

# St Bede's School

# Religious Studies Policy

*"In a Catholic school, the true development of the person,  
pupils and staff, takes precedence over all other things"*  
(Vincent Gerard Nichols)

## 1 Aims and Objectives

- Religious Studies enables our children to investigate and reflect on fundamental questions of life, helping them to learn *from* religion as well as *about* religion
- To develop knowledge and understanding of
  - The mystery of God, the Church and central beliefs which Catholics hold, and the response to faith, human life and religious commitment
- To develop awareness and appreciation of
  - Spiritual and moral responsibility within multicultural society, relationship between behaviour and faith, and importance of truth and others' views
- To develop skills of
  - Examination and reflection of faith, listening carefully and gathering information, and thinking critically and making informed judgements

## 2 The Position of Religious Studies

- The education our children receive at St. Bede's School is in accordance with the beliefs, rites and practices of the Catholic Church
- Religious Studies lessons and liturgies are planned and led by a practising Catholic, and we encourage full participation in school religious events by all staff and pupils
- We encourage all staff to make appropriate reference to the Faith in each area of the whole school curriculum as and when appropriate
- Our curriculum is based on elements from the Archdiocese's Curriculum Strategy and requirements of Common Entrance, enriched by class and whole-school liturgy, as well as developing awareness of sacred space and a sense of awe and wonder
- Nomenclature for timetabled curriculum time:
  - RS - bringing all elements of RS curriculum together with focus on spirituality
  - RS English - exploration and study of Biblical text using literacy strategies
  - RS Catechism - taught as a series of doctrinal and curriculum based facts
  - Mass - celebration of the Eucharist as the heart of our community of faith
- Weekly curriculum time (RS, RS English, RS Catechism and Mass) as of Jan 2017:
  - EYFS (Rec) = 90 minutes out of 985 = 9.13%
  - Prelim (Y1) = 150 minutes = 11.67%
  - Forms I and II (Y2 and Y3) = 150 minutes = 11.67%
  - Forms III - UV (Y4 – Y8) = 150 minutes = 11.67%
  - On average, RS is allocated 11.39% of timetabled lesson time
- Form III,IV, LV, MV, UV (Y4-8) have an additional 30 minutes timetabled prep time

## 3 Teaching and Learning

- We believe that good teaching allows children to both learn about our Faith and to reflect on what its religious ideas and concepts mean to them as an individual
- Their study during lessons enables children to extend their own sense of values, promoting spiritual growth and development

- Different strategies are applied in order to facilitate optimum teaching and learning:
  - Prayer, liturgy and exploration of Church tradition
  - Investigation of scripture using Missal and the Good News Bible
  - Discussion and dialogue with development of interaction and thinking skills
  - Pupil involvement/engagement in note taking and research using books/ICT
  - Questioning, modelling and explanation including hot-seating and role play
  - Use of writing and illustration to record work in exercise books/files
- We believe that the best teaching and learning outcomes are as a result of a combination of Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic experiences and opportunities

#### **4 Curriculum Planning**

- The organisation of the curriculum allows children to build upon prior learning, the planned progression offering an increasing year-by-year challenge to pupils, from:
  - EYFS: emphasis on experiential learning through real-life awareness; to:
  - Form UV (Y8): emphasis on revision, coursework and response to pupil need
- The Long Term Overview maps study areas for each form
- Medium Term Plans give further detail and suggests strategies for delivery
- The teachers' own Short Term Reviews facilitate a record of delivery in relation to medium term planning with notation to inform future planning if applicable

#### **5 Cross-Curricular Links**

- English – actively promoting skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening throughout, and developing different ways to record our work
- IT – using Information and Communication Technology where appropriate, developing internet, word processing, and general presentation skills
- Music – this area plays a very important role in celebration at St. Bede's and the teaching of sacred music is taught with constant reference to our faith
- Art – several elements of the Art curriculum have a religious focus and we encourage the application of artistic skills in Religious Studies lessons
- History – promoting collection of information, and making of judgements
- Science – especially with regards to the wonders of God's creation and SRE
- Latin – the language's historic use in the Catholic Church and Mass
- Geography – mapping where Biblical events took place
- Maths – the importance of numbers in, and in the use of, the Bible
- Special links with Citizenship/PSHE/SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme and Sex and Relationships Education – providing many opportunities to scaffold personal, moral and social and spiritual awareness and development

#### **6 Special Educational Needs**

- At St. Bede's School we teach Religious Studies to each and every child, whatever their ability, guaranteeing the opportunity of inclusion in all we do
- We ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children by matching the task to the ability of the child using appropriate differentiation
- We take into account specific targets for children with Individual Education Plans

