

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy



“Doing our best for God”

'To help children, boys and girls, young men and women, and adults to know and to love the Lord ever more is one of the most beautiful educational adventures, for it comprises the Church.'

Pope Francis

Aims

The aims of our school are:

- To lead our children into a loving relationship with God through Prayer, Prayer and Liturgy, Scripture and Sacraments, whilst involving the wider community.
- To ensure all children feel secure, listened to and feel valued by creating a positive atmosphere.
- For children to have knowledge, to celebrate and respect the diverse nature of our society and school family.
- To see the presence of God in both themselves and others by finding ways to incorporate our School Mission Statement into their everyday lives.
- To strive for high standards in all areas of school life.
- To support the parents as the first teachers of their child.

How will this be achieved?

- Working in partnership with all members of the school team involved in school life including our Parish Priest, Fr. David.
- Inviting the local community to join and assist in mass, school celebrations and curriculum activities.
- Engaging parents in all school celebrations and finding ways to involve them in school roles.
- Emphasising and living out our Gospel values; and the use of our positive behaviour policy and reward system.
- Demonstrating mutual respect to all those we encounter in and around our school.

Assemblies and Prayer and Liturgy

Our Parish Priest comes to celebrate with our school community on a weekly basis. Year groups take it in turn to prepare these masses. The themes are based on lesson themes and the Liturgical calendar.

The children also take part in a whole school mass every half term and on Holy Days of Obligation in the parish church of St Bernadette's. Fr. David also works with children, parents and staff in preparing the children for the Sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation.

We come together, in various ways throughout the week:

- Tuesday: Whole school Gospel assembly led by the Head Teacher.
- Wednesday: Class mass led by a year group with Father David.
- Friday: Celebration assembly led by the Head Teacher. Children from each class receive a Good Value certificate based on the Gospels for a variety of reasons. The house ribbon is presented to the house that has achieved the most points that week. Maths, writing, punctuality and good behaviour is also celebrated and promoted in this assembly.

Christmas: Early Year's and Key Stage One children perform nativities in the parish church for family and parishioners. Key Stage Two perform in a carol concert with Year 6 providing a freeze frame of the Nativity Story.

Easter: Years 3 and 4 act out Palm Sunday and the Last Supper as assemblies in school at the start of Holy Week. Year 5 and 6 act out Jesus' final hours in a passion play. Year 6 narrate the stations of the cross while Year 5 freeze frame each scene.

Stations of the Cross: Each year group is responsible for two stations and set them out in order in the Parish Centre. Candles are lit and books are at each station for children and adults to write their reflections.

Prayer

Prayer is an important aspect of the religious life of our school. We begin and end each day in prayer and prayers are said before meals. Through prayer, we aim to help the children develop a personal relationship with God. For prayer to happen and to be of value, we need to create the right atmosphere. At St. Bernadette's, we appreciate the value of objects to help to focus the mind on prayer and so all classrooms have a designated RE area where the children can see a statue, crucifix, candle and bible.

From the Foundation Stage, the understanding of prayer as an open dialogue with God is discussed and developed with the children. All children, appropriate to their age, are given regular opportunities to experience reflective, contemplative and silent prayer.

Alongside this, the children have opportunities within lessons to compose their own prayers to be shared with others.

All staff and Governor meetings begin with a prayer in order to remind ourselves that Jesus is always at the centre of the teaching within the school and all decisions that are made.

Religious Education

RE lessons are seen as an opportunity to promote knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and its teachings. Pupils will be given the opportunity to develop a range of skills including those of communication and enquiry and the ability to engage in religious thinking. Religious Education is allocated two and a half hours a week (10 per cent of the weekly timetable) across both key stages. This time allocation does not include Prayer and Liturgy.

The children also have access to a prayer garden. When it is appropriate, lessons or parts of lessons will be held here and children can go here for independent prayer when accessing the outdoors.

Our school ensures that the Gospel Values are not just taught in isolation but are promoted through the children's everyday lives. All children have contributed to displays around school celebrating these values and also discuss them during times of Prayer and Liturgy.



Teaching

At St Bernadette's, we have predominately followed the 'Come and See' Religious Education Programme in line with guidance from the Lancaster Diocese. However, from 2023-2024 we are beginning to introduce the new RE Directory. Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, EYFS, Year 1 and Year 3 are the first classes to be introduced to the new RE Directory, following 'The Vine and The Branches' in line with guidance from the Lancaster Diocese. In 2024-2025, Year 2 and Year 4 will start the new curriculum. Finally, in 2025-2026, Year 5 and Year 6 will follow the new objectives. Until the new RE Directory is introduced, classes will continue to follow 'Come and See'. Both curriculums make learning about our faith lively, interactive and relevant.

