

St. Hubert's RC Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Document purpose

This document reflects the values and philosophy in relation to the teaching and learning of Religious Education at St. Hubert's School. It gives a framework within which all staff work and gives guidance on teaching, planning and assessment. The policy is intended to be read in conjunction with the Curriculum Mapping Document for R.E., the Diocesan Scheme of Work, People of God, which gives details of what pupils in different year groups will be taught and other documents within the R.E. Teacher Handbook.

Audience

This policy document, having been presented to and agreed upon by the whole staff, Parish Priest and governing body, is distributed to all individual members of the teaching and non-teaching staff and school governors. Extra copies of the document are available from the Headteacher.

Subject aims and objectives

"At St. Hubert's, home, school and parish work together as we grow and learn, knowing that God is with us in all we do." (Mission Statement)

"We aim to lead our pupils to a living and active faith by developing their awareness of God's presence in their lives, helping them to know and love God and to respond to God's invitation to enter into a personal relationship with God through reflection, prayer, worship and celebration.

We aim to provide teaching according to the Catholic faith, where the Gospel of Christ is at the heart of school life and the opportunities for a continuing and deepening experience of Christ through prayer and the sacraments are developed.

We aim to work in partnership with the home and parish to create a Catholic Community and to foster education and faith development outside the school, for example, in the home and in the parish.

We aim to promote an awareness, understanding and respect for other religious beliefs and an appreciation of human achievement and aspirations from many cultures."
(from School Aims)

The Religious Education Policy for St. Hubert's School must seek to ensure that the above principles are implemented in our school. Religious Education is the most appropriate vehicle by which these principles can and should be implemented.

The Religious Education provided in a Catholic School cannot be confined to teaching/learning specifically devoted to Religious Education. The school should seek to ensure that the message

and spirit of the Gospel permeates ALL aspects of school life, that it informs the approach to and treatment of the whole curriculum and that it is reflected and communicated in the love and care with which both Staff and Pupils are treated and treat each other.

Nevertheless, specific Religious Education is of central importance.

"It leads children into an exploration of the different aspects of religion and thoughtful reflection upon religious belief." (Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, 1996).

It is a subject which must be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject.

Religious Education in our school should aim to

- nurture pupils' faith
- promote in a gradual way their understanding and appreciation of Catholic teaching and practice
- develop their involvement with the Church community
- develop the ability to show care for others
- foster the pupils' religious, spiritual and moral development
- develop the skills required to be able to examine and reflect on religious belief and practice, including those from other faiths and cultures
- develop understanding of the link between faith and life, life and faith
- develop a sense of awe and wonder

Religious Education should occupy 10% of curriculum time, excluding assemblies and hymn practices.

Organisation

The Scheme adopted by St. Hubert's School has been adapted from the People of God scheme for Religious Education in Primary Schools (Archdiocese of Birmingham, 2002), and aims to implement the RE Curriculum directory. The Scheme provides progression throughout the School within the key areas of Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. It also allows opportunities for monitoring and assessment. The Scheme is intended to link in with other curricular areas; it should be resourced by using Bibles, Missals, Veritas, Children of the Promise, Sacramental Programmes, multicultural resources and other resources appropriate to the Programme of Study. As well as in classrooms, resources for R.E. can be found in the resource area in the resource room and trolleys in the corridor. The R.E. coordinator can advise what is available. A list of resources is also available in the R.E. handbook.

Teaching and learning objectives of the Scheme are:

- to help children become more aware of and to reflect on their experience of living in the world with others (Experiential)
- to reveal to the children some aspect of God's plan for our salvation (Doctrinal)
- to help them respond to God's love in their lives (Moral)
- to help them listen to and respond to God (Prayer)

Prayer has an important role in the scheme and is taught both as an integral and a discrete area of the programme of study. To highlight the importance of Prayer, a separate policy has been written for this area. (See sections 9 and 10 in the R.E. handbook).

Each classroom and the School Hall should have a religious focal point. A Crucifix and a Bible should be displayed in a prominent place. The Prayer Corners should include cloths appropriate to the liturgical season.

SEN provision

Lessons and activities from the scheme should be planned and differentiated sufficiently to allow all children to work at their own ability level, including extending the most able.

Sacramental preparation

Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation is an important and integral part of the Religious Education Scheme. It is important that the whole faith community (children, parents, teachers, priest and parishioners) is involved in this preparation.

The following guidelines are in accordance with those set in the Diocesan policy framework "Communicating Christ".

- First celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation should precede First Holy Communion and should be kept distinct from subsequent preparation for First Holy Communion.
- Preparation should be a continuing process in keeping with the age and moral development of the child.
- The child's privacy should always be respected.

Preparation for all the Sacraments is built into the People of God scheme. Timings of the units have been adapted on the school curriculum mapping document for R.E. to take into account the scheduling of the sacraments in the school/parish/liturgical year. From December 2002, no main supplementary scheme will be followed for Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation, as the People of God scheme is recognised to be superior to any published scheme and the use of a published scheme may lead to aspects being studied out of context, in insufficient depth and without regard to differences in ability. Published schemes, however, may provide valuable supplementary resources and a range of opportunities for parental involvement.

Reconciliation and Eucharist

Catechesis on the Sacrament of the Reconciliation and Eucharist is not confined to the immediate preparation before receiving the sacrament for the first time and instruction should be ongoing throughout the child's school life.

It is important that parents are given the opportunity to be involved in the preparation for the reception of the sacraments, through work at home with the children and through a systematic series of meetings and celebrations, which will include preparatory meetings led by parish catechists and Masses held with the Parish.

