

**St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School**  
**Religious Education Policy**

**Our Mission**

**Learn to Love: Love to Learn**

At St. Bernadette's Catholic School you will find us caring, hardworking and co-operative. We follow the ways of Jesus using our talents and gifts to make our school special. We show respect to all and welcome you.

**RATIONALE**

Religious Education at St Bernadette's is not just a formal subject - it is regarded with the highest priority. Although it is taught discretely, it also permeates through other subjects and the life of the school through prayer, liturgy and social and moral education. At St Bernadette's, we strive to include religious values and beliefs in all aspects of school life; we use Christ's teaching to help us to understand our world and how it affects daily life and all of our relationships whether these be at school or at home. We aim to enable the children to learn to respect God, the environment, each other and the views of others. At St. Bernadette's we believe that all teachers have an important responsibility to promote the Catholicity of our school.

**AIMS**

We strive to ensure that our curriculum and learning environment provides a Catholic setting in which each individual can fulfil his/her potential, growing in understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.

The Religious Education programme will provide the children with opportunities

- 1 to increase their knowledge of and deepen their relationship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, through the teachings of Jesus Christ, appreciation of other scripture and understanding of the Church's teaching.
- 2 to develop their faith and their moral and social awareness through the educational partnership between home, school and parish.
- 3 to grow in their understanding of their mission to do God's work as responsible and caring members of a multi-faith community.
- 4 to develop positive self esteem through a growing appreciation of their uniqueness as a part of God's creation.

## **ORGANISATION**

Religious Education is allocated 10% of Curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference.

Prayer, Assemblies, Christmas Plays, Circle Time, PHSE, Citizenship and Hymn Practice are not included in this allocation, however, Mass may be considered the equivalent of half-an-hour of Religious Education, but only once in any week.

(Communicating Christ)

At St Bernadette's School, we expect Key Stage 2 pupils to be taught two 1 hour lessons of Religious Education per week and in Reception and Key Stage 1, pupils should also be taught two 1 hour lessons per week.

During times such as Christmas and Holy Week, work may be taught in a block.

## **LEGAL RIGHT**

Non-Catholic parents will have discussed with the Head Teacher the importance of assemblies and Mass to the children's spiritual development prior to choosing to send their child to St Bernadette's school and will have chosen for their child to take a full and active part in these acts of worship. Parents will have been informed of their right to withdraw their child from the assemblies and Masses and prayers.

## **LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

At St Bernadette's, we aim to enable the development of religiously literate young people who are given the opportunity to learn about religion, to learn from religion and who have the opportunity for reflection and contemplation. We aim to provide these opportunities through a variety of ways: lessons within the classroom; planned and unplanned opportunities for interaction with others in the immediate, local and wider community.

## **THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

### **Scheme of work**

At St Bernadette's School, from Nursery age up to Year 6, we use the Archdiocese scheme of work entitled 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'. The origins of this scheme come from the 'Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools' produced by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The scheme offers a rich range of activities to support the teaching of Religious Education. Using this document as guidance, staff develop medium term plans which ensure that, whilst the curriculum

is covered, it is in a way that is most relevant to the children within our care. Support materials are available.

Nursery children are taught according to the Early Years Foundation Curriculum document and, whilst they learn about Catholicism, being a non denominational setting, they also learn about other faiths.

The Sex and Relationship Education Policy has been agreed by Governors and follows the Religious Education Department's recommended Family Life and Sex Education programme 'All That I Am' and this is supplemented with further materials. Year 5 undertake a unit of work in the Summer term where aspects of puberty are taught and discussed and Year 6 learn about 'Family Life and Sex Education' in the Autumn term. We ensure that the provision is fully consistent with the teaching of the Church and all staff delivering the unit are fully prepared and knowledgeable. Meetings for parents are held so all resources can be viewed and the programme explained.

### **Special Needs**

As for other children within the class, Children's individual requirements will be met through groupings, differentiation of work and outcome of planned activities. For less able children, support will be given at all available opportunities and may be in the form of adult support, peer support or scaffolded independent tasks. Work is set at a level at which children can access.

### **Gifted and Talented**

Gifted and Talented children are challenged through planning that encompasses tasks from the more able sections of the Curriculum Strategy. Some children are involved in tasks to use Computing skills such as Power Points for use in class and Assemblies.

### **The Sacraments**

All the Sacraments have the Home/School/Parish partnership at the centre of their programme. From the start of the programme parents are made aware of the preparation that occurs in school, that should occur at home and how this is supported by the parish. During the year when the children receive the Sacraments, parents and pupils are asked to attend regular meetings led by the school and Parish Priest and to attend specially timetabled Masses.

