



Learning and Challenge Rooted in Faith

St Benedict's Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy

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St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the Christian value. We believe that these values will nurture all as individuals and instill in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing roots in faith for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Values

We believe that the purpose of St. Benedict's Catholic Primary school is to:

- Help pupils to live and learn in a Catholic Christian environment leading to acceptance and respect of others in a diverse school community and the wider world.
- Provide an environment in which high expectations will lead to a striving for excellence in all areas of school life.
- Educate and develop each member of the school community by building on their strengths and supporting their weaknesses.
- Foster purposeful relationships with those who learn in, work in and visit our school where diverse views and backgrounds are respected.

Introduction

St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary-aided Catholic School in the trusteeship of the Diocese of Southwark.

As a school founded by the Catholic Church, St. Benedict's School bases its teaching on the Gospel message of God's immeasurable love for us and invites the children to respond by loving God and by loving their neighbour as themselves. So, the children are encouraged to take Jesus as their model.

St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School achieves this by teaching the children to know and love God and His creation. This teaching permeates all aspects of the curriculum and the school's daily life. This teaching is celebrated in the worship and liturgies, rites and rituals of the Catholic Church. Parents are encouraged to uphold and reinforce the fundamentals of the Catholic faith that are taught in the school.

St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School demonstrates openness to all children. It endeavours to see that all children present in the school may learn happily with others and develop their full potential. To this end, St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School encourages the children to build confident, independent and resilient children who are respectful of themselves and others.

St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School provides a warm and welcoming environment to all.

The Place of R.E. in the School

St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School fully believes that Religious Education is the foundation of all our teaching and educational process. The Christian Catholic beliefs and values inspire and



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unify every aspect of our school life. They are the basis and important influence on our school curriculum.

Religious Education is linked to all our teaching and the key areas of the children's learning. This is because we see education as being God's work, and so education is religious in that it concerns discovering the breadth and depth of God's creation and His creatures. Hence, whatever area of the curriculum children are studying, they are actively learning about:

- The mysteries and wonders of God's creation.
- The challenges and discoveries that are presented to them.
- The uniqueness and dignity of individual people.
- How they can enjoy God's world.

The planning of our faith teaching, which is at the centre of our curriculum, becomes the foundation for the National Curriculum, with its aims to promote "the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils . . . and prepare such pupils for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life." (Education Reform Act 1988)

The leadership of Religious Education

Religious Education is the responsibility of the R.E. subject leader and the Headteacher. Their role is to monitor and assess the R.E. curriculum throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression. They also ensure that the aims and learning outcomes in the Curriculum Directory are identified and fulfilled. In addition, a governor has specific responsibility for R.E. and liaises closely with the school staff to fulfil their monitoring duties.

Curriculum Content

R.E. is a core subject in our school, alongside English and Maths, and therefore we devote the required time to its delivery.

We adhere to the Curriculum Directory guidelines and learning outcomes. This provides a cohesive approach and opportunities for whole school assemblies and celebrations and displays that are relevant to every child.

The core of our curriculum is based on the programme "Lighting the Path". The content of this R.E. programme is based on the four significant Constitutions of Vatican II is related to the Church's teaching on Revelation, the Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. These themes are treated and developed each year, though children are introduced to the theme through various "Life Topics" related to it. [The Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory for R.E. (January 1997) follows the same structure of the major Vatican II Constitutions, relating them to the study of the Trinity, Creation, the Scriptures, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.]



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These themes are developed with greater depth and breadth each year as the child progresses through school and will form the core of our R.E. studies. The purpose of these areas of study is to help the children as follows:

- **Revelation: Story, Scripture, Memory and Tradition of the Church**
 - To explore the importance of story in the human quest for meaning.
 - To understand the role of Christian Scriptures as expressions of how humankind strives to understand the nature of God and the nature of human persons.
 - To reflect upon the personal and community response to God invited by Scripture.
 - To explore the sacred writings of other faith communities.
- **Community: Church, Community of Believers, Pilgrim People of God**
 - To reflect on the experience of belonging to the community at various levels.
 - To reflect on the belief that, as people created in the image of a Triune God, Christians are called to be that community which is the Church.
 - To develop a knowledge and understanding of people and roles in the Church and understand that to be the Church is to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ.
 - To explore the relationship between the Catholic Church and other denominations and faiths.
- **Way of Life: Lifestyle, Morality, Values, Attitudes**
 - To explore the values which underpin beliefs and actions in the human family.
 - To understand the following of Christ as a call to holiness/wholeness of life.
 - To reflect on the values which Christ expressed in his life and teaching.
 - To explore the values and way of life of other world faiths.
- **Celebration: Ritual, Prayer, Sacraments, Worship, Liturgy**
 - To explore the meaning of the celebration, which marks the growth and development of every human being.
 - To understand that spiritual growth and development is rooted in the Church's sacramental life, which is expressed in sign and symbol throughout the liturgical year.
 - To reflect on the place of prayer in the life of the Catholic community and of individual Christians.
 - To develop a knowledge and understanding of prayer in other faiths.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

