

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Introduction

At St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School our Religious Education Policy encompasses our mission statement;

“To ensure a happy and secure learning environment. To celebrate the dignity and worth of all in our school community. As a Catholic community we recognise that in loving others we love Jesus and we help each other to reach our full potential.”

We believe that the whole of the educational provision in a Catholic Primary School is rooted in a religious understanding of life based on the Gospel. Worship and Religious Education in the classroom constitute the specific, but not exclusive, Religious Education provision. For the purposes of this document, Religious Education is considered as the professional area of the curriculum flowing to and from the life and values that the school seeks to proclaim and celebrate. As a Catholic school we offer Religious Education as an important contribution to the faith development of pupils. It may also be received in our classrooms by pupils as catechesis, deepening and enhancing their personal faith, or as evangelisation, this being the first time they have been presented with the truths of living faith.

Rationale

At St Bernadette's School we believe that Religious Education is at the heart of our curriculum as we strive to proclaim and live the Gospel Values. We see our role as supporting parents in leading their children to a greater understanding of who God is and to celebrating, with deeper faith and more understanding, the liturgy of the Church. We believe that Religious Education provides children with opportunities to recognise, affirm and celebrate the gifts and talents they and others have been given and to develop the skills which will enable them to think and question more deeply and lead, ultimately to a greater understanding and appreciation of their faith.

In proclaiming the Gospel message we endeavour to share the Gospel spirit of love in all that we do and say by providing a warm, family atmosphere reflecting the fact that all children need to feel respected, trusted and loved. We believe that Religious Education is about the 'meaning' and the need to discover answers about human existence. Love and security are the most basic human / religious needs. We teach that God is love and faithfulness, but understanding of this concept can only grow from our own experiences of kindness and love. Therefore every effort is made to create, in our school and in our classrooms, a community where the children know they are loved and feel confident and secure. Through our teaching of Religious Education we endeavour to enrich the lives of the individuals in our school.

Aims for the Teaching of Religious Education

Our subject specific aims for the teaching of Religious Education, complimenting our general curricular aims, are to enable children to:

- gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church and the ways in which it seeks to express the significance of human life while respecting the rights of people to hold beliefs which are different from their own.
- examine their own feelings views and responses in the light of their knowledge and understanding.
- Be helped towards an awareness of who they are – a unique person endowed with the gifts of the spirit.

Towards the realisation of these aims we have regard to the guidance provided by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisors.

Content

The content of the Religious Education curriculum is provided in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (RECD).

At St Bernadette's School the requirements of the curriculum are met mainly through 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' series as well as other resources such as the CAFOD Universal Church units.

As far as possible RE matches the abilities, attainments, interests and experiences of the children and helps them to develop their knowledge and understanding in a structured way. As well as factual scripture based on knowledge it develops concepts, skills and attitudes with the children that will enable them to question, reason, explain and debate.

Strategies for Teaching and Learning

Curriculum Organisation:

RE incorporates two Attainment Targets: learning *about* the Catholic faith (AT1) and learning *from* the Catholic faith (AT2), and In each topic pupils will cover elements from both AT1 and AT2 .

These are set out in the form of specific key learning objectives which are taken from the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) and are used to aid curriculum planning.

Teaching Styles:

As in other curricular areas the range of teaching styles may vary and are used as appropriate. These may include whole class teaching, co-operative group work, or individual tasks. There is no specialist teaching in RE. Each class teacher is responsible for the planning, teaching and assessment of RE in their own class.

Resources:

Classroom resources are the responsibility of the classroom teacher. These include copies of teacher and pupil books for *'The Way, the Truth and the Light'* together with frequently used resources of worship /liturgy. As in other curricular areas class teachers often use their own resources dependent upon the needs of the specific topic and their own particular style of teaching. The school has a class set of bibles which are kept centrally for use of Key Stage 2 classes and each of the key stage 1 classes has its own picture bible.

CDs and posters are also kept centrally for use when required.

A resource that is much appreciated and valued is the time and energy of the Parish Priest as well as the parishioners themselves who support and assist the school. The church is also visited regularly by all classes as part of the teaching of Religious Education as well as for Mass and other services throughout the year.

Time:

As a Catholic School, in accordance with the Bishops' requirement we dedicate 10% of our curriculum time to the discrete teaching of Religious Education. Collective worship and hymn practise is timetabled separately.

(See class timetables and Collective Worship Policy Statement).

Planning

There are six topics to be covered in each year group and each topic lasts for a half term.

