



**St. John Vianney School**  
Steps to Independence & Education for Life

## **SJV Religious Education Statement**

### **Our Mission Statement**

*At St John Vianney School we celebrate the uniqueness of every child and the God given gifts they bring each day to our learning community.*

*Inspired by the example of Jesus Christ we are a school where every child and young person is highly valued and encouraged to give of their best.*

*Building on our Roman Catholic foundations we aim to foster an engaging, nurturing and safe environment, within which our children thrive and achieve their full potential.*

*Our St John Vianney family is dedicated to fostering independence and educating resilient, lifelong learners, who are empowered to enrich their own lives and those of others.*



### **Our Values**

***We believe that the purpose of Saint John Vianney Catholic SEND School is to:***

- Help pupils to live and learn in a Roman Catholic environment; leading to acceptance and respect of others in a diverse SEND school community and in the wider world***
- Provide an environment in which high expectations will lead to all pupils striving for excellence in all areas of School life***
- Educate and develop each member of the School community by building on their strengths and supporting their weaknesses***
- Foster purposeful relationships with those who learn in, work in and visit our School, where diverse views and backgrounds are respected***

### **Background and context to SJV**

St John Vianney RC Special School sits geographically in Trafford's LEA, but is a Diocesan managed school. As a non-maintained School we are governed by the Diocese of Salford Trustees, who delegate their authority to the Governing Board, chaired by Fr Gerard Fieldhouse-Byrne (who is also the Director of the St Luke's Centre in Whalley Range, Manchester). We are the only Special School in the Diocese of Salford and as such have a unique offer and status. All the children and young people of St John Vianney have EHCPs and we work with many different LEAs in providing bespoke SEND provision for their learners. Children and young people currently attend our School from Salford, Trafford, Manchester, St Helens, Stockport and Tameside. The learners present a range of needs and the School has an excellent reputation of providing appropriate and effective support and guidance for its

children and young people. The School is nationally accredited for its excellent ASC provision. Our last re-accreditation was in January 2025. In January 2022 the School was awarded a 'Commendation' by the National Autistic Society for its pupil 'enrichment' activity. In 2025 the School was awarded 'Advanced' practice status, the highest level of award given to schools by NAS.

In July 2019 the School was subject to a **Section 48 RE inspection** and was graded as '**Outstanding**' in all areas of its RE provision. In February 2023 the School was subject to a Section 8 Ofsted Inspection and was graded 'good' again.

### **The Place of RE in the School**

Pupils who follow the RE programme in our School gain a deep awareness of their own and others' identities; they wrestle with the mysteries of life and the answers given by a wide variety of religions and beliefs; they develop a clear sense of what is of real value in the world today.

Pupils who follow the RE programme in our School gain a deep knowledge and understanding of the teachings, practices and life stories expressed in a variety of ways within Christianity and other principal religions and world views. Through reflection on their own beliefs and values in the light of their learning, they grow in respect for themselves and others.

Pupils who follow the RE programme in our School encounter the transformative power of religion and beliefs in people's lives – in the Greater Manchester area, in the UK and in the wider world. They demonstrate curiosity about men and women of faith and commitment who have changed individual lives, society and culture. Through RE, they feel compelled to imagine and contribute to the creation of a better world for all.

It is important for young people to acquire a better understanding of the role that religion play in today's pluralistic world. The need for such education will continue to grow as different cultures and identities interactions with each other through travel, commerce, media or migration. Although a deeper understanding of religions will not automatically lead to greater tolerance and respect, ignorance increases the likelihood of misunderstanding, stereotyping, and conflict.

The foundation of our Religious Education aims and work can be found in the School Mission Statement. St. John Vianney School recognises and accepts that each individual is unique and of equal value in God's eyes.

At St. John Vianney School we recognise that each pupil has his or her own place in God's eternal plan for our salvation. The RE delivery seeks to foster these aims, throughout its work, and in its interaction with others, and seeks to fulfil these aims through the teachings of Jesus Christ. To this end our aim is to give each pupil a good understanding in all aspects of Religious Education.

Each pupil will have equality of opportunity regardless of gender, race, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment to develop the knowledge and skills that they will require for their future education in their lives ahead. The approaches and areas of

knowledge to be studied and the skills taught will be within the framework set out in the Salford Diocesan RE Project Guidelines.

**The Salford Diocese Guidelines in Religious Education** state that the programme of Religious Education “must start from and build on a Christian understanding of the child and this means, first of all, recognition of each pupil’s uniqueness and worth as a human being, made in God’s image, with an eternal destiny.”

These statements form the rationale upon which the RE team’s work and objectives are organised. We accept that we are all on a faith journey to God and, as teachers of Religious Education; we must meet our pupils where they are on their faith journey. It is our task to enable our pupils to discover their faith and to give them knowledge, skills and experiences so that their faith can grow and develop. We aim to bring them to knowledge and understanding of God, His love for them and His plan for their lives, made known to them through Jesus.