Parish links will also be fostered by encouraging parishioners to become prayer sponsors to the children receiving the Sacraments. Within school the children who have been confirmed will be encouraged to act as prayer sponsors for the Y3 children.

Confirmation

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation and the link between Baptism and Confirmation should be made clear. The importance of communal/parish celebration should be observed, with the candidates for Confirmation being presented at an enrolment Mass in the Parish. Parents and parish should be involved in preparation as much as possible: parish catechists will lead part of the programme. Candidates should be made known to the parish, parishioners being invited to act as prayer sponsors, as for First Communion; within school the children from the year below should be encouraged to become prayer sponsors.

Liturgy and celebrations

Celebration of Mass should have an established place in the life of the school. The method of celebration should be adapted to the needs and age of the children within the limits allowed. Class or part-school Masses are important in facilitating a style of celebration which caters especially for the needs of a particular age group. It is also valuable for the children to participate in Masses celebrated by the whole school and to attend Masses in Church (schooldays and Sundays) as well as in the Hall or classroom. Themes for Masses should flow from the children's work or the liturgical calendar.

Celebrations of various kinds have a great part to play in the liturgical formation of the children. Religious Education lessons should include the opportunity for prayer, song, services of reconciliation and activities which show our love and concern for each other.

Collective worship

All pupils should take part in a daily act of collective worship, though not necessarily as a whole school. Collective worship may take the form of a whole school assembly, a Key Stage assembly, Mass, a prayer service or class prayers. It should affirm the School Mission that "God is with us in all we do". For more guidance see section 6 in the R.E. Handbook.

Home/school/parish links

Wherever possible, links with the Parish should be made. The Parish priest is encouraged to come into school on a regular basis and is invited to participate in a range of school activities. Parishioners are invited to attend School Masses and are kept informed of what is going on in School through the posting of School newsletters on the Parish Noticeboard and through mentions in the Parish Bulletin. Likewise Parish events are publicised in School Newsletters. A school/parish Mass on the second Sunday of each month also takes place to further these links. Since 2003, parish catechists have played a leading role in preparing candidates for the sacraments of eucharist and confirmation.

Multi-cultural aspects of Religious Education

'We aim to promote an awareness, understanding and respect for other religious beliefs and an appreciation of human achievement and aspirations from many cultures.'

(School aims).

Multi-cultural education in our school will be based on Christian principles and should reflect the respect that Christ showed for people, regardless of race or cultural background. The study of other faiths is built into the R.E.Scheme with the aim of enabling children to appreciate, understand and respect the beliefs of others while gaining in knowledge and appreciation of their own Catholic faith. We live in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society. Our school must strive to fulfil its function of preparing our children for life in this multi-cultural society.

Inclusion

The implementation of this RE policy is in line with the school's inclusion statement:

"St. Hubert's is an inclusive school guided by the Gospel values that are expressed in our school aims and governors' ethos statement. These aims promote inclusive education in its widest sense in all areas of school life."

Family life education

The R.E.Scheme allows many opportunities for the discussion and appreciation of self, of growth, of love, of marriage and of family life. A growing awareness of the facts of physical changes and human reproduction is also covered in the Science scheme. Family Life Education builds on this and follows the key principles of 'Education for Love' (CES, 1998). From September 2002, the school is adopting the All that I am programme in Year 5 which links social and emotional development with physical development and from May 2004, the All that I am programme will be followed in Y6. More detail of the Family Life programme can be found in a separate policy (see section 18 of R.E. handbook).

Cross-curricular links

Religious Education is seen as having links to work in most curriculum areas and additionally provides opportunities for teaching the following cross-curricular themes:

Citizenship; careers education; and for teaching the following cross-curricular developments: ethnic diversity; equal opportunities; personal and social education.

Literacy links

The R.E.Scheme provides many opportunities for Literacy Links. Relevant texts can be studied as part of the Literacy Hour or as a discrete R.E. exercise; each unit of work has a vocabulary list; it provides the opportunity for writing, including extended writing, using a range of styles, genres and audience; there are many opportunities for speaking and listening, drama and role-play. In particular Religious Education "provides the stimulus for pupils to use their language skills to reflect on and make sense of their own experience as human beings, and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development." (QCA: Religious Education and the use of language, 1998)

Numeracy links

Within R.E., opportunities for maths exist such as conservation of number, number related to chronology and AT1 and other possibilities. Such links should be exploited when the opportunity arises.

ICT

R.E. provides the opportunities for a variety of ICT activities e.g. use of ICT to produce and present work, the use of audio-visual equipment, the internet and CD Roms to research work. Every possible use should be made of ICT to enhance the teaching and learning of Religious Education. Guidance regarding possible opportunities is provided in the R.E. handbook. (Section 17)

Planning, assessment and recording

See separate guidance (sections 12- 16)

Reporting

Teachers are required to report to parents in the end of year school reports.

Resources and accommodation

Religious Education requires the use of the following types of resources: Bibles, reference and story books, prayer books, Missals, pictures, hymn music and religious artefacts. Resources are largely distributed to individual classes to facilitate use. However, some resources are stored centrally in the corridor and the resource room, and a list of these resources has been circulated to all teachers to be kept with the R.E.Policy. The R.E. Co-ordinator reviews the use of these resources. Staff should submit to the co-ordinator lists of any additional resources they require and these will be purchased as the subject budget allows, the amount allocated reflecting the degree of priority given to the subject in the current SDP

Evaluation

The R.E. policy will be reviewed in line with the SDP.