

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

RE Policy 2025 – 2026



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, worship and social and moral education. At St Bernadette's, we strive to include religious virtues, 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 through the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching. At St. Bernadette's we believe that all teachers have an important responsibility to promote the Catholicity of our school and to teach the whole curriculum through a Catholic lens.

AIMS

We strive to ensure that our curriculum and learning environment provides a Catholic setting in which each individual can fulfil their 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. The celebration of Mass, Prayer, Assemblies, Christmas Plays, Circle Time, PHSE, RSE, Citizenship and Hymn Practice are not included in this allocation.

At St Bernadette's School, we expect Key Stage 2 pupils to be taught two 75 minute lessons of Religious Education per week and in Reception and Key Stage 1, pupils should also be taught two 75 minute 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 Prayer and Liturgy, including the celebration of Holy 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 Collective Worship. Parents will have been informed of their right to withdraw their child from acts of Collective Worship.

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, contemplation, analysis and evaluation. 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, they also learn about other faiths. To help children retain what they have learned, lessons begin with flashback activities to learning either in previous lessons or other units.

The Relationship and Sex Education Policy has been agreed by Governors and follows the 'Life to the Full Plus' Programme. Year 4 undertake a unit of work where aspects of puberty are taught. This is then followed up in Year 5, with aspects of 'Family Life and Sex Education' taught in Year 6. We ensure that the provision is fully consistent with the teaching of the Church whilst still meeting the statutory requirements set out by the Department for Education and all staff delivering the unit are fully prepared and knowledgeable. Meetings for parents are held so resources can be viewed and the programme explained. Parents also have access to a parent portal where resources may be viewed.

Special Needs

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 Prayer and Liturgy services.

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 other additional material. 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 year band Masses/Class Prayer Service
- Regularly fundraising for chosen charities such as CAFOD, Fr Hudson's Caritas, Dr Barnardos

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 'World Faith Week' where different world religions are studied. Various visits are carried out within the academic year related to a faith other than Catholicism. At present:

Y2 visit a Buddhist Pagoda

Y3 visit a Catholic Church outside the parish (often St Chad's Cathedral)

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. The children are provided with time to help them plan acts of Prayer and Liturgy to celebrate these important feast days and seasons. Such studies may take place within the classroom during a Religious Education lesson or time of Prayer and Liturgy such as the celebration of Mass, celebration of the Word assemblies and adult and/or child planned prayer services.

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. We also subscribe to 'Ten:Ten' who provide weekly celebration of the Word resources as well as other Prayer and Liturgy material.

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. All classes have their own dedicated class saint.

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.

Prayer and Liturgy

At St Bernadette's we provide daily opportunities for Prayer and Liturgy which are central to the life of our Catholic school. This provision reflects our Catholic ethos and fulfils the statutory requirement for daily collective worship as outlined in the Education Act 1996. Prayer and Liturgy take a variety of forms, including:

- class prayer,
- adult and/or child prepared prayer services
- whole school gatherings,
- celebrations of the Word,
- stay and pray sessions
- liturgical celebrations linked to the Church's calendar.
- celebration of Holy Mass

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, however, the children are also encouraged to recognise when the prayer focus needs updating in line with the Liturgical Year.

Each year group also has a 'Stay and Pray' session timetabled throughout the year. This session is usually at the start of the school day and is an opportunity for parents to come into the classroom and take part in a Prayer and Liturgy session with their children.

Whole School 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 Harvest. Parents are invited to all Masses at Holy Family Parish. Key Stage Masses are timetabled and occur one every term, usually with Key Stage 2 in the Autumn, Key Stage 1 in the Spring and Foundation in the Summer term. There are also regular planned opportunities for Year Band Masses that take place in the school Chapel, with the children being encouraged to help write prayers of intercession and choose hymns for the celebration. The leavers Mass in July is an outdoor Mass at school. The children actively participate in Prayer and Liturgy by singing, responding, listening and through moments of silence and reflection.

ASSESSMENT

As a Catholic setting in which we strive to support each individual in fulfilling their 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 End of Phase Standards document.

Unit Assessments

In line with Diocesan guidance, one of the strands of the curriculum strategy (Sacraments, Liturgical Year, Scripture and Living as Christians) is selected (as set out by the Diocesan Education Service) as a focus for assessment and monitoring each academic year. Teachers complete end of unit assessments and these are then analysed by the Religious Education coordinator.

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 evaluating pitch and progression. This feeds into the identification of priorities to be actioned.

Work is marked according to our school Marking Policy.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

Reporting to Parents formally is via school reports at the end of the academic year.

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 Mrs Maria Winters and Fr Fretch Ballesteros

September 2025