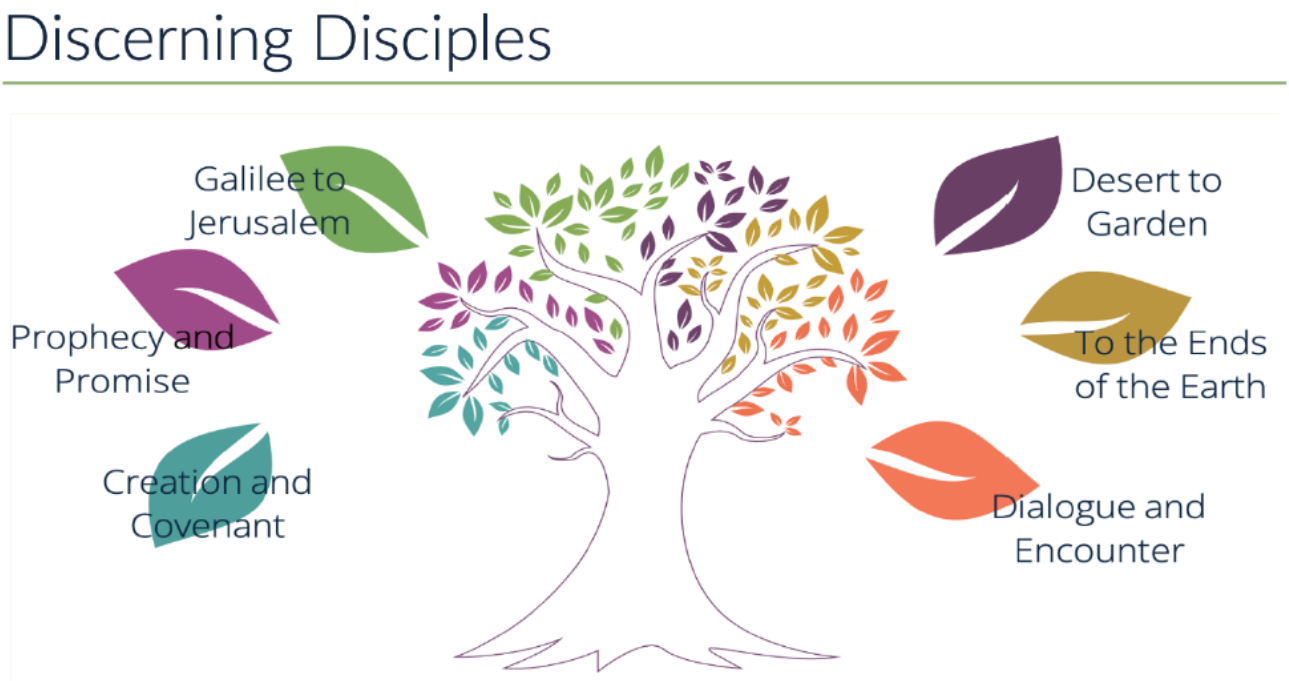
Values
Our school values are linked with our mission and the teachings of Christ:
Determination: we always try our best, for with God nothing is impossible
Humility: we put others first
Fairness: we share and treat everyone equally
Respect: we are polite to everyone and treat everyone with dignity
Unity: we work together and everyone has an important part to play
Aims of Religious Education

As a Catholic school, our belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and in his teachings as the right way to live, are fundamental to the entire ethos of our teaching, care for and attitude towards the children. It is integral in all aspects of school life and is outlined in our mission statement, it means that in Religious Education we are not just teaching a curriculum subject but also a living faith which we are encouraging children to share in.

Entitlement & Provision

Our school operates under the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
Religious education is in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, discipline and general and particular norms of the Catholic Church. Religious worship is in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church; and at all times the school serves as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ. RE is a core subject and holds the same status as English and Mathematics.
Religious Education is taught for 10% of contact time every week. RE is taught over at least two lessons and is not taught in a single block. In EYFS, RE is taught as a discrete subject at least twice a week and is not subsumed into the rest of the curriculum.

The Scheme of Work for RE



Discerning Disciples is the religious education curriculum for Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. It has been developed in full accordance with the Religious Education Directory (RED), the curriculum directory issued by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales which sets out what pupils in Catholic schools should know, understand and be able to do in religious education.

Discerning Disciples is organised into the six 'branches' of the RED, which align with the Catholic Church's liturgical year:

- Creation and Covenant
- Desert to Garden
- Prophecy and Promise
- To the Ends of the Earth
- Galilee to Jerusalem
- Dialogue and Encounter

Across these branches, pupils encounter Sacred Scripture, deepen their knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and teaching, study prayer, liturgy, and the sacraments, and consider how faith is lived in the world. Through *Dialogue and Encounter*, they also learn about other faiths and religions, and develop the knowledge, understanding, and dispositions needed for respectful dialogue.