In all classes there are children of differing abilities. Recognising this fact, the school provides suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task set by the teacher to the ability of the child and the support given.

Our school meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act that stipulates that Religious Education is compulsory for all children including those in the Foundation Stage. In the Foundation Stage, Religious Education is undertaken through the Early Learning Goals including the Personal, Social and Emotional theme with the children being introduced to the faith gradually through prayer and learning activities

The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the search for meaning in life. God's initiative in Revelation who comes to meet us and our response of faith. (cf. CCC26) This pattern guides the structure of the programme and informs the process of each topic, opened up through; Explore, Reveal and Respond.

The child friendly material provided within both The Vine and The Branches and Come and See allows children to explore the teachings of the Catholic Church through the use of age appropriate resources and activities. Children are taught in as creative a way as possible, using role play, hot seating, drama, art, music, reflection; the children learn and live through experiencing living faith.

Other Faiths

At St. Bernadette's School we aim to make children globally aware, that is, not just to be aware of others who are different, but, to feel a bond with them as brothers and sisters of God's family. In addition to our Catholic Faith, children are also taught about Islam and Judaism.

Right to Withdraw

The 1988 Education Reform Act allows parents to withdraw their child from Religious Education classes if they so wish and this is done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors.

Wider Curriculum

Religious Education contributes to the teaching of other subjects:

English

RE promotes the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Religious texts are read, discussed and analysed. Comprehension of the themes or messages of the text are evidenced both verbally and in writing. Children will write in a range of ways - diaries,

letters, explanations. They will debate issues such as the impact of global warming on poorer third world countries.

Geography

'Fill the world with people; look after the world; look after one another; take care of the fish and the birds, the animals wild and the reptiles, the trees and the flowers and the plants. And so it was. God saw all creation and indeed it was very good.' (Genesis 1: 26-31)

As Christians we believe that we are made in the image and likeness of God and that means that each person has dignity and is to be treated with respect, creation is not ours to own but it is on loan to us for the time we live on the Earth. Genesis tells us of our responsibility to take care of the Earth and everything in it; that is to be good stewards. We must sustain and protect it for future generations. Geography is an integral part of RE where children learn about the destruction caused by global warming through drought, mud slides and flooding on poorer countries and the destruction of rainforests and the world's oceans through overuse of plastic. RE teaches children that charities such as CAFOD work to support sustainable development and allows children to respond to 'big questions' on stewardship and respond to it by referring to the scripture.

Computing

The use of technology, where appropriate, is encouraged. This may include visiting websites, watching DVDs, recording work using technology and using technology as a research tool.

Art

Pupils look at works of art from a range of religious traditions when studying world religions. Within the RE curriculum, pupils are encouraged to develop spiritual expression and this may sometimes take the form of a piece of artwork or craft. Pupils respond to questions of identity, meaning, purpose and commitment through their creative work. There are opportunities for pupils to enter their religious artwork into competitions.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

Through RE, children are taught about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices in behaviour. Values and attitudes are promoted for citizenship in respecting others, promoting tolerance of others and appreciating what it means to be a positive member of a pluralist society. This is achieved through first hand experiences, handling of artefacts and visitors to the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

We provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life, recognising the difference between right and wrong. This enhances social development by building a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values, developing knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their lives.

Planning

Long Term Planning

For both The Vine and the Branches and Come and See, the branches/themes and topics framework sets out the programme for the year. The topics are set out on a yearlong plan to ensure all will be taught and learning intentions can be met.

Medium Term Planning

The Vine and the Branches - Medium term planning is to follow the objectives in the separate branches focusing on each of the ways of knowing (understand, discern and respond).

Come and See - Medium term planning is the responsibility of the R.E. co-ordinator who will use the overview to note the basic question of Christian doctrine for the term. These can also be found on the Come and See website so teachers may adapt it to the needs of their class.

Short Term Planning

Teachers will plan by:

- Selecting appropriate activities to ensure the achievement of the learning focuses and overall learning outcomes
- Stating the days on which these activities are to take place - *this is essential*
- Ensuring planning is differentiated
 - Vine and the Branches: using the knowledge lens content objectives including a *Driver Word* to meet the needs of all pupils.
 - Come and See: by using the Standard Indicator statements with each activity clearly including a *Driver Word* to meet the needs of all pupils
- Indicating groupings to show how the differing needs and abilities of children are to be met.

Differentiation

The purpose of differentiation in Religious Education is:

- to enable children to succeed in the set task or activity
- to challenge beyond their comfort zone of knowledge, understanding and skills
- to enable children to recognise their achievements and celebrate these.

Special educational needs are referred to on the short term planning and the SEN resources on the Vine and the Branches and the Come and See Websites are made use of. These children are on the SEND register.

