

Christian Ethos Policy

Introduction

In Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 2340, Education, England, made on 29th August 2008, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families exercised powers conferred by section 69(3) of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998(a), as applied to independent schools by section 124B(b) of that Act, and designated Heritage School as a School Having a Religious (Christian) Character.

This policy explains how the Christian character of Heritage School is manifested.

Assemblies

At Heritage School, our assemblies are of a broadly Christian nature. They include presentations about Christian beliefs and values. This is done in a manner that respects diversity of beliefs both at Heritage School and in society more widely and the need for students to form their own reasoned convictions. Assemblies normally include singing Christian hymns. Assemblies are closed with a collective Christian prayer.

The Curriculum

At Heritage School the Christian faith is manifest in the following ways in our curriculum:

- Scripture readings feature regularly.
- Biographies of important figures in the history of the church are read as part of our Religious Studies curriculum.
- The Religious Studies curriculum includes discussion of a wide range of religious, philosophical and ethical perspectives. It is weighted toward Christianity, and it will include reference where appropriate to Christian perspectives on other religious, philosophical or ethical positions so students can develop a critical awareness of similarities and differences.

Admissions

As noted in our Equalities Policy, Heritage School does not make adherence to the Christian faith an admissions criteria. Students of all faiths or none are equally welcome.

Adherence to the Christian faith as a Genuine Occupational Requirement

All employees at Heritage School need to declare their willingness to be supportive of and act in keeping with our Christian ethos. It is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for classroom practitioners (teachers and teaching assistants) to be practising Christians able authentically to participate in the religious life of the school and the staff community and appropriately to commend Christian beliefs and values. In the Senior School, Trustees may make specific exceptions to this policy in certain subjects, on the understanding that all teachers must agree at a minimum to speak and act in ways that are consistent with the Christian Ethos of the school.

The work of Heritage School rests upon Christian ideals, beliefs and values. To detach our work from these convictions is to invite a gradual weakening of our common life and the high ideals which motivate our work.

Appendix

A statement of our (Christian) Ethos can be found on our website. It says:

Every culture has a gravitational centre, a set of ideas and values which provide inspiration and direction, and which bring coherence to the whole. The Christian faith has provided such a centre-point for millions of people over thousands of years, as well as for many outstanding institutions and even whole societies, and it anchors the work of Heritage School.

It shapes our understanding of the human person, including the high value we place upon each person, and of healthy human development. It means we resist reductionism. It encourages us to place the highest priority upon considerate relationships and to work for a culture marked by kindness. It also offers plausible answers to the big questions of human existence, which children are generally very ready to explore. Amongst staff, Christian faith provides inspiration for our task and a shared purpose.

How does this impact the curriculum? In two ways. First, Christian beliefs and values are explored in assemblies, Christian hymns are sung and we finish with a corporate prayer. Second, short Bible readings feature in the curriculum, with a particular focus upon the most well-known stories. We think all students should be aware of the contents of the Bible given its far reaching historical and cultural significance.

Heritage encourages pupils to form their own reasoned convictions, wherever this leads them. Our deep respect for the child as a person, and our commitment to the principle of self-education, means we reject any form of manipulation. Heritage warmly welcomes children from all backgrounds.

Authorised by	Jason Fletcher
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