



# St. Anne's Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

-  To create a caring environment, which embraces the Catholic ethos wherein, fostering the Christian attitudes, values and beliefs is given priority;
-  To provide an effective education for each pupil, consistent with the requirements of the N.I. Curriculum;
-  To enhance each pupil's self-esteem through the development of self-confidence, self-discipline and independence;
-  To develop meaningful links with the home, the parish and the wider community.

### **ETHOS**

*"Be it known to all who enter here, that Christ is the reason for this school;  
the unseen, but ever present, teacher in its classes,  
the model of its staff and the inspiration of its pupils."*

The Ethos of the school is firmly rooted in the Gospel and with the child as its primary focus. The school endeavours to develop the full potential of every child, staff member, parent and parishioner within the School Faith Community. The children are encouraged to develop a visible living faith which is evident through their words, actions and relations with others. A faith where the 'Light of Christ's' example is both the source of empathy and inspiration for all activities.

St Anne's Primary School works in partnership with the home and parish to foster each child's faith development. Religious activities and spiritual learning experiences allow the children to develop the essential knowledge and skills to understand their faith, use it in context and engage in and contribute to the community in general.

Children are encouraged to develop a greater understanding of God, themselves and the environment in which they live and develop a language of faith which supports their spiritual, intellectual, moral, pastoral and emotional growth. Our Living Faith is conveyed, supported and lived out by each member of the school team and is clearly evident in the school's identity and ethos. Children are encouraged to understand each stage of their Faith Journey and develop a long lasting commitment to Christ which includes a growing awareness of and regard for all people's faiths.

### **CURRICULUM**

At St Anne's, Religious Education is both contextual and Parish based. Faith is fostered from years 1 to 7 through daily prayer, prayer services, assemblies, reflections and a reverence for the Eucharist and Bible readings. Children are prepared diligently for the Sacramental journey and attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist regularly. The parish community joins together in celebrating First Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation. On a daily basis children participate in discussion, story, music, song, art, mime, poetry, drama and ICT activities and are encouraged to ask questions and seek answers. Teaching activities follow the agreed good practice identified in our Learning and Teaching Policy and follow the agreed structure.

1. Introduction – connecting prior learning
2. Development – Activity – furthering skills attributes and values in context
3. Plenary – Revising what has been learned and creating paths for future learning.

## **RESOURCING**

To supplement the Parish partnership, the school uses the catechetical series Alive-O 1-7 produced by Veritas. The thematic approach to faith development is evident and invaluable in developing progression.

### **Alive O**

1. Seasonal changes – liturgical seasons
2. Responsibilities
3. Reconciliation – Good Shepherd
4. Relationship as friendship deepened – Eucharist
5. Baptism – Liturgical Seasons: Christianity and heritage – Ireland
6. Creation – Body of Christ – Parish
7. Prophecy – Commandments, Confirmation

The teachers also make use of materials gathered from a range of sources including DRC materials and resources issued by Diocesan Advisers. Religious Resources are audited as required and included in the plans for annual requisition. Areas identified for upgrading include renewal CDs/DVDs for some classes and supporting renewal texts where required.

Religious Education permeates and underpins all activity within the curriculum. Such an approach ensures that all outside agencies that visit the school engage with the pupils in a manner that benefits and supports our ethos. For example:

'Education for life' programme	– Citizenship – peer pressure and change
Trocaire, Children-in-Need, Action Cancer, etc	– Helping those less fortunate than ourselves in our community – wider environment
Dental Nurse, Police, Fire Services	- Encouraging children to make responsible decisions and treat others as they would wish to be treated.
Cross Community partner schools	- Respecting diversity, appreciating shared cultures and traditions
'Mount Royal Fold' & Northfield Nursing Home	- Respect for the vulnerable in our community

## **INCLUSION**

As a Catholic Primary School St Anne's welcomes children from all backgrounds and invites them to join in the ethos of the school and live in faith accordingly. All pupils, regardless of denomination, academic ability or Special Educational Needs are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets their needs. Activities are amended to meet the needs of those children with identified Special needs and resources provided to meet such requirements.

As part of our parish based Sacramental provision we work in partnership with our sister schools, St Comgall's & St Malachy's in Bangor, and host children from Killard Special School for Sacramental preparation. We liaise with our post-primary pastoral partner schools to ensure a safe and supportive transition for our year 7 pupils.

## **EFFECTIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

Pupils' work is assessed through class observation, marking of written work, pieces of artwork, musical and lyrical compositions and appropriate positive comments are used in context. Teachers monitor provision via sampling, cluster groups, sharing sessions and observations. Diocesan Advisors visit the school every two years and advise on good practice.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Where viable and possible the school provides opportunities for all the staff to attend professional development opportunities. Accountability for quality of provision lies with the Principal, as delegated via the Board of Governors. Regular liaising with the Parish Priest ensures the successful evolution of the Parish based features of school development. The Principal must model good example and be an active embodiment of living faith. The Parish Priest – school chaplain - supports and liaises regularly with the school community.

## **SCHOOL BASED ACTIVITIES**

- Regular class visits by Fr. Gunn to discuss activities, Gospel readings and learning
- Termly Penance celebration
- Celebration of feast days/observing obligation via school closure or parish based masses such as
  - Ash Wednesday
  - Immaculate Conception
  - St. Patrick's Day
  - Epiphany
  - All Saints /Souls
- Lenten campaigns and regular fund raising to develop concept of charity and communal responsibilities
- Weekly assemblies using prayer, song and story to bring Alive O series to life and contextualise the school's core values.
- 'I'm Special, You're Special' Programme in Year 7 organised by Diocesan Advisers.
- Celebration of Christ's birth via school concerts.
- Visits from missionaries to share their work with the pupils.

## **PENANCE PROGRAMME**

- I. Initial meeting – orientation with parents – enrolment
- II. Works in Progress – Service of Enrolment
- III. Celebration of Sacrament of Penance during Lent

## **EUCHARIST: COMMUNION PROGRAMME**

- I. Initial meeting – orientation with parents
- II. Works in progress – Service of Enrolment
- III. Celebration of Communion – 9.30am Sunday mass

## **CONFIRMATION**

- I. Initial meeting – orientation with parents
- II. Service of Light and Commitment and Renewal
- III. Celebration of Confirmation 5pm, St. Comgall's, Bangor

**'This is our faith. This is the faith of the church. We are proud to profess it in  
Christ Jesus Our Lord.'**

**'A Catholic school must be a community of learning, prayer and worship.'**

**Patrick Walsh  
Bishop of Down and Connor  
'A living faith 2006'**