### **Curriculum Content**

RE is a core subject in our school, alongside English, Maths and Science, and therefore we devote minimally 10% of our curriculum time to its delivery. We adhere to the Diocesan Curriculum Directory guidelines and learning outcomes. This provides a cohesive approach and opportunities for a diverse liturgical programme, including whole school Mass and other services, assemblies and celebrations, as well as displays which are made relevant for every child.

In Key Stages 1-3 pupils are taught RE using a 3-year themed curriculum through 6 teaching topics within each year, revisiting previous concepts based on current Salford Diocesan guidelines. There is a long-term plan which identifies a sequential approach to RE delivery across a school and for each topic a Medium-Term Plan is produced, which includes a summary of objectives, tasks, teaching methods, assessment, vocabulary, and resources. Our curriculum coverage is 70 - 80% Christianity and 20 - 30% other faiths. This ensures that Religious Education is based on the guidelines in the National Religious Education Curriculum (RED)

We have now phased out the Salford Diocese Certificate in RE, which we have previously used and developed for SEND learners for the Diocese of Salford schools. From September 2024 we have introduced a KS4/5 NOCN RE accredited qualification to ensure our pupils are provided with a nationally validated qualification, which is both ambitious and challenging. The NOCN RE award provides an opportunity to build skills and learning from our KS2/3 programme of study, allowing our SEND pupils to deepen their understanding of RE, as they move through the School. The qualification will be assessed at Entry Level through to Level 1 equivalencies, providing all our pupils the opportunity for success in their learning.

A third RE lesson was introduced for each class in school from September 2024. To complement the NOCN award, the RE team designed an additional ‘Faith in Action’ lesson, which allows pupils to explore the 7 Tenets of Catholic Social Teaching and allows each class team to develop their learning through class activity around relevant learning themes. We are

confident this provides a balanced and developmental programme of learning for all pupils and ensures pupils are able to put their learning into action in contributing well to the school's catholicity.

Religious Education has a role to play in the language and literacy development of all pupils, by introducing them to the language involved in Religious Education and its appropriate use, an understanding of a variety of literacy forms in the scriptures and developing writing skills. This is enhanced through participation in cooperative learning activities, discussions, assemblies and liturgies, where speaking and listening skills are developed.

Each class has the opportunity to participate in a Class retreat to the 'Just Youth' Centre in Salford. This allows all learners to take part in a planned spiritual retreat- aimed at meeting the needs of that class. Further to this, the Chaplaincy team take part in an Advent retreat to help plan the schools Advent Liturgical programme. The Leaders of the Chaplaincy/ G.I.F.T team also take part in a Lenten retreat, to review and reflect the aims of the Chaplaincy team and to plan for the following year's activities.

Whilst formal Religious Education lessons will provide the main teaching and learning opportunities, wider Religious Education experiences and activities are recognised and used when it arises, regardless of curriculum subject. Therefore, teaching in Science, Topic and the Creative subjects may be utilised, for example, to increase the pupils' sense of awe and wonderment of God and the world around.

The RE curriculum continues to make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. It also supports the development of their knowledge and awareness of Prevent, British Values, Citizenship, keeping children safe and the diversity, equality and cohesion agendas; these are all essential contributing factors in providing outstanding RE teaching and learning for all pupils.

Pupils will have access to a range of resources including books, posters, worksheets, videos, ICT and artefacts suited to their age and ability.

At St John Vianney School Religious Education is integrated into the whole life of the School. We encourage behaviour and values based on love, trust, and respect for one another; Jesus' law of love, ***"This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:12)***

### **Assessment, Recording and Marking**

The assessment of Religious Education at St John Vianney School is designed to assist our children's learning and to enable them to strive for a feeling of confidence and success in their understanding of the Catholic faith. Progress is monitored through discussion, questioning, posing problems and giving opportunities to present their knowledge to others in a variety of ways, e.g. class assemblies and liturgical services. Attainment level records are completed using our assessment platform, SOLAR, which plots each child's progress against the framework statements designed for RE in our Special School. This evidences the children's levels of understanding and their learning successes and also informs planning for staff.

Marking is undertaken in line with the School's marking policy. Marking of children's RE work is always positive and supportive to encourage the child in his/her faith journey. Our marking policy provides opportunities for all children to regularly revisit learning and make improvements through 'green pen', MAD (Make a Difference) time.

All Staff at St John Vianney School are either Roman Catholics or are sympathetic to the teaching of the Catholic faith, which permeates all aspects of our School life. Through example, commitment and teaching the children are encouraged to develop a loving and trusting relationship with God, an experience which it is hoped will influence their attitudes to life and their relationship with other people. All teaching staff have the responsibility of teaching Religious Education to the children in their class. All staff are encouraged to regularly attend relevant courses and CPD requests to support gaps in knowledge and experience are fully supported. Our Catholicity coordinator, Mrs Garfin, and Our Chaplain, Fr N Kumi provide training opportunities through the meeting cycle and also promote external CPD opportunities. The Catholicity Coordinator delivers whole staff training every half term to help support and develop staff in their knowledge and delivery and this underpins our Catholic ethos. Our Diocesan advisor is regularly invited into School to contribute to our staff development and her help and advice is regularly sought around policy and practice.