Year 3 children, in preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, follow the 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' scheme, which is supplemented with other materials. All of the units contribute to the preparation of the two Sacraments.

Year 6 children, in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation also follow the 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' scheme alongside material from 'Gifted in the Spirit'. Again, all of the units contribute to the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The units are covered to fit in with the timing of the celebration.

### **Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE)**

As with all curriculum areas, PSHCE and Citizenship are an integral part of Religious Education. As a Catholic School, we ensure that children should be taught to value other people's beliefs and ways of life. Each year, the children are involved in being active citizens in a number of ways, for example:

- Leading Mass in Church
- They celebrate Harvest Mass and distribute the food that they have donated to a local charity
- Leading a year band Mass/ Class Prayer Service
- Regularly fundraising for chosen charities such as CAFOD, Fr Hudson's Society, Dr Barnardos
- Singing carols at the local library, hospital and care home

### **Other Faiths**

Aspects of other faiths (multi faith provision) are also covered in school through work within the classroom, during assemblies, via trips out of school and through inviting visitors into school. Much of this work takes place during 'International Week' where different countries/ cultures and religions are studied. Various visits are carried out within the academic year related to a faith other than Catholicism. At present:

Y2 visits a Buddhist Pagoda

Y3 visits a Catholic Church outside the parish

Y4 visit a Sikh Gurdwara

Y5 visit a Jewish Synagogue

Y6 visit an Islamic Mosque

### **Other cultures**

In developing the children's understanding of the community and world being a multicultural society, opportunities are taken to find out about traditions in other cultures. Whilst some classes may choose to integrate multicultural studies in various aspects of their learning, we also include at least one week per year where children find out about how others in different cultures compare to their own lives.

### **Special Feast and Seasons**

Teachers plan for feast days and special seasons, choosing the most appropriate tasks for the children within their care. Such studies may take place within the classroom during a Religious Education lesson or time of Collective Worship or during a Mass or assembly.

## **RESOURCES**

The school is stocked with a full range of materials to help deliver the curriculum strategy with recommended resources to suit each year group. In addition there is a bank of resources that are available to staff i.e. posters, hymn books, assembly books, mass books and religious artefacts. These are centrally resourced.

The school has its own chapel area which is used for Masses and Penitential Services.

We encourage visible signs of our Catholic faith around the school in the form of statues, pictures, crucifixes and prayer tables within classrooms. Children are taught care and respect for all these resources.

## **Computing in Religious Education**

The use of computing skills are encouraged to enhance the children's learning as and when appropriate. Children can use these skills to present work for their books and displays. Children also have use of the Internet to research about Saints, or facts about other religions, or Liturgical celebrations. Staff are encouraged to share any relevant resources they may be using; there is a collection of resources set up on the school network. This is updated as an ongoing process.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Liturgy and Collective Worship are an integral part of the children's Religious Education at St Bernadette's School as outlined in the Collective Worship Policy. Children are provided with a variety of opportunities to engage in collective worship. This takes many forms at St Bernadette's School.

- Hymn Practice
- Assemblies
- Class Prayer Services
- Whole school/ Key Stage/Year Band Masses
- Daily Collective Worship.

Prayers are said at the beginning and end of the day and before and after lunch. Children are given the opportunity for both formal and informal prayer.

Each classroom has a specific area devoted to Religious Education and a class saint; this area forms a focal point for prayer and display. The class teacher is responsible for maintaining these areas.

Masses take place at Holy Family Church for all classes in Reception to Year 6, usually at the beginning and end of term and any significant feast days. The whole school walks down to the Church with older children and younger children paired as 'Prayer Buddies'. There are also Masses that follow the Liturgical Year or special celebrations such as the Harvest. Parents are invited to all Masses at Holy Family Parish. Key Stage Masses are timetabled and occur one every term, usually with Key Stage2 in the Autumn, Key Stage1 in the Spring and Foundation in the Summer term. There are also planned opportunities for a Year Band Mass, with the children being encouraged to help write prayers of intercession and chose hymns for the celebration. The leavers Mass in July is an outdoor Mass at school. Themes are followed for each Mass and the children read, sing or act during the celebration of the Eucharist.

Parents are invited to school Masses and special celebration assemblies.

## **ASSESSMENT**

As a Catholic setting in which we strive to support each individual in fulfilling his or her potential, we hold regular pupil progress meetings in order that we can acknowledge the needs of each individual child regardless of their ability, faith, culture or background.

### **Assessment of Religious Education**

Assessment is an ongoing process. Evidence may be collected in Religious Education books, in class portfolios, via audio recording, via photographs etc and credence is also given to 'non recorded' anecdotal evidence that staff can use in discussion.

