

BENTLEY ST PAUL'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR R.E.



'Growing together in faith, love and trust, we will succeed.'

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POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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This policy aims to explain how RE is taught, monitored and assessed at Bentley St Paul's.

Explanation

In our church school, Christian learning is not confined to the teaching of classroom R.E. Rather, it is intrinsic to every aspect of school life. Christian education and spiritual development occur whenever staff and pupils interact. Likewise, in the teaching of other subjects to the curriculum, religious issues will be touched upon, and a growing understanding of Christianity and how beliefs and values affect our lives, take place.

In our school, spiritual development is underpinned by a clear framework of theological presupposition and it stands boldly as the central core of what education is about. As Christians we believe that there is more to this life than the material world, and that our humanity is only complete when we live in harmony with that greater power. Our core Christian values underpin the Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of daily life at Bentley, and they are woven through our curriculum. Each class takes a value as their key focus. The values are Friendship, Forgiveness, Trust, Peace, Wisdom, Responsibility, Respect and Reverence.

During the teaching of classroom R.E. staff and pupils will consider the relationship that Christians have with God and each other, drawing upon their understanding of this in order to develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious. This supports them in gaining a greater understanding of the characteristics of positive and negative aspects of personal relationships and helps them to see how the truth of faith is relevant today.

It is also important that teachers recognise and allow for the material that is presented to have its own direct impact on children. Teachers cannot always plan for every learning outcome. Indeed, it would often be inappropriate to do so within the school context. However, there are occasions when stories of faith and courage, or even one's own actions, will touch children in ways we had not expected, or planned for. This also is implicit Christian education, and we seek to maximise the opportunity that these occasions present to remind our pupils that the truth of Christianity is relevant today.

Without the implicit dimension, R.E. is in danger of propagating and promoting a division between a world of the sacred and the secular. When it is included, children are encouraged to see that religion is all of life, and not just that which has been given a particular ritual or ceremonial focus. It is only for ease of organisation that we separate religion from other areas of enquiry. Most of us need to create categories of knowledge in order to make sense of a vastly complex and confusing world.

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In the Essex Agreed Syllabus frameworks, when teaching the specific subject category of Religious Education, teachers are encouraged to consider all human experience as a legitimate subject of enquiry. Those aspects of human experience that direct us to wonder about the purpose and meaning of life and death are considered to be particularly worthy of our attention. Relationships, community, the environment and personal character have been singled out as being especially appropriate topics for implicit religious education when teaching primary age children. These areas of implicit R.E. have therefore been specifically identified and highlighted.

The Aim of Religious Education

RE in church schools aims to help children to:-

- Think spiritually and explore questions of life and death, meaning and purpose
- Understand how Christianity is relevant in today's society
- Recognise that faith is based on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world
- Respond in terms of beliefs, commitments and ways of living
- Develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious
- Experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community
- Engage in thoughtful discussion with other faiths and traditions
- Become active members of the school and wider community
- Understand how religious faith can sustain them in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition

Religious Education is taught throughout the school in such a way as to reflect the overall aims, values and philosophy of the school.

Principles

1. R.E. at Bentley St. Paul's School conforms with the school's trust deed and meets all other legal requirements. The R.E. programme is based on the frameworks provided in the Chelmsford Diocesan RE syllabus and the Essex Agreed Syllabus for R.E., and also draws from other non-denominational sources. Weekly planning is based on the school's schemes of work for R.E.
2. Timetabled R.E. is normally taught for one hour each week in all classes, either as a discrete lesson, or through an integrated, cross-curricular approach within a topic. It may also be taught as a blocked unit when appropriate.

