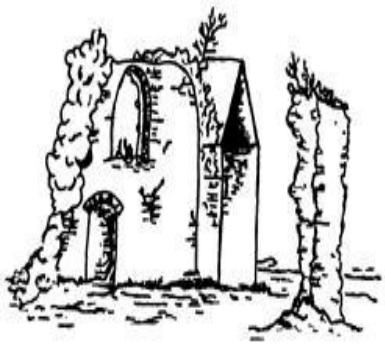
The Priory Catholic Primary School



Religious Education Policy

The Priory: a place to learn, have fun, grow and develop in the light and love of Christ.
Jesus said: “I am the vine; you are the branches.” (John 15:5)

Rationale

At The Priory Catholic Primary School, Religious Education is at the very heart of our mission and our curriculum. It is not only a subject to be studied, but a living encounter with Christ that inspires our pupils to grow in faith, knowledge and love. Teaching RE is a joy and a privilege, as it allows us to explore with children the beauty of the Gospel, the richness of the Catholic tradition and the call to live as disciples in the world today.

Religious Education is both a rigorous academic discipline and a formative encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. Through the study of theology and the wider search for meaning and truth, pupils develop religious literacy, deepen their understanding of faith and learn to engage thoughtfully and critically with the questions that shape human life. As they grow in knowledge and understanding, they are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and values and to recognise the relevance of faith in today's world. We embrace the responsibility and privilege of ensuring that Religious Education at The Priory is academically ambitious, faithful to the teachings of the Church and transformative for all who encounter it.

Religious Education at The Priory is enriched by our close partnership with Our Lady and the Beauvale Martyrs Parish and the opportunities pupils have to connect classroom learning with the lived faith of our parish community.

Aims of Religious Education

Through our Religious Education curriculum at The Priory, we aim to:

- Keep Christ at the centre of all teaching and learning, so that every lesson becomes an encounter with His love and truth.
- Offer a systematic, progressive, and comprehensive exploration of Catholic theology, faithful to the Religious Education Directory and inspiring pupils to think deeply about their faith.
- Guide pupils in growing in knowledge and understanding of Sacred Scripture, the Creed, Liturgy and Sacraments, Christian Living, and Prayer, so that faith is both studied and lived.
- Develop pupils' religious literacy, enabling them to articulate and share their faith confidently and engage in thoughtful dialogue with others.
- Foster a love of the Catholic faith, nurturing a sense of joy, wonder, and openness to truth, goodness, and beauty.
- Support pupils in their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural formation, helping them to flourish as compassionate, courageous, and active witnesses of Christ in today's world.
- Promote respect for people of all faiths and none, encouraging understanding, dialogue, and friendship in the spirit of human dignity and peace.

The Religious Education Curriculum

At The Priory, we value the Religious Education Directory (RED, 2023) because it provides a clear and inspiring framework for teaching and learning, ensuring RE lessons are both faithful to Church teaching and academically rigorous. For teachers, it supports professional confidence and creative, meaningful planning; for pupils, it fosters religious literacy, theological discernment, personal reflection, and active engagement with their faith, helping them grow as informed, joyful, and thoughtful disciples of Christ.

Ways of Knowing

The RED identifies three complementary "Ways of Knowing" that guide how children learn in Religious Education. These ways ensure that RE is both a rigorous academic subject and a formative encounter with faith. Through these Ways of Knowing, children should come to know God more clearly.

1. UNDERSTAND - Knowledge and Understanding

- Pupils acquire secure and accurate knowledge of Catholic faith and belief, rooted in Scripture, Tradition, and the teaching of the Church.
- This involves learning key facts, concepts, and vocabulary of theology, enabling pupils to build a strong foundation of religious literacy.
- It answers the question: *"What do Catholics believe, teach, and celebrate?"*

2. DISCERN - Critical and Analytical Thinking

- Pupils are taught to think deeply, ask questions, and evaluate sources of belief.
- They engage with Scripture, doctrine, and moral teaching in a way that develops reasoning, comparison, debate, and higher-order thinking skills.
- This ensures that RE is not just "learning about" but **thinking with and through** faith, fostering intellectual curiosity and academic rigour.
- It answers the question: *"How do we understand, interpret, and make sense of faith?"*