Incorporating Catholic Social Teachings (CST) into every facet of our curriculum in RE is paramount in fostering a holistic education that aligns with our school's deeply rooted values. CST provides a moral compass that transcends academic subjects, guiding our students towards a profound understanding of compassion, justice, and the dignity of every individual. By infusing CST principles into subjects ranging from science to history, we not only impart knowledge but also cultivate a sense of responsibility towards society. Through this integrated approach children learn to view the world through a lens of solidarity, prioritising the well-being of the marginalised and vulnerable. This holistic educational experience empowers our students to become not only knowledgeable scholars



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but also compassionate advocates for positive social change, ensuring they carry the transformative teachings of CST into their lives beyond the classroom.

Assessment and Recording

The assessment of Religious Education at our school is designed to assist our children's learning and enable them to strive for a feeling of confidence and success in their understanding of the Catholic faith.

Progress is monitored through discussion, questioning, posing problems, allowing children opportunities to move from knowledge and understanding to evaluation and analysis, and giving opportunities to present their knowledge to others in a variety of ways, e.g. class assemblies. Attainment level records are recorded on Target Tracker to show children's levels of understanding.

Marking

Marking should always include and reflect the learning objective that is being taught. Feedback will regularly be given as a whole-class approach, in-line with the School's Marking and Feedback policy.

Teaching Staff

All teachers at St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School are either Catholics or are sympathetic to the teaching of the Catholic faith, which permeates all aspects of our school life.

Through example, commitment and teaching, the children are encouraged to develop a loving, and trusting relationship with God, an experience which it is hoped will influence their attitudes to life and their relationship with other people. All teaching staff are responsible for teaching Religious Education to the children in their class.

Discussion of approaches between teachers is vitally essential, and regular discussions occur at our staff meetings and departmental meetings. In addition, all staff are encouraged to attend relevant courses regularly.

Home Links

The school recognises that it cannot teach our children without the cooperation of the parents and the parish. Therefore, the parents/guardians are the first educators and they are in partnership with the teachers who have the professional skills and training to help parents in the task of teaching the Catholic faith.

We endeavour to do this in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. During the year, parents and friends are invited to join us at many celebrations and opportunities for prayer and reflection.



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Every Wednesday, each class is given a copy of the Wednesday Word, it is also published on the school website to encourage children to explore the upcoming Gospels with their families.

Parish Links

Our school works with and is supported by the Parish of St. Simon Stock Church. This includes regular visits from our Parish Priest supporting church programs, facilitation of sacramental preparation, children's liturgy Union of Catholic Mothers.

We give regular support to CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society enabling our children to become aware of the needs of the broader world of children and families overseas. This leads to an appreciation of the diversity of cultures, races and faiths within the world.

Parish Priest

Our parish priest, who is also a governor of the school, has responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community. The parish priest promotes the spiritual life of the 'school church'. He leads the celebration of liturgies, mass, reconciliation and meditation. In addition, the parish priest visits the school regularly to discuss the topics being studied with each class in their R.E. lessons.

Prayer

An essential part of the Catholic ethos of the school is the prayer life. Staff meetings and Governors meetings begin with a prayer. The most important aspect of prayer for children is that they realise it is their way of communicating with God and is, first and foremost, a personal occasion.

Children are encouraged to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development.

The Way, The Truth and The Life programme offers progression for children as they move through school. Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying:

- quiet reflection / meditation
- praying together
- writing own prayers
- prayers through music
- learning traditional Christian / Catholic prayers

Staff are encouraged to pray with children and be an example for them. Through prayer, we endeavour to develop our relationship with God.

All classes have a prayer area that has displays of children's work. This area generally changes with the liturgical year. Class prayers are established throughout the school, and each teacher uses prayers appropriate to the age and ability of the class. Candles, pictures and objects are also used as a focus for worship.



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Children take part in writing and leading collective worship and in whole school assemblies where children and staff join together to pray.

