



# **Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School**



## **Religious Education Policy**

**Date of policy: February 2023**

**Next Review: February 2024**



### **Mission Statement**

At Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School, we pride ourselves on being a culturally diverse family. We seek to instill, in every child that we nurture, the joy and wonder of learning.

As we journey together with Christ, we develop children's resilience, intellectual curiosity and creativity through our positive learning behaviours. We nurture and cherish the unique talents of all, empowering them to flourish and grow into life-long learners.

Our mission is to show love, promote learning and belief in God our Father.

### **LOVE – LEARN- BELIEVE**

#### **Rationale of Religious Education**

In the life of faith of the Catholic School, religious education plays a central and vital part. At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian Vision of the Human person. Therefore religious education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process.

The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school. (Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1988)

At Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School we also realise that our children come from a range of backgrounds and abilities and that our teaching of Religious Education will reflect this.

#### **Aims and Objectives in Religious Education**

Through Religious Education at Blessed Dominic we aim to:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the responses of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose.
- Promote the skills required in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.
- Promote, foster and deepen children's spiritual awareness by developing a reflective attitude and a sense of awe respect and wonder.

The objectives of Religious Education at Blessed Dominic are:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ, of the church and of central beliefs which Catholics hold.



- To develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and the vital relationship between faith and life, life and faith.
- To encourage study, investigation and reflection by the pupils and staff.
- To develop appropriate skills, for example, ability to listen, to think, to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively, to make informed judgements.
- To foster appropriate attitudes, respect for truth, for the views of others, awareness of the spiritual and moral responsibilities.
- To develop awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multi-cultural, multi faith society.
- To lead children to a deeper knowledge, understanding and appreciation of other religious faiths.
- To explore the beliefs of other Christian Churches as well as other World Faiths.
- To ensure Religious Education in this school makes a significant contribution to the common good and local and wider community.
- To offer the opportunity to Key Stage 2 children to have an experience, pilgrimage or retreat (Y5- SPEC, TenTen Theatre, Y6- School journey )
- Encourage and develop a personal relationship with God,

### **The Religious Education Programme**

To fulfil our aims we use Margaret Carswell planning documents across the school to support teachers in the planning and delivery of RE. In accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops' Conference, 10% of the timetable is dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education. It integrates the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Levels of Attainment and the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Children explore the mystery of Faith through Scripture and Tradition. Links are made explicitly in planning documents to the resources and plans are adapted to meet the needs of the unique cohort. Lessons are very well resourced with both interactive stimuli, a variety of artefacts and making cross curricular links. There are two topics taught each term and 'other faith' units are also integrated termly into RE classroom teaching. There is a selection of ritual objects, books, videos and posters etc in school. Children visit the Synagogue in Hendon, Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Temple in Neasden, Islamic Cultural Centre in Regents' Park and the Mosque in St John's Wood.



### **Planning**

We are confident that the breadth of the curriculum is being taught and that there is clear progression from year to year. Please refer to Margaret Carswell's unit materials for more detail about planning and curriculum coverage.

The advantages of this approach are:

- Appropriate content for each group is ensured
- Planning and recording are easy
- Continuity and progression across the school are assured
- Communal celebrations are possible

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Each teacher has the responsibility for maintaining records on the children in their class. The school is now in its second year of transitioning towards using the Age Related Standards materials to assess and track children's achievement in RE. Teachers identify where skills have been met in the children's RE books and then record the date and the standard met on the skills tracker which is kept at the front of our RE books.

Each half term, staff will then track which skills have been covered and how well the children have mastered each skill on an Excel document. Each term, an overall teacher judgement will be given to each child using the schools data management system, Insight. This judgement will be based on the work in a child's book and their responses in class. The standards are then thoroughly moderated at phase, school, deanery and Diocesan level throughout the year. The subject leader then analyses attainment and progress at whole class and group level. This information is then used to inform action planning.

Additionally, teachers constantly assess and evaluate their own children's work through discussion, circle time, questioning, observing role play as well as the rigorous marking of RE written work in accordance with the school's marking policy.

Parents receive a written report annually where there are clear indications of what their child has learnt, understood and achieved.

### **Home, School, Parish links**

We recognise the importance of parents as the child's first teacher and their role in faith development. Parents and staff do everything possible to work in close partnership. There are many opportunities for parents to engage in school life.

Blessed Dominic School seeks, in partnership with parents and parish, to develop and nurture the Catholic faith of our children. We strive to bring pupils to a fuller understanding and knowledge of the Catholic tradition.

On Holy Days of Obligation (where circumstances permit) Blessed Dominic School will celebrate mass in the parish church.

Children are prepared for Holy Communion at the parish church of St Margaret Clitherow.

Christmas celebrations take place in the church.



The priest celebrates class masses with KS2 children and leads reconciliation services in the school. We invite parents to our annual Easter presentation.