Medium term planning is the responsibility of each teacher.

Assessment for learning is incorporated into our planning.

As in other curricular areas, Short- Term planning is also the responsibility of each class teacher who will:

- allocate time for each learning outcome to be achieved
- select appropriate activities for the whole class or groups of children
- indicate the focus and method of assessment.

However, short-term plans may be informal and some of the above information may be included in the more formal Medium Term Plans.

Differentiation

As with all other areas of the curriculum, the purpose of differentiation in Religious Education is:

- to enable children to succeed in the set task or activity;

- to challenge children beyond their comfort zone of knowledge, understanding and skills;
- to enable children to recognise their achievements and celebrate these.

Differentiation is planned into short-term plans by the class teacher.

Pupils with Special Needs

At St Bernadette's School the curriculum is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. If a child is identified as having a special need we do all we can to meet these individual needs in accordance with current school policy which follows the guidance contained in the DfE's Code of Practice.

Assessment

Assessment is focused by the overall aims and objectives of Religious Education.

"...The objective of Religious Education is to include analysis and reflection, critical appreciation of sources and examples, and a real sense of progression through the different stages of education".

Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, January 2000.

Assessment provides pupils and teachers with a clear understanding of pupils' attainment that is, their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do improve. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith.

Assessment of RE is continuous; assessment for learning is part of the planning process, and teachers assess work done within each topic rather than creating a separate task at the end. We believe that when assessment tasks are integrated into lessons pupils take increasing responsibility for and interest in their progress.

Assessment of RE may take the form of:

- general observation of children engaged in classroom tasks and activities;
- observation of contributions made to classroom displays;
- review of end of task, activity or lesson;
- conversations with individuals or groups;
- marking of more formal written work.

A note is kept by the class teacher of those children who are achieving above or below expectations.

Attainment Targets and Strands

There are 2 attainment targets for RE:

Attainment Target 1 (AT1) is Learning ABOUT Religion
Attainment Target 2 (AT2) is Learning FROM Religion.

Within each Attainment Target there are strands of educational progression which relate to specific skill and attitudes. In AT1 these are:

AT1i beliefs, teachings and sources
AT1ii celebration and ritual
AT1iii social and moral practices and way of life

In Attainment Target 2 the strands are:

AT2i engagement with own and others' beliefs and values
AT2ii engagement with questions of meaning and purpose

Levels of Attainment:

The Attainment Target levels correspond to those provided for in other subjects of the school curriculum. That being so, the expected attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, is level 2 and at the end of Key Stage 2 is level 4.

The purpose of the attainment levels is to support children's learning by offering an account of educational progression. They will help teachers to make accurate judgements on pupils achievement, to sum up what pupils have learned so far and to identify how pupils can make the next step in learning. They will also contribute to the quality of Religious Education provision within the school.

The Levels of Attainment used in St Bernadette's School are those from the RECD.

Expectations

In line with national expectations the majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 are expected to work within the range of levels 1-3, with most children achieving level 2 at the end of the Key Stage.

The majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 are expected to work within the range of levels 2-5, with most children achieving level 4 at the end of Year6.

The expectations of attainment in each topic come from the Levels of Attainment outlined in the RECD.

Recording

Recording provides evidence of achievement. This may take many forms:

- notes from observations;

- written comments on children's work;
- visual evidence – photographs, displays, videos or recording of drama or celebrations;
- class/school portfolios;
- pupils' self-assessment.

Reporting

There are four dimensions to reporting in Religious Education. Reporting:

- provides feedback to pupils on their achievement and progress;
- informs colleagues of the achievement of individual pupils and the areas studied by a class and year group;
- informs parents of the progress and achievement of their children;
- informs parents, governors, parish and external agencies of the content and quality of Religious Education being provided and the achievements of the pupils.

Role of the Subject Leader

Primarily, to offer support with planning and teaching RE whenever it is required. The subject leader will also undertake a book scrutiny each term to monitor standards and ensure progression throughout the school. In addition to this there will be a termly moderation meeting where samples of work may be collected.

Each term, as for other curricular subjects, the subject leader will collect evaluations of each topic from class teachers. These will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the planning and the teaching and learning strategies used in RE, throughout the school. The subject leader will use this information to inform future school improvement planning. Teachers receive verbal feedback from the subject leader.

The subject leader also observes the teaching of RE in each class. This is followed by a discussion between the teacher and the subject leader, noting the strengths and areas for development.