3. RESPOND - Personal and Reflective Response

- Pupils are invited to reflect on what they have learned in light of their own life, experiences, and spiritual journey.
- This develops self-awareness, moral decision-making, and openness to God's call, while respecting freedom of conscience.
- It encourages children to see how faith connects with real life and shapes choices and values.
- It answers the question: *"What does this mean for me, for others, and for the way I live?"*

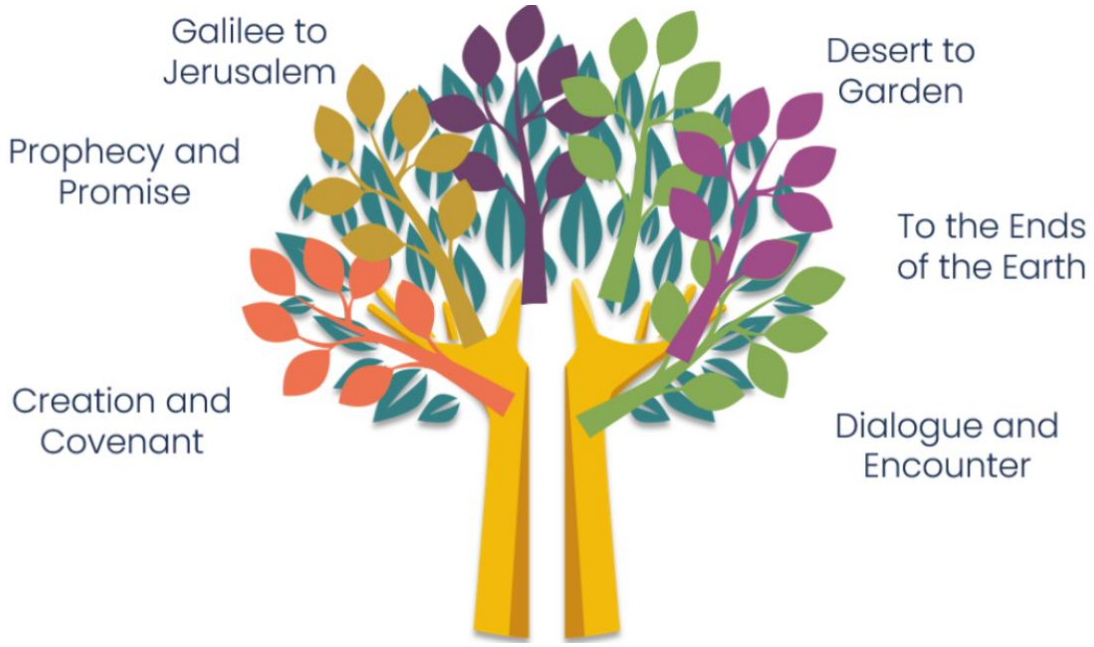
The three Ways of Knowing are **integrated**, not separate steps:

- **Knowledge** provides the foundation.
- **Discernment** deepens understanding and develops discernment.
- **Personal reflection** makes learning meaningful, allowing pupils to encounter Christ and apply faith to life.

Branches of Study

The curriculum is structured into six branches, each representing a key theological area of Catholic faith. These provide the content progression from EYFS to Year 6:

The Six Branch Structure



Advent Term 1: Creation and Covenant (Sacred Scripture) – God's revelation through sacred scripture, salvation history, the life and teaching of Jesus.

Advent Term 2: Prophecy and Promise (the Creed) – what Catholics believe (Creed, Church teaching, key doctrines of faith).

Lent Term 1: Galilee to Jerusalem (Liturgy and Sacraments) – how Catholics celebrate and encounter Christ in the Sacraments and liturgical year.

Lent Term 2: Desert to Garden (Christian Living) – how we are called to live (Catholic Social Teaching, moral life, saints, vocation).

Pentecost Term 1: To the Ends of the Earth (Prayer) – the forms, traditions, and practices of prayer in the Catholic faith.

Pentecost Term 2: Dialogue and Encounter (Theology and Skills of Religious Literacy) – developing skills of enquiry, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and communication of religious belief.