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3. R.E. is a central academic curriculum subject, and has its own co-ordinator, named governor and a priority linked to the School Development Plan. The co-ordinator and Head teacher keep abreast of national and local development in the subject.
4. Teaching staff are given all necessary help to teach the subject well, including pupil resources, support materials and in-service training.
5. Although it is assumed that most pupils will receive R.E. in the school, appropriate provision will be made for any pupils withdrawn from all or parts of R.E. lessons.
6. R.E. teaching and learning opportunities at Bentley St. Paul's School exemplify best practice, providing a programme of activities that are inclusive, appropriate and challenging.
7. The religious content of our R.E. programme is drawn mainly from the Christian tradition, is bible-based and draws upon first-hand experience of the local Christian community. It includes the consideration of other world faiths, but ensures that the teaching of Christianity is given appropriate priority.

Strategies

1. Class teachers plan R.E. lessons using the school's weekly planning proforma and follow the school's schemes of work. The R.E. co-ordinator helps with such planning, as required.
2. Provision is made for children with special needs by the class teacher in dialogue with the SENCo and other support staff as required.
3. Classroom and teacher resources are stored in the resources areas, but may be kept in classes for up to half a term while in use. Resources include bibles, bible storybooks, crosses, Christian and other faith symbols and imagery, a Qur'an and Torah, fact and fiction literature on a range of cultures, faiths and traditions. All of these are readily available for staff and pupils to access.
4. KS1 and KS2 classes use individual R.E. class books in order to record any of the pupil's work during a lesson.
5. Regular homework is not assigned in R.E. but may be given on occasion by teachers.

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6. Pupils should be given feedback on their work in R.E. on a regular basis as a means of formative assessment, either through written marking in their books, or verbally during a lesson. Individual and group assessments are also encouraged.
7. Yearly summative assessments are made using Age related expectation descriptors.
8. The R.E. co-ordinator monitors classroom planning throughout the school regularly. Lesson observations are carried out annually following the school's expectations and Lesson observation pro-forma is used.
9. At least one staff curriculum meeting annually is designated to co-ordination and resourcing for R.E. Further inset is provided as necessary.
10. In the event of parents withdrawing children from R.E. classes, precise details of alternative arrangements will be agreed with the parents regarding accommodation and work set.

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Children

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires schools to 'promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils at the school and in society' (paragraph 1:2), through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is a key focus of our R.E. and wider curriculum, and is framed by the school's seven core Christian values. We help the children to learn the difference between right and wrong, develop good social skills and to make a contribution to the school and wider community. We encourage respect for, and understanding of, cultural diversity, whilst seeking to develop our pupils' awareness and understanding of Christianity.

There are links to our SMSC policy and there is a separate folder in which evidence of SMSC development is collected.

Time Allocation

The time allocated to Religious Education should be no less than 5% curriculum time. As a result of the way in which the curriculum is organised at each Key Stage and in each year group, the amount of time allocated to R.E. in any week may differ. Religious Education may be provided in a 'whole block' and the R.E. Curriculum team endeavour to ensure that all children have equal access to the required amount of Religious Education curriculum time.

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Curriculum and School Organisation

The schemes of work for Religious Education outline in detail how Religious Education is planned and taught in each Key Stage and in each year. They indicate which religions have been chosen to be studied and which curriculum units have been selected for each year group. It is our aim to include the school's seven core Christian values within these units. Details of the content of each curriculum unit can also be found in the schemes of work in the form of content descriptors taken from the agreed syllabus, plus additional material.

Subject planning and evaluation for work in Religious Education is incorporated into year group planning and evaluation each half term. This can be seen in teachers' long and medium term planning. Planning and evaluation of work within any curriculum unit on undertaken on a weekly basis by the class teachers and can be seen in their short plans.

Learning

Learning in Religious Education may be by means of direct teaching to the class or small groups; by providing direct hands-on experience with R.E. resources, such as photographs, ICT programmes or artefacts; by teacher-prepared materials such as worksheets; through topical debate, stories, poetry, drama; through visits to, or visitors from, faith communities.

A range of reference materials for Religious Education are available – no one resource alone is used. Pictorial material, such as posters and picture packs are a valuable resource for Religious Education.