At the heart of Discerning Disciples are the RED's three ways of knowing: **understand, discern and respond.** Pupils are therefore encouraged not simply to acquire religious knowledge, but to think deeply about what they learn, make connections, consider different perspectives and make thoughtful judgements. In doing so, religious education helps pupils to grow in knowledge, wisdom and understanding and to reflect on how what they learn might shape the way they live.

Sacramental Education

Preparing for the Sacraments

Catholic children in our school receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist in Year 3 and the Sacrament of Confirmation in Year 6 at St Thomas More Church. The school works closely with the Parish catechists involved with the preparation of children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

'Parents are the First Teachers of the Faith'

The Baptismal ritual states that parents are "the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith." This is echoed in the words of the Catechism: "parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children."

As part of the family of schools of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, we are fully committed to Archbishop Bernard's vision for Catholic education by nurturing a deep, integrated home-school-parish partnership for your child, aligned with new Archdiocese of Birmingham guidelines.

We prepare pupils for the Sacraments using specialised diocesan booklets, which our teachers deliver through six dedicated 20-minute sessions per sacrament.

These sessions are timetabled within the school day and are delivered to the whole class, as per the guidance from the diocese.

Each session follows a consistent structure:

- Session Overview
- Direct knowledge statement for pupils
- Unlock the theme
- Proclaim scripture
- Discussion prompts
- Activity
- Prayer

This school-based provision is a joyful entitlement designed to complement, rather than replace, the essential pastoral formation provided within parish life. Working in close collaboration with our catechists, our sessions run alongside existing parish programmes to ensure a strong, supported spiritual foundation for every child.

Other Faiths and Religions

We follow the Diocese programme Discerning Disciples Curriculum which provides pupils with opportunities for dialogue and encounter with other faiths. In addition to the RE curriculum, we ensure that pupils are taught the British Values as part of our PSHE curriculum and gain a greater knowledge, understanding and tolerance of other faiths. The focus for these lessons is the faith and culture allocated. All teachers are aware that we do not teach the faith aspects comparatively. FS

and KS 1 cover other faiths through celebrations/festivals at appropriate dates throughout the school year within the Early Years curriculum and we aim to provide opportunities for pupils to experience other faiths, for example through Indian Dance workshops for Divali.

Planning

Long-term Planning

The Long-term Plan, written each July for September, indicates which units are to be taught, when and for how long. This is the responsibility of the RE Subject Leader. Units in some year groups, may be moved some years, to facilitate Sacramental preparation and to spread out assessments across the school year.

Medium-term Planning

Medium term planning is the responsibility of the class teacher and should be completed on a unit by unit basis according to the long-term plan. The units are available on the google drive and teacher also have a hard copy. Planning should be uploaded to the planning area of the shared drive.

Short-term Planning

Short-term planning (weekly planning) is the responsibility of the class teacher and should be completed on a weekly basis. Short-term planning sheets can be obtained from the RE area of the google drive, Short term plans should be uploaded to the Year group planning in the shared drive. It is acceptable for teachers to use a detailed medium term planning format which combines the medium and short-term together. All elements of the short-term plan should be included in this.

Equal Opportunities & SEND

All children are afforded the same opportunities in their religious education. Non-Catholic children have access to the religious teaching of the school and are only prevented from taking part in the actual receiving of the Sacraments. As far as possible all children take part in all aspects of the religious life of the school.

In order to ensure access to all children regardless of ability, gender and culture, activities and expectations are adjusted to meet the particular needs of individuals or groups of children, and teacher planning will include scaffolding where appropriate.

Marking & Feedback, Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Marking & Feedback

In RE we respond to written work according to systems in place in the *Marking and Feedback policy. The* main focus of marking in the RE books relates to the religious objectives being taught. Through marking teachers can encourage children and stimulate deeper thought by relevant comments and questions. Children should however be encouraged to present their work neatly and to the best of their ability with regard for spellings, punctuation and handwriting which is the expectation in all subjects.

RE Displays

- Every class should have an RE subject board. This is where examples of pupils work is displayed.

- Current vocabulary linked to RE lessons should be displayed and the current Catholic Social Teaching principle for that term. The Virtues for the half term are also displayed on RE boards. These are updated regularly and used as a tool for learning and should be referred to in lessons where appropriate.

Legal Right of Withdrawal
Statutorily, parents have the right of withdrawal from Collective Worship. Should this right be exercised, the Head Teacher would invite parents who have concerns to come and discuss the matter.

Communication:
This policy will be communicated to:
All members of the school community
The Parish Priest
New members of staff (and will form part of their induction).
New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards collective worship.

Review date
January 2027