Lenses

The RED proposes that children learn to "see" through different theological lenses, helping them to interpret and understand faith in a structured way:

- Scriptural Lens – reading, interpreting, and applying the Word of God.
- Theological Lens – studying the doctrines of the faith, understanding what the Church teaches and why.
- Liturgical Lens – recognising how the Church celebrates, prays, and lives the mysteries of faith.
- Moral Lens – exploring how faith shapes the way we live and the choices we make.

The Branches are taught through the **Hear, Believe, Celebrate, Live** lenses. The names of these four lenses reflect the language of the Catechism itself which states that the mystery of faith which we hear and receive requires us to 'believe in it', to 'celebrate it' and to 'live from it' (CCC 2558). The final two lenses 'dialogue' and encounter' are directed towards the sixth branch of study.

These lenses allow pupils to explore the same topic from multiple perspectives. For example, when teaching the Eucharist:

Hear - Scriptural: study the Last Supper accounts.
Belief - Theological: understand the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
Celebrate - Liturgical: examine how the Mass is celebrated.
How we **Live - Moral**: reflect on how receiving Christ in the Eucharist shapes our lives of service.

In summary…

Branches are the *Content* - "what" we teach (Scripture, Creed, Sacraments, etc.).

Lenses are the *Perspective* we take - "how" we study each branch, through scriptural, theological, liturgical, and moral approaches.

Ways of Knowing identify the *Skills and Outcomes*, the "purpose and process": pupils gain knowledge, learn to think critically, and respond personally.

Supporting Children in Attaining Expected Learning

By the end of each unit, the integration of branches, lenses, and ways of knowing ensures pupils can:

- Recall and explain key knowledge of Catholic faith (Knowledge and Understanding).
- Use sources (Scripture, Tradition, Church teaching) to analyse and evaluate questions of faith (discern).
- Reflect and respond in an age-appropriate way, recognising how faith connects with life, prayer, and moral choices (Personal Response).

Teachers support attainment by:

- Planning learning objectives explicitly linked to the Ways of Knowing.
- Designing activities that use multiple Lenses so pupils encounter topics deeply and from different angles.
- Sequencing units across Branches to ensure progression in both knowledge and skills.
- Using assessment that measures what children know, how they think, and how they respond.

Supporting Children with SEND

At The Priory, we ensure that RE teaching is inclusive and accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND. Teaching should be tailored, scaffolded, and supported to enable full participation, ensuring every child can engage with Scripture, doctrine, liturgy, and prayer, and experience meaningful spiritual, moral, and academic growth.

See Appendix – RE and SEND adaptations

RE Marking and Feedback Summary

At The Priory, marking and feedback in RE prioritises live, formative approaches that actively move learning forward. Teachers use learning intentions, steps to success, metacognition, questioning, self/peer assessment strategies to check understanding, correct misconceptions, and challenge thinking in real time. Written feedback is selective and purposeful, used only when it adds value beyond immediate verbal guidance. Personal feedback ensures pupils reflect, improve, and progress, while whole-class feedback and exit tasks inform subsequent lessons. The approach is manageable, motivating, and meaningful, supporting pupils' growth in knowledge, skills, and faith.

Assessment and Progression

The curriculum follows a clear progression of knowledge and skills from EYFS through to Year 6, deepening understanding at each stage. It builds theological understanding that is age-appropriate, coherent and cumulative.

Pupils' progress in Religious Education is assessed with the same rigour as in other core subjects through a combination of formative and summative approaches (e.g. live marking, exit questions, quizzes, respond work). Assessment reflects pupils' knowledge and understanding, skills of analysis and evaluation, capacity for theological reflection, and personal response to learning. Assessment also evaluates pupils' progress in knowledge, understanding, discernment and personal response, ensuring progression through the expected learning outcomes identified within the Religious Education Directory.

This enables teachers to identify next steps in learning, celebrate achievement and ensure all pupils make strong progress in Religious Education.