Sacramental Preparation

Through our R.E. scheme, knowledge of all the sacraments is established, emphasising Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation. Years 5 and 6 also learn about the Sacrament of the Sick and Holy Orders.

The children are prepared through the school for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion from Year 3. The course of preparation is carried out at school by staff and Parish Catechists. In this way, we hope to achieve a true partnership between school, family and parish, with the children celebrating their First Communion in their local Church.

Liturgy and Celebration

These are essential moments in the life of St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School; when gathered together around the table of the Lord, the community is nourished and strengthened. Our Masses will reflect the liturgical year and other notable occasions. All children, irrespective of their church affiliation, are involved with the celebration, have a part to play, and identify with what is happening. Masses should encourage participation in the preparation, music, processions, gestures, readings and prayers; staff will ensure that the language and symbols used are appropriate to the age group concerned.

Classes lead an assembly to which their parents are invited. Assemblies are occasions for celebrating the children's work and are experiences of worship when all the children are actively involved.

The assembly's theme is usually based on the class topic or the liturgical year. Class assemblies generally last about twenty minutes and may contain prayers, Bible stories, modern stories with a biblical message, children's prose and poetry, drama, music, dancing and singing.

Discipline and Relationships

We believe that children learn best when they are safe and happy. Therefore, good relationships between staff and children are paramount. We encourage open, honest discussion with children. Particular care is taken when teaching R.E. to ensure consistency between teaching and practice.

Spiritual and Moral Development

The religious character of our school is seen as giving shape to every aspect of school life, especially the spiritual and moral development of our children. Spiritual growth is understood as the development of all those aspects which enable us to appreciate goodness, beauty and truth.

Through our teaching, we hope to enable children to reflect on their life experiences and grow in the knowledge of their feelings, needs and reactions. Through their awareness and understanding of themselves, they will recognise God's action in their lives and come to inner peace and contentment.



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In addition, pupils are taught about the importance of the mission of the Church and the school's contribution to the 'common good' centered around Catholic social teaching.

Helping children make their moral decisions is a crucial part of forming moral conscience. Through our teaching, we aim to help children understand the Gospel of Jesus and, through self-awareness and self-confidence, enable them to come to sound moral judgements.

Multi-Cultural and Multi-Faith

St. Benedict's is a Catholic school. Naturally, therefore, the very religion that causes its existence must be a school that encourages tolerance, respect and care for all people, regardless of colour, race, or creed.

Whilst Religious Education at St Benedict's is of the Christian Roman Catholic tradition; we welcome input from other faiths and denominations. We appreciate how the beliefs and values of other faith communities can enrich our spiritual existence. We teach and learn about the other significant faiths across Key Stage 2 and within our scheme of work, 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'.

The right of withdrawal from Religious Education

Parents are permitted, by law, to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of Religious Education. This request should be made in writing to the Headteacher.

Environment

It is our intention that the environment of our school reflects our mission statement and that we are providing a caring, well-ordered and stimulating environment that reflects our Christian beliefs. Work is displayed in a variety of ways throughout the school. Each classroom has an R.E. area with a display board and prayer area. The displays will reflect the colour theme of the liturgical year.

Bibles, candles, artefacts and pictures are all used to enhance and present our Catholic faith.

What every New Teacher needs to know

- Any questions directly relating to Religious Education should be directed towards the R.E. Lead and subsequently the Headteacher.

It is important that every teacher, when joining the school, becomes familiar with:

- The location of our Parish Church- St. Simon Stock Catholic Church
- The curriculum, 'Lighting The Path' Scheme

Resources

- Resource books for staff can be found in the PPA room
- Posters and pictures are stored in the R.E. cupboard
- The school library has a variety of religious books



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- The mass box and altar cloths can be found under each prayer table. The following resources can be found within the school:
- A class set of Bibles
- A selection of candles
- Other faith resources in the R.E. cupboard

Special Needs

The R.E. curriculum, as with other areas of the curriculum, is differentiated to meet the needs of our children.

In the classroom, we intend:

- To provide a happy, caring environment so that all children can achieve their potential.
- That plans should indicate a variety of learning styles for all children.
- That children's work should show a variety of recordings to suit all abilities.
- That teaching should focus on learning outcomes and provide for individual and group work.
- To build on the child's strengths to allow maximum participation in all activities.
- That all children be allowed to grow spiritually and to develop a strong sense of the value of God's world.

Information Technology

All classes have access to iPads, Chrome books and other ICT equipment, which will enhance R.E. teaching and learning.

Sense of wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ; reflect upon our individual faith journeys; develop prayer skills.