



**St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School**  
**Religious Education**  
**Statement of Intent, Implementation and Impact**

Religious Education at St. Ambrose Barlow is more than a stand-alone subject, it underpins the foundation of our mission and aims to develop each child in every aspect of their spiritual, academic and personal life. Religious Education lessons are taught using the Scheme of Work for Religious Education produced by the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service, 'Learning and Growing as the People of God', from Reception class to Year 6. This Scheme of Work is based on Gospel Values and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic mission of our school permeates all areas of the curriculum. We recognise that every child is unique and created in the image of God. It is our aim to develop the whole child; to help them to grow in faith and to develop as global citizens with a maturing Christian awareness. Our Catholic curriculum teaches the children to be honest, respectful, attentive, compassionate, generous, caring and wise citizens. We give the religious, spiritual and moral education of our children the highest priority.

Children are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation during Key Stage 2. This is in a strong, three-way partnership between the school, the Parish and home.

Masses and Liturgies are celebrated regularly at school, with children from Reception to Year 6 participating in the collective worship. Classes take turns to prepare and lead each Mass or Liturgy. Whole school Masses are celebrated for Holy Days of Obligation, Saint Days and Ash Wednesday. Our children are encouraged to recognise the importance of their faith and they respond to all forms of liturgy and collective worship with absolute respect and reverence. Families and local parishioners are welcome to join us in the celebration of the whole school Masses at school.

Prayers are said regularly throughout the day, during assemblies, class worship and during Religious Education lessons, where appropriate. Children learn prayers that are said collectively and have many opportunities for open prayer. Children are also encouraged to write Bidding Prayers for Masses or Liturgies, as well as choose their hymns.

Being a 'Rights Respecting School,' this convention is embedded throughout our curriculum. We teach the children to have an awareness of other faiths and cultures and that everyone has the right to practise their religion and take part in the customs of their culture. The

children participate in International Culture week annually. Studying both our local and global community in the curriculum, affords children the opportunity to look outside the self and to empathise with the world around them.

The Religious Education curriculum also encompasses the delivering of Relationships and Sex Education (R.S.E.) The framework of our R.S.E. programme is taken from the model Catholic R.S.E Programme by the Catholic Education Service. This programme has been highlighted by the Department of Education as a work of good practice. Taught with a spiral approach to learning, in which children will revisit the same topics at an age-appropriate stage through their school life, the R.S.E programme includes teaching about personal health, physical and emotional wellbeing, strong emotions, private parts of the body, personal relationships, family structures, trusted adults, growing bodies, puberty, life cycles, the dangers of social media, providing an understanding of the 'Common Good' and providing experience of living in the wider world. The entire teaching is underpinned with a religious understanding that our deepest identity is as a child of God - created chosen and loved by God. The programme is fully inclusive of all pupils and their families.

Ultimately, our curriculum is intended to live out our school mission: 'With St. Ambrose Barlow as our guide and Jesus at our side, we are all learning to live, love and learn together.'

## **INTENT**

We are a Catholic school and proud of that fact. The Catholicity of the school underpins what we do every day. Thus, we implement a Religious Education curriculum whereby the Catholic faith permeates everything we do. We ensure that families are supported in bringing their children up in the Catholic faith and we provide a well-rounded Catholic education. The staff of St. Ambrose Barlow see it as their vocation to see the mission and vision embedded across the Religious Education curriculum and the whole wider curriculum beyond. This sits alongside the Gospel Values which are inextricably linked throughout everything we teach.

As a Catholic school, the Religious Education curriculum is central to the whole school curriculum and underpins all teaching. It is a core subject and we follow the 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' scheme of work with timetable Collective Worship and daily lessons.

It is also our intention that children at St. Ambrose Barlow will enjoy their Religious Education lessons and they will not be seen as a way of either promoting the Catholic faith exclusively, nor for them to be something in which they are purely 'taught'. Religious Education lessons should be faith-filled, enjoyable lessons where each child feels they belong to our school community and not excluded because they are not Catholic. Lessons should be places where everyone is respected for their beliefs and expressions of faith, but where

ultimately, embedding curiosity, awe and wonder in the beautiful world around them. They are active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

For Religious Education, we follow the Archdiocese's 'Learning and growing as the People of God' scheme as a scaffold for planning and coverage. We ensure that a minimum of 10% of Curriculum time is allocated for Religious Education teaching across both key stages. Through the high standard of teaching of Religious Education, children are inspired to become critical thinkers, encouraged to explore religious questions about life, other cultures and religions and to reflect deeply upon their own faith journey. They are challenged through the topics taught, to think about how they put the teachings of the church and Jesus into practise in their own daily lives. The children are encouraged to continually think about their own spirituality and teachers plan opportunities for children to explore this through discussion, lesson, prayer and weekly Collective Worship. A high priority is given to the formation of pupils in their understanding of, involvement in and service to building the Kingdom of God and in the words of Pope Francis in the encyclical 'Laudato Si', taking care of our 'common home.' Regular links are made with children's own experiences and universal experience; raising questions and providing material for their own reflection.