Teaching and Learning in RE

Effective RE teaching at the Priory Catholic Primary School is characterised by:

- High expectations for all pupils, with an inclusive and differentiated approach.
- Clear planning rooted in the RED, ensuring coherence across year groups.
- A variety of teaching methods that are engaging, creative, and inspiring, including the use of art, music, drama, and digital resources.
- Opportunities for pupils to reflect, discuss, and question, developing higher-order thinking skills.
- Links between RE, Prayer and Liturgy, Catholic Social Teaching, and the wider curriculum.
- Respectful dialogue with other faith traditions, recognising the dignity of all.

Teachers are supported through regular CPD to ensure deep understanding of the RED, theological confidence, and subject expertise.

Time Allocation: In line with Bishops' Conference requirements, 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to Religious Education (2.5 hours per week at Primary level).

Wider links

Religious Education, Prayer and Liturgy, and Catholic Life and Mission are distinct yet interrelated dimensions of Catholic education. Religious Education informs Prayer and Liturgy through theological understanding, while Prayer and Liturgy provide opportunities for pupils to respond to God's invitation and deepen their relationship with Christ.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The RE Subject Leader works with the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator, Headteacher, and Diocesan Advisors to ensure the RED is fully implemented.
- RE teaching and learning are monitored through lesson observations, book scrutinies, pupil voice, and assessment outcomes.
- Findings are reported to governors as part of Catholic Life and RE monitoring.
- The policy and curriculum are reviewed annually to remain aligned with Nottingham Diocesan guidance and national expectations.

Partnership with Parents, Parish, and Diocese

We recognise parents as the first educators in faith and work in partnership with them to support their children's learning. The parish and diocese play a central role in supporting the RE curriculum and providing formation opportunities. Together, we form a community of faith, learning, and witness.

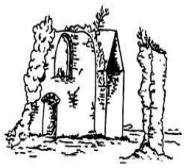
Governors

Governors fulfil their canonical and statutory responsibilities by monitoring the quality of Religious Education and ensuring that Religious Education remains at the heart of the curriculum.

Conclusion

In following the Religious Education Directory: *To Know You More Clearly*, our school is committed to providing a high-quality, systematic, and inspiring Religious Education which leads pupils to know and love God more deeply, and to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today.

Next Review: September 2027



Religious Education Adaptations



Cognition and Learning	Communication and Interaction
• Allow alternatives to writing or adult to scribe what the child has said or done. (Creative Curriculum) • Enable writing using sentence stems, scaffolds, or speech to text software. • Verbal construction of simple sentences to support writing • Pre- teaching opportunities. • Recap of prior learning prior to the topic. • Religious sources available to support learning. • Visual prompts. • Discussion prompts, regular revision of key themes, opportunities for overlearning and repetition. • Simplified version of scripture. • Use of religious videos to support understanding of scripture.	• Topic specific vocabulary supported by artefacts, pictures or religious sources (songs, art) • Practical learning assists with development of new vocabulary. • Word mats, display, pre-teaching of vocabulary. • Scaffolded sentence stems 'This links to…, This reminds me of….., In this picture I can see……' • Additional thinking time after posing a question be-fore returning. • Emotions fans or cards. • Supporting by reasoning aloud, 'I think that'… • Group / partner work with shared writing
Physical and/or Sensory	**Social, Emotional and Mental Health**
• Sources of information / text could be converted to electronic format so they can be read aloud using immersive reader or shown to the child in a larger print and/or on buff paper. • Consider how different sources could be used to Convey the information - physical resources such as prayer mats, bibles, Mass vessels, may be of greater interest to the child than photos. • Be aware of any sensory stimuli such as the use of incense or religious music, which will be unfamiliar to the children. • Ensure they are sitting away from any sensory stimuli or are provided with ear defenders etc. if part of normal practice. • Advance preparation of any sensory stimuli. • Consider pupil sensory audits and adaptations.	• Prepare the children in advance using social stories, pictures, and videos to enable them to know what to expect. • Prepare the children with any routines/cultural expectations they may be asked to follow. • Social stories or images around accepting different beliefs and views. • Clear expectations that no one will be made to share if they are not comfortable. • Emotions cards so that the child is able to communicate if they are uncomfortable with the discussion. • Sentence stems to aid productive discussion/avoid offence. • Bank of appropriate words to discuss topics if this is a concern. • Additional time to discuss emotions with an adult. • Awareness of background when approaching particular subject content.