#### **7 Multi-faith Aspects**

- The Catholic faith and religion is explored and experienced by all those taking part in school life, whether they are baptised/practising Catholics or not
- Children are encouraged to develop their understanding of religious traditions, and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain and the wider world

- All children are provided with opportunity to reflect on what it means to have a personal faith, whatever their own religion or culture
- All children and staff are encouraged to attend every liturgy, whatever their belief, in order to uphold the participation in a Catholic environment
- Elements of other religions are incorporated into the curriculum, explored and then used as a comparison to Catholicism and commitment to a faith. These may include:
  - Festivals and pilgrimage, service to the community, main traditions and denominations, founders/prophets/teachers, important ceremonies, places of worship, and key beliefs/books/teachings/doctrines

## 8 Liturgies and Prayer

- These are seen to be an integral and essential part of celebrating the Catholic nature of St Bede's School, placing Jesus Christ at the centre of our purpose
  - Mass
    - Weekday Mass            School
    - Sunday Mass            Boarders
  - Daily Prayer
    - Graces at Breakfast    Boarders
    - Morning Prayer        School
    - Graces at Lunch        School
    - Evening Prayer        Boarders
    - Graces at Supper       Boarders
  - Regular School and/or Class Liturgies
    - October                The Rosary / Harvest Liturgy
    - November             Holy Souls / Golden Bowl
    - Advent                 Advent Liturgy
    - December             Service of Readings and Carols
    - Ash Wednesday       Ashing Liturgy
    - Lent                     Stations of the Cross / Lenten Liturgy
    - May                     Marian Procession / The Rosary
    - June                     Reconciliation / First Holy Communion
    - July                     Confirmation / Thanksgiving

## 9 Assessment and Recording

- Priority is given during class-time to opportunities for children to engage in exploration, discussion, questioning, hot-seating, thinking skills, explanation, recording and the development of spirituality through prayer and liturgy
- Formative assessment takes place continually in Religious Studies by the means of informal judgements through observation in class lessons and liturgies
- Formal assessment is via termly tests/exams from Form I upwards, the results used as a record of pupils who are meeting or achieving above/below expectation
- Both formative and summative assessments are used to give a half termly and termly grade in effort, attainment and presentation and to set targets
- Each pupil is also assessed against National Attainment Levels every term through an assessment/tracking procedure which gives a clear picture of individual attainment

## 10 Community Links

- St. Bede's has a Chaplain who is the Parish Priest of St. Joseph and Etheldreda. He visits school at least once a week to celebrate Mass, hear confession, and to speak to classes and individuals as and when appropriate. The boarders attend Sunday Mass in his Church, which is also used for some of our Sacramental Liturgy

- The School Choir supports Catholic, interdenominational and other ecumenical events in the local communities of Rugeley, Stafford and Birmingham
- We support charitable works including distribution of harvest gifts every year to the elderly, different specific charities each year, and offer adult help to child-initiated charitable ventures and fund-raising to a wide range of wealth/health related issues

## **11 Resources**

- The Chapel, classrooms and the outside environment are all used for teaching
- We aim to have sufficient resources at St. Bede's for teaching and display
- Children from Form I upwards are encouraged to have their own Good News Bible
- A good supply of religious books and the IT Suite is available for research

## **12 Sex and Relationship Education**

- We believe that our children should be given an understanding of relationships and sex before they leave us, within the context of a framework of Catholic morality, and in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the doctrines of the Catholic Church
- Children gain an understanding of the growth and change in bodies as part of the Science curriculum, and children in the UV will further develop their knowledge and understanding of personal, social and spiritual issues during the Summer via SRE
- Based on the programme 'Where I Am' we cover the journey of transition from childhood, through adolescence towards adulthood - addressing the connection between the development of emotional and physical changes that happen
- There is also a deep emphasis on what this mean in terms of the human person and the common good, with the aim of helping our children on a personal journey towards wholeness and integrity - living happy and authentic lives
- There are four basic strands to the terms study:
  - Love needs friendship
    - healthy relationships - appropriate behaviours - 'being in love', 'lust' and 'true love' - the value of chastity in terms of abstinence
  - Love needs family
    - roles/responsibilities in a community where members grow in faith, hope and love - providing the best loving support and security
  - Love overcomes loss
    - identifying forms of separation and associated anxiety, a natural part of life - God accompanying them in times of joy and sorrow
  - Love needs love's expression
    - Church teaching and media portrayal of relationships and marriage - sexual intercourse being deepest/most intimate sign of human love - each person being unique at conception and worthy of respect

## **13 Monitoring and Review**

- The Head of Religious Studies is responsible for:
  - Reviewing all documents annually
  - Monitoring the standards of learning
  - Providing a strategic lead and supporting colleagues
  - Being aware of national and diocesan developments
  - Discussing strengths and areas for development with the Headmaster

Director of Studies  
January 2017