Certain resources for ICT may be useful for work in Religious Education such as word-processing programmes, CD-ROMs, power point presentations and interactive websites for use on the IWB or individual lap tops with internet connection.

Children in each Key Stage may occasionally be asked to undertake some homework activities or tasks as part of their work in Religious Education. This could be completing a 'finding out' activity or researching information from local sources.

Visitors from a range of faith communities may be invited into school to work with the children, and visits may also be planned to take the children to see other places that are faith communities. Establishing links with local faith communities is therefore useful.

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Links with other subjects

Religious Education has links with other areas of the curriculum including Literacy, Numeracy, Science, History, Geography, Art, Music and ICT. It is also linked to the way in which the school organises its Collective Worship. Collective Worship is provided according to Diocesan guidelines and whilst it is seen as being distinct from Religious Education, there are certain links that can be identified. For example, during the variety of forms of collective worship there will be time given for the members of the school community to reflect; there will be opportunities for spiritual development; a particular Religious Education theme may be developed; class teachers may use their year group theme or a core Christian value as part of their weekly assembly, or the focus for their Key Stage assembly or for the presentation of their Eucharist service in church.

Religious Education also provides opportunities for teaching the following cross-curricular dimensions – Equal Opportunities, Inclusion, Personal, Social and Health Education and Education for Ethnic Diversity. In addition, the school's seven core Christian values will be developed within the Religious Education units.

Teaching Religious Education

At Bentley St. Paul's, Religious Education is taught by individual class teachers. They are responsible for their own class organisation and teaching style in relation to Religious Education, whilst at the same time, ensuring that these complement and reflect the overall aims and philosophy of the school.

Within any one class, children are given the opportunity to work as a class, as individuals and part of a group. The choice of class organisation will be determined by the learning task or activity and the resources being used.

Withdrawal from Religious Education

It is recognised that parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education, either in entirety or in part. If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from Religious Education then arrangements are made for that child to be withdrawn during Religious Education lessons by the class teacher in consultation with the Head teacher.

Resourcing Religious Education

A wide variety of Religious Education resources are currently available in school. These include children's reference and story books, teachers' resource books, packs and notes, pictorial resources such as posters, pictures and photographs, magazines, ICT, resources,

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videos, DVDs and access to television and radio programmes. Resources are shared and all staff, including visitors and trainee teachers, have equal access to them all.

Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out to enhance the teaching and learning of Religious Education within our school. It is the responsibility of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to monitor and evaluate the curriculum provision made for Religious Education within the school in order that pupils make the greatest possible progress. Detailed evaluation is undertaken by the R.E. Curriculum Co-ordinator (please see 'Bentley St. Paul's Subject Co-ordinators' Summative Annual Evaluation Commentary' and the 'National Society Self-Evaluation Toolkit for Anglican Church Schools').

Evaluation includes a regular evaluation of the content of the Religious Education Curriculum to ensure that the Agreed Syllabus requirements are being fulfilled in the best possible way. Monitoring of teachers' planning is carried out to check that plans are actively put into action in the classroom. Pupils' progress and performance is evaluated. A staff audit of training and resource needs is carried out annually in order to support staff fully within their professional development as Religious Education Practitioners.

Evaluation of R.E. may take place by means of a number of methods including:-

- Looking at children's work, including work books, class/whole school displays role-play and drama presentations
- The analysis of teachers' planning as seen in long, medium and short terms plans
- Discussion during key stage and whole staff meetings
- Classroom observation
- External inspection and advice

Evaluation will usually take place on an annual basis.

The evaluation and review of the policy for Religious Education and the schemes of work for R.E. take place on an annual basis. Throughout the year, the whole staff are encouraged to feedback information and ideas to the R.E. Curriculum Team. This may include comments as to how a particular curriculum unit is progressing and the work that the children are undertaking, or comments as to the availability and suitability of resources.