Assessment and Reporting

Those year groups following the old RE Directory, use the Standard Indicators to plan and assess pupils in RE. These are a description of what is expected of pupils by the time they reach the end of a phase. The phases are:

- 4-7 years

- 7-9 years
- 9-11 years

Within the standards, there are three sections:

Knowledge and Understanding (learning about)

- Developing knowledge and understanding
- Making links and connections
- Historical development
- Religious and specialist vocabulary

Engagement and Response (learning from)

- Meaning and purpose
- Beliefs and values

Analysis and Evaluation

- Use of sources as evidence
- Construct arguments
- Make judgements
- Recognise diversity
- Analyse and deconstruct
- Reflection

We are currently looking at our assessment following the new RE Directory, using the expected end of age-phase outcomes to support this. The phases are:

- EYFS
- 5-7 years
- 7-9 years
- 9-11 years

Teaching to the age-phase outcomes, assessment focuses on 6 different areas...

- Hear
- Believe
- Celebrate
- Live
- Dialogue
- Encounter

As a school it is important to understand the children's religious knowledge and understanding so children are assessed at the end of each year with most children expected to achieve the required indicator at the end of each key phase.

Assessment is ongoing with marking of work on a regular basis, highlighting of targets met by each pupil and through discussion, observation and questioning. Moderation takes place each term (in school for two terms and externally in the summer term). Work is collated by teachers across each term and assessed. Sample work is then taken to moderation with teachers working together to monitor assessment that has been undertaken, so that children's attainment can be monitored and future planning is based on this. Each teacher has a folder of moderated work from across their class that displays the work covered across the year.

Parents are informed of the progress and achievement of their children. This is usually done when speaking at parents' meetings and at the end of the year when teachers write reports.

Sacramental Programmes

Children in Year 4 begin preparations for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion which begin in September alongside the Catechists of St Bernadette's Church. Reconciliation takes place in January with Holy Communion in May. The St Bernadette's School family always join the families of the children involved to celebrate this special Sacrament.

Wednesday Word

Each week the Wednesday Word is made available to all families and friends of St Bernadette's School which shares Sunday's Gospel with all school families, in a unique way.

CCRS

The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies is designed for teachers in Catholic schools; that they may have a basic understanding of the Church, its teaching and way of life to enable them to contribute to the maintenance of the ethos of the Catholic school. All teachers are encouraged to undertake the certificate.

RE Subject Leader

The Religious Education Subject Leader will be responsible for:

- Working with senior leaders on monitoring teaching, learning, and planning standards through lesson observations and scrutiny of work.
- Organising and maintaining the school portfolio of pupils' work.
- Organising in-house moderation of standards meetings.
- Self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development for the School Improvement Plan.
- Ensuring the curriculum offered is appropriate, suitable and relevant to pupils' needs and interests.

Promoting Community Cohesion

'Educators develop in themselves and cultivate in their students, a keen social awareness and a profound sense of civic and political responsibility.' (SACRE)

A cohesive community is one where:

- There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities.
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued.
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities.
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds.

At St Bernadette's we develop community cohesion through:

- Links with our Catholic family of primary schools and feeder high schools
- developing and understanding of rights and responsibilities in the children
- Extended schools e.g. 'wrap around care' at our breakfast and after school clubs
- Working and learning together e.g. making links with other schools via e-mail etc.
- Caring and learning in the community e.g. local charity work with Brian House our work with CAFOD.
- Caring for the environment - e.g. eco school status, engaging children with the garden and Prayer Garden.

At St Bernadette's Primary School, we endeavour to:

- Contribute positively to local parish, deanery and wider diocesan life and worship
- Ensure that pupils have the opportunity to be involved in all appropriate school activities.
- Teach about the challenges to society where community cohesion is lacking.
- Collaborate with other Catholic schools and schools of other denominations, faith traditions and schools of no religious character.
- Contribute to the life of the local community and to national and international events/ initiatives and opportunities.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Make the provision of prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school inclusive.
- Include all staff and pupils in its corporate life of worship.
- Ensure that the curriculum promotes community cohesion.
- Demonstrate in planning and practice that the RE curriculum teaches Christian concern for all, irrespective of e.g. gender, ethnicity and faith.
- Ensure that the breadth and balance of the school's curriculum enhances teaching about the benefits of community cohesion.

Resources

Each class has a dedicated area for prayer and liturgy. This displays the colour for the liturgical year, a bible, a cross/crucifix and the St Bernadette's prayer. Other resources are to be found in RE cupboard. Staff have copies of the relevant God's Story and Church's Story books which are referenced in the Come and See Teacher books and access to The Vine and The Branches ebooks. Teachers also have access to We Believe and The Way, The Truth and The Life to supplement lessons.

Signed: *Elizabeth Scarlett* (RE Coordinator)

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