An important part of Catholic Life at St Ambrose Barlow is to ask ourselves what God is calling us to do. We all need to find our 'vocation' in life. Many people only use the term 'vocation' to talk about priests, monks and religious sisters. But the call is for everyone. We believe that God calls each and every person into existence and then calls us to be a living sign of his love for the world. We are created out of love and we are created to love. This means that for Christians, a vocation is not just something that God calls us to do, it is also the person God calls us to be. We ensure that vocation and what this means is embedded in our Catholic Life and curriculum, so that our children can nurture a deep understanding of what it means to have a vocation and how this translates to discernment and a religious life for some, but for others can look very different. The school has an annual vocations day for Year 5 & Year 6, when representatives from a variety of careers explain their route to their chosen vocation. UKS2 complete projects on a chosen vocation. Priests and nuns participate in 'question and answer' sessions, with our children, further embedding our children's understanding of 'vocation.'

One of St Ambrose Barlow's greatest strengths is the witness of staff and governors to their faith and the school's Catholic values. All the governors and a high percentage of the staff are practising Catholics. Pupils benefit greatly from seeing the lived-out faith of the staff and governors.

Work is presented in a variety of ways across the school, both written and oral. In written pieces, children have to present work as they would in English and other subjects and there is the expectation that it will be neat, clear and well organised. Throughout topics, children are encouraged to actively listen and interact with others to discuss issues and form opinions. This shared learning enables children to express their own ideas, listen to those of others and grow in their understanding. Drama is used effectively to walk in the footsteps of others, developing a greater sense of empathy and an understanding of how they and others feel. Work is also depicted through RSE, Art, Writing, Computing and other areas of the curriculum. All activities are planned through deep consideration of how the learning objective can be best achieved and how higher order thinking can be embedded.

All teaching staff plan for and teach a multi-faith scheme of work according to their year group. This allows the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths in the world, as well as exploring similarities and differences between and within religion. Through these lessons, they are given opportunities to reflect on the benefits and challenges of living in a multi-cultural and diverse society. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on a variety of moral and spiritual issues. We ensure that they show a mature approach to world issues, demonstrating a willingness to stand up for what is right and morally acceptable in our society today. As a result of our outstanding teaching of other faiths and cultures, the children show mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

With regard to the new Standards Framework, the new assessment strands retain the same AT1 Knowledge and Understanding (learning about the topics studied) and AT2 (learning from topics studied), the strands within them have been combined. In addition, there is an extra skill which is only introduced in Year 3. This is entitled 'Analysis and Evaluation'. In Lower KS2, children are expected to use a given source to support a point of view, express a point of view when constructing arguments and express a preference when making judgements. In Upper KS2, children are expected to use sources to support a point of view, express a point of view and give reasons for it when constructing arguments and actually arrive at their own judgements. An extra expectation in this key stage is to recognise diversity by recognising difference and comparing and contrasting different points of view. Also, the framework shows the end of phase expected standards: end of EYFS (Reception), end of KS1 (Year 2) and end of KS2 (Year 6) rather than end of year.

At St Ambrose Barlow, we are passionate about helping embed a thorough understanding of the meaning of a vocation and ably assist the children in discerning theirs. Our vocation is the 'call to holiness'- not just our occupation. In the words of the prophet Jeremiah (29:11,) "For I know the plans I have for you"—it is the Lord that speaks - "plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

## IMPACT

Ongoing informal assessment against the Standard Indicators and Formal Assessment tasks are used to inform planning and to identify areas for focus and support. Assessment is moderated internally and externally within cluster meetings. The Religious Education curriculum challenges children academically as the subject is rigorous in assessment and teaches children how to express opinion and belief with deep levels of analysis in extended writing. The subject enhances levels of Literacy and allows children to apply skills to meaningful questions in their written work. Speech and language is developed through intelligent debate, where students discuss some of life's big questions and self-esteem grows through the requirements of class presentations and group work. Evidence of impact in Religious Education is not just collated through books.

As a result of these strategies, children at St Ambrose Barlow achieve consistently well in all areas of Religious Education and make exceptional progress. Our children are happy, well rounded individuals who have developed a deep-rooted relationship with God and understanding of their Catholic faith.

Children at St Ambrose Barlow build respectful relationships regardless of faith, gender and race - recognising that everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity. They uphold and understand the importance of our British and Gospel Values, knowing the difference between right and wrong; their exemplary behaviour reflects this.

It is recognised by our children that our children are ambassadors for Jesus, who are ready to go out into the world and proclaim the values of the Gospel confidently. They play a key part in building the Kingdom of God through compassion, justice, love and forgiveness in their relationship with others, understanding that they are part of the family of God and know how they can play their part in this global family, in our common home, united by Jesus.