For pupils from Reception to Year 6 the assessment is linked to:

- The expectations for the unit of work in 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' (Unit Assessments)
- The expectations laid out in the Levels of Attainment in Religious Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges guidelines.

### **Unit Assessments**

Each year, teachers assess three units of one strand of the of the Religious Education Curriculum; i.e. Sacraments, Liturgical Year, Scripture and Living as Christians, in line with Diocesan expectations.

This is made explicit, by the Religious Education coordinator at the beginning of the academic year. This ensures that a timetable of monitoring is in place to assess the children's knowledge within each strand over a four year period. This assessment

information is used by teachers in order to feed into future planning and groupings of children. It is used by the Religious Education coordinator at timetabled monitoring points throughout the year in conjunction with pupil conferencing, planning trawls, evidence trawls and professional conversations with staff and observation of teaching in order to support the monitoring and evaluation of both content and pitch.

#### **End of Phases Expectations in Religious education in Catholic Schools and Colleges:**

These guidelines are also used by staff in order to support the progression of Religious Education throughout the school. Regular staff meetings (whole staff/small group/one to one) are held in order to share attainment of pupils. This allows staff to evaluate their own teaching and identify priorities within their own classroom and supports the coordinator in monitoring and evaluation of pitch and progression. This feeds into the identification of priorities to be actioned. One child, per class (an above average, average and below average child across the year band) has been chosen to be assessed, specifically, via these guidelines. This portfolio will then be kept so that, eventually, a portfolio is built up which shows a range of abilities 'typical' to a particular year group. For Nursery age pupils, assessment of Religious Education is in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage guidelines, although by the end of Nursery, pupils often begin to show evidence of working within certain aspects of a level one of the Levels of Attainment in Religious Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges guidelines.

Work is marked according to our school Marking Policy.

#### **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

Reporting to parents occurs at least three times per year - twice a year at Parent Consultation evenings and once a year via their child's end of year report. If teachers need to report to parents at any other time, in addition to this, they may do.

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

In line with the School's Equal Opportunities Policy, we believe that all children regardless of race, gender, socio-economic background or special needs have the right of access to the full broad and balanced curriculum. Children, through experiencing Religious Education that is both implicit and explicit at St Bernadette's, have an entitlement to equal opportunity, and to contribute and build up their self esteem. In endeavouring to live the Gospel we believe that all members of our school community should be treated with respect.

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School supports equal opportunities by countering stereotypes and prejudice, reducing the effects of sexual, racial and social discrimination, while at the same time acknowledging the cultural and educational needs of our pupils.

As a staff we will remain aware of, and provide equal opportunities for all our pupils in Religious Education. We will take into account cultural background, gender and Special Needs, both in our teaching attitudes and in the published materials we use with our pupils.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Candles**

- Matches are kept in a safe place away from the children's reach.
- Candles are lit by the teacher, who ensures that there is not a danger of them setting alight to anything else.
- Candles are extinguished by the teacher.

### **Going to church**

A number of roads are crossed on the way to church:

- At least two adults should stop traffic and supervise children as they cross the road.
- Children wait in a line behind the adult until the adult deems the road to be safe to cross and that there is a clear path for the children to follow.
- One adult stands in the road to protect from the danger of traffic.
- The children are led across the road by the other adult.
- The teacher will inform the office that their class is going to church (if this is an extra visit – i.e. unnecessary for a Whole School Mass)

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Head Teacher's responsibilities**

The Head Teacher is the leader of the Catholic faith within the school. The Head Teacher has the ultimate responsibility for the teaching of Religious Education within the school. She must monitor and ensure that there are strategies and guidelines in place for planning and teaching the subject. The Head Teacher will ensure that staff receive the appropriate training to teach Religious Education. All children must receive their entitlement as set out by the Birmingham Diocese. The Head Teacher must ensure that this is so. They should, in consultation with the coordinator, complete the School Self Evaluation document for Religious Education.



**Religious Education Coordinator's responsibilities**

The Religious Education Coordinator is accountable to the Governors, the Head Teacher and the Senior Management Team. It is the Coordinators' responsibility to:

- Write policies, provide schemes of work and write action plans
- Monitor planning and delivery of Religious Education
- Update resources as appropriate
- Plan the rota for Masses and Assemblies
- Oversee preparation of children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation

**Class teacher's responsibilities**

Class teachers are accountable to the Head Teacher and Governing Body. It is the class teacher's responsibility to:

- Ensure that all children are given equal opportunities to access the Religious Education curriculum
- Plan and teach from the agreed scheme of work
- To inform the Religious Education Coordinator of any resources required

The link Governors for Religious Education are Father Philip Griffin and Mr Paul McMaster.

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