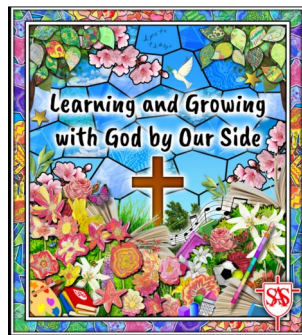


Dear SSAS parents and carers,

It has been a pleasure to join the St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic Primary School team as Executive Head teacher and I am appreciative of the warm welcome that I have received from staff, governors, parents and pupils..

As you may be aware, my focus is the Catholic identity of the school, which is the very heart of all that the school does. Parents are the first educators of children and thus it has been so valuable to read your contributions to the parent questionnaires and to meet with you at the recent coffee morning. In response to this we held a Religious Education parent workshop and this newsletter will hopefully provide more information for those unable to attend, with links to the school website for more information.



### Catholic Life and Mission

The Catholic life of the school is a real strength of the school and the school lives out its mission statement, 'Learning and growing with God by our side'. The special history of the school from when it was formed by the Sisters of Mercy is illustrated in the beautiful art work around the school and will be celebrated during the upcoming 90th anniversary celebration. Further key figures are the saints the school is named after and the saints of the different houses. As well as being witnesses to their faith the pupils carry on the mission of these inspirational figures through their work in the Pupil Chaplaincy Team, caring for each other as well as the wider community (and this continues through the other pupils representative groups-School Council, Eco-Warriors, Sports Ambassadors and Squabble Squashers). We are all looking forward to Green Day this week which brings together these different groups and highlights our Catholic Social Teaching this term- Creation and Environment.

All pupils continue our catholic social teaching focus by considering the needs of others and committing to the common good by supporting those less fortunate than themselves. Some notable examples include Christmas Jumper day in support of the homeless and the cake sale for CAFOD.



## Religious Education

<https://www.ssas.herts.sch.uk/catholic-life/teaching-of-religious-education/>

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is our core subject, and at least 10% of teaching time for every class is devoted to this important subject. All teaching is based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and the scheme the school follows is Come and See, which is structured as below, but with a focus on a 'big question' to deepen understanding.

- **EXPLORE:** Introduction to the topic where the children's life experience is explored, the questions it raises are wondered at, shared, investigated and reflected upon.
- **REVEAL:** Knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith is revealed through the Word (in Scripture, Tradition, doctrine, prayers, rites and Christian living)
- **RESPOND:** Learning is celebrated and responded to in daily life.

We also teach about other faiths, most recently **Hinduism Week**.

<https://www.ssas.herts.sch.uk/hinduism-week-in-ssas/>

Religious Education is our most special subject and this is shown by the high quality beautifully presented work in books, with some creative art work.

## Collective Worship

<https://www.ssas.herts.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Prayer-and-Worship-Policy.pdf>

Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of daily life at St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic School. As well as daily traditional prayers, there are regular assemblies, child led worship and singing together to express our faith, all with a strong basis in scripture. There are also celebration of many special events during the liturgical year such as the Passion Play, the special assembly for the Mary during the month of May or the masses celebrated on Holy days of Obligation, most recently the Mass for the Ascension. Father Michael and Father John develop the prayer life further by supporting the teaching of the sacraments. The sacrament of reconciliation can be delivered during school time but, as per the Bishops directive, all other sacraments are parish based. This includes First Holy Communion. Again the pupils further strengthen this through their excellent work as Prayer Leaders, contributing to assemblies, masses and prayers times in the beautiful school prayer garden.

## Home learning

Some parents requested suggestions for home learning to further strengthen the links between home, school and parish. Please find some below some websites that may be useful:

- R.E. curriculum overviews and termly R.E. update <https://www.ssas.herts.sch.uk/catholic-life/teaching-of-religious-education/>
- Wednesday Word- <http://www.wednesdayword.org/>
- Mark 10 Mission <https://www.themark10mission.co.uk/the-mark-10-mission>
- Caritas- <https://www.caritas.org/>
- CAFOD- <https://cafod.org.uk/>
- Catholic Children's Society- <https://www.cathchild.org.uk/>

There is so much to share with you that it was difficult to select the examples but hopeful this is a window onto the catholic life of the school. More information can be found on the school website. As always, please do come and speak to us at the school. We are here to work together.

*Learning and growing with God by our side*

Miss Coleman, Executive Headteacher