### **Home Links**

The School recognises it cannot teach our children without the cooperation of their parents. Parents and Carers are the first educators and they are in partnership with the teachers who have the professional skills to help parents in teaching Catholic faith. We endeavour to do this in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. During the year, parents and friends are invited to join us at many celebrations. At the beginning of the School year we hold a 'Welcome Mass' and a 'Welcome Evening' for all members of our community. We celebrate all key liturgical celebrations and offer Reconciliation twice a year. At the end of the year we hold a goodbye/leavers' Mass to say farewell to anyone leaving us and to thank them for their contribution and commitment to the life of our School. Parents and Carers are always made to feel invited and welcomed into our School for these and other celebrations.

### **Prayer**

An essential part of the Catholic ethos of the School is the prayer life. The most important aspect of prayer for children is that they realise it is their way of communicating with God. Children are encouraged to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development. Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying:

At SJV we have identified our own four 'Pillars of Prayer', which are displayed in every classroom.

1. Saying (our daily prayers to God)
2. Doing (our actions, songs and relationships)
3. Thinking (reflecting on our lives and relationship with God)
4. Being- (placing ourselves in God's presence)

Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying using this approach

- Quiet reflection / meditation
- Praying together
- Writing own prayers
- Prayers through music
- Learning traditional Christian / Catholic prayers

Staff lead prayers at the start of the day, at lunch time and at the end of the day. Staff are encouraged to pray with children, and to be an example and role model for them. Through prayer, we endeavour to develop our relationship with God. All classes have a prayer area, which has displays of children's work. This area 'theme' changes with the liturgical year. Class prayers are established throughout the School and each teacher uses prayers appropriate to age and ability of the class. Candles, pictures and objects are also used as a focus for prayer. Children take part in whole Key Stage assemblies, where children and staff join together to pray and to celebrate. Children are also encouraged to pray using their own prayers. From February 2024 we have introduced a weekly pupil mass (Friday morning), which a significant number of pupils attend (25-30 pupils weekly on average). This is in addition to the Weekly Wednesday morning staff mass, which is celebrated in the School Chapel.

For staff who may find the delivery of Catholic prayer a challenge, perhaps through their own faith and background, support is given to staff to feel comfortable about prayer delivery, within the context of St John Vianney School. The RE Coordinator is always available to offer this support and various publications we share with staff, pupils and their parents, including the Headteacher briefing notes, reflections, 'weekly newsletter', the 'Wednesday Word', 'Walk with Me' booklets are useful resources available to staff to support their prayer delivery.

### **G.I.F.T /Chaplaincy and CARITAS Team**

Our School Chaplaincy team was set up in 2015: our aims are:

- To support the School in emphasising its spirituality and Catholicity, as set out in the School's mission statement.
- To support and encourage the School's pastoral care, which includes, pupils, staff and parents.
- To promote, plan and organise the celebration of liturgies and co-operate with others in developing the School as a Roman Catholic community embracing other faiths.

Our GIFT/ chaplaincy team is an inclusive, creative, relevant and innovative team that helps our students to promote a culture of confidence in witnessing Christian beliefs and values. The Chaplaincy and Caritas team, which has 34 pupils (28% of school population), are all involved in shaping the liturgical programme in School.

The school has now further developed the G.I.F.T./ Chaplaincy and CARITAS team by introducing G.I.F.T. team leaders in 2023. The G.I.F.T. leaders have more responsibility within their Chaplaincy role – and each have their own area to oversee, such as preparing readers

for the Liturgical services, mentors for the younger Chaplains, support around school and key events. The Chaplains have to go through an application and interview process and have extra training within these roles.

We now have 12 G.I.F.T. leaders, with each Key Stage represented equally.

### **Spiritual and Moral Development**

The religious character of our School is seen as giving shape to every aspect of School life, and especially the spiritual and moral development of our children. Spiritual development is understood as the development of all those aspects which enable us to appreciate goodness, beauty and truth. Through our teaching, we enable children to reflect on their experiences of life. Through their awareness and understanding of themselves, they recognise God's action in their lives. In addition, pupils are taught about the importance of the mission of the Church. Helping children to make moral decisions is a crucial part of the formation of a moral conscience. Through our teaching, we aim to help children to have an understanding of the Gospel of Jesus and through self-awareness, enable them to come to good moral judgements. Our Behaviour Policy is based on love and respect for the individual.

### **Review**

The School undertakes an annual review of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school with input from the Governing Body, staff, parents, pupils and our Diocesan adviser. Outcomes are used to plan training and development needs for the upcoming year and prioritise actions in the following school improvement cycle. This process is visible in our Catholic Section 48 self-evaluation form and RE development plan.

### **Withdrawn from Religious Education.**

The Headteacher and the School governors have a responsibility to ensure that Religious Education (and collective worship) is provided in the School and that parents / carers have information about the right to withdraw their child from all or part of Religious Education.