**Parents are:**

- Given a warm welcome when they visit our school.
- Given termly curriculum overviews which inform them of the topics covered in class, as well as ways they can support their child's learning.
- Given the Wednesday Word each week so they can share the message of the Gospel with their children
- Given an opportunity to give support/input with their child's RE homework.
- Given weekly newsletters
- Given a verbal report on their child's RE development during Parents Evenings.
- Given a written report on their child's RE development at the end of the year.
- Given opportunities to support their child during First Holy Communion preparation by attending meetings and working at home on aspects of the programme
- Given opportunities to be involved in all charity activities during the year for school or for the wider community.

**Classroom worship**

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship. All staff have access to the Children's Liturgy toolkit.

**The Religious Education Subject Leader**

The first purpose of the RE subject leader's role is to help improve the quality of the teaching and learning that the pupils receive in Religious Education.

The subject leader is responsible for:

- Writing and keeping relevant documentation up to date
- Co-ordinating the teaching throughout the school by encouraging collaboration between year groups or key stages
- Being involved in the process of assessment, recording and reporting
- Monitoring the quality of teaching, the progression and continuity of Religious Education throughout the school.
- Offering support and advice to colleagues
- Identifying resource requirements
- Maintaining a strong relationship between the school and the Diocese, and with the school's Diocesan advisor
- Maintaining the high status of worship within the school
- With the headteacher, completing the Religious Education action plan and using it to inform the School Improvement Plan
- Keeping resources well stored, catalogued and available
- Ensuring that the Curriculum Directory is understood and being followed



## **Inclusion**

In Religious Education we recognise the need for resourcing, careful planning and differentiation to cater for children of all abilities ranging from the gifted children to those of low ability. RE presents a particular challenge to teachers in that all classes contain pupils who may not have good literacy skills but are very able and insightful in RE. Again, these pupils must be catered for at an appropriate level.

## **Environment and Display**

From the moment you enter Blessed Dominic you know you are in a Catholic school. Certificates and thank you letters for the children's charity work are clearly on display. Each classroom has a prayer area in a prominent place of the classroom and a display dedicated to current learning in Religious Education. As you move around the school, there are a number of displays showing the children's religious art work, statues of saints and prayer areas.

## **Resources**

Each class has a prayer focus with a selection of books and artefacts where children can gather together for acts of worship.

The library has a selection of religious books for children. A larger selection of reference, religious festivals and multi-faith resource books and assembly books are available in the Resource Cupboard and from the RE Co-ordinator.

Artefact boxes for the main world faiths are currently being updated and replenished. These can be found in the Resource Cupboard.

A set of bibles is available for each class from Year 1 upwards.

Sacred vessels, candles, altar cloths etc are kept in the Head teacher's office.

Each class has a set of resources to support child led worship.

## **Wider Community**

We at Blessed Dominic encourage involvement with the community. At the heart of a vibrant and caring community, Blessed Dominic's close network of local partners help to drive exceptional outcomes for children. Partners are also invited to our special events such as masses, the Christmas nativity, the carol service, and summer concert. We hold special celebrations and assemblies annually to thank our partners. Across the curriculum, we aim to deliver full engagement and learning for each child. As well as promoting cohesion, community and partner engagement enhances our children's progress, resilience and resourcefulness by facilitating:

- a curriculum that is constantly challenging and innovative;
- a richer school environment;
- direct mentoring support;
- a range of encounters with possible professions;



- 'hosting' or 'curating' of children's work; and
- a learning culture giving the freedom to experience, experiment and discover.

### **Presentation**

Children will present their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways:

- By discussion and written work.
- Research and collating of evidence.
- By visual presentation including drama, role play and class assemblies.
- By whole school and class celebrations, liturgies and masses.
- By art and written displays in class and around the school.
- Through ICT. Power point presentations, videoing, photographs, DVDs etc
- Colleagues are encouraged to expect the highest standards from the children taking care that displays and the learning environment reflect this.

### **Creative Curriculum Links**

"We believe that Religious Education is not one subject among many but, the foundation of the entire education process" (Bishops of England and Wales).

In accordance with this statement we believe that Religious Education is at the heart of what we teach and therefore permeates the whole curriculum. It is reflected in our prayer life and liturgy, in our personal and extended relationships and through developing awareness in our children of the need to appreciate and care for the wider community and world in which we teach.

### **APPENDIX 1**

**Colours:** purple for penance, red for Holy Spirit and martyrdom, white, gold for important feasts, green for the ordinary times of the year, blue is associated with Mary.

#### **Other special focus times**

Some months of the year have special foci.

**October** is the month of the Rosary – blue

**November** is the month when the Holy Souls (the deceased) are prayed for especially

**May** is the month when Mary is especially remembered – blue

**June** is the month of the Sacred Heart when we remember especially the great love Jesus has for us.