

Bethany
School
Finlay street
Sheffield
S3 7PS

Information pack

An independent
Christian,
Family, School
educating
children aged
four to sixteen.



When Did It All Start?

A public meeting called in the summer of 1986 was the starting point for Bethany School. From that meeting a small group of Christian parents from a number of churches began to plan the opening of a Christian school in the city. The school began in September 1987 with 12 pupils and 1 paid teacher meeting in rented rooms at the Sheffield YMCA. Since then the school met in various church premises, before finding a permanent home in the Netherthorpe area of Sheffield in 2001. Since its small beginnings Bethany school has grown to around 90 pupils, with several paid members of staff and many unpaid volunteer workers.



How Is The School Managed?

A Board of Governors, who are, or have been, parents of the children attending the school, manages Bethany School. All parents have an active role in running the school and meet regularly to discuss, plan and pray for the work of the school. The day to day running of the school is in the hands of the Head Teacher, who is accountable to the Board of Governors.

What Is Christian Education?

There are probably about one hundred of the new Christian Schools in the U.K. In such schools it is considered vital that

education is consistent with biblical teaching. Christian Education is not simply a good idea, for us, it is a matter of biblical principle. A harmful mistake which dominates many Christians' thinking on education is the view that knowledge is 'neutral'; that it is possible to teach in a way which does not reveal a religious view of the world; that, for example, the Christian and the non-Christian will view science or history or literature in the same way. However, we believe that true Christianity cannot simply be the religious icing that we put on top of a secular cake; it is our whole life. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 10:5,

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

In this task the Bible is our starting point. Christians take a distinctive view of the origin and purpose of life. Science is not the study of impersonal chance laws, it is the study of God's created order and design. History is not the examination of random events or the march of progress; for the Christian, history is the unfolding of God's plan. No school subject is neutral! If a school leaves God out of the curriculum the school is making a religious statement, namely that God is not relevant to the majority of life, that life can be interpreted without reference to God. This is little more than the practical atheism of our secular schools.



The Governors believe that the Bible places prime responsibility upon parents for the physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, spiritual and social development of their children. The School's

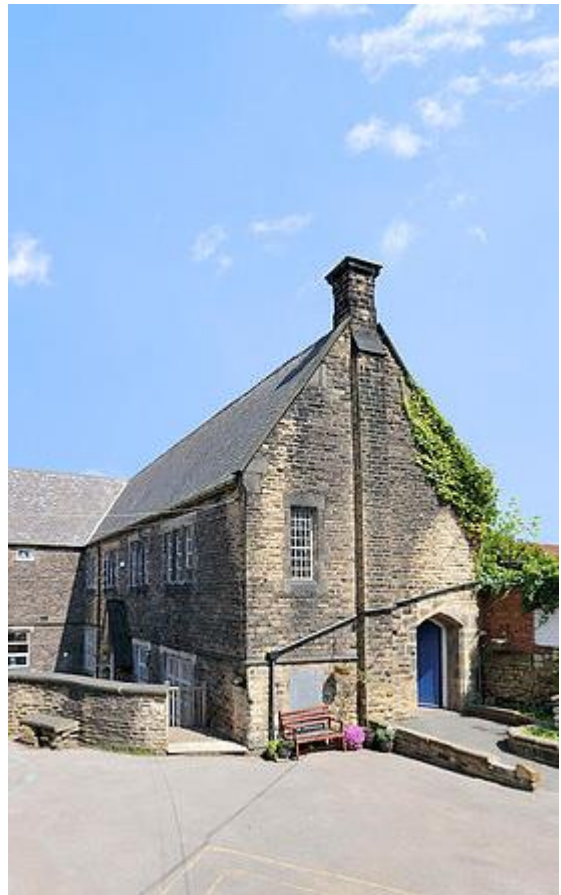
aim is to work in partnership with parents in order to help them fulfil their biblical obligations.

The idea of the school as an extension of each family has had a considerable effect upon the way in which Bethany School has developed. It is to supplement rather than take the place of the family. The school must never be so large that it loses the familiarity, informality and the caring discipline which should be features of family life; and perhaps most importantly, parents should be involved in the education of their children alongside those who, because of training, may have greater experience. Professional teachers assist parents at Bethany, they do not replace them.

Our Aims and Purpose

Again, we need to look to God's word to discover what the school should be trying to achieve.

We see our children as God's gift to our families (Psalm 127:3), wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14), but conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5) and in need of redemption (Romans 3:23). We recognise our duty to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Galatians 6:4) and that knowledge, wisdom and understanding are especially valued by God (Proverbs Chapters 1-5). We want to see each child thoroughly equipped for good works which will commend Christ in this world (2 Timothy 3:15-17) and prepared in heart, soul,



mind and strength for life in the world to come (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37).

Thus our aims and purpose in education are to complement the role of the family and the church and reflect what we believe are God's priorities for our children.

Aims of Bethany School

To serve the families involved with the school by helping them:

- To provide each child with a biblical understanding to equip the child for practical living in this world and encourage the child's awareness of spiritual and eternal realities.
- To help children develop an understanding which is relevant to all their roles in adult life.
- To develop in children an understanding of society in both place and time.
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of humankind's cultural activities.
- To develop an understanding of scientific and technological activities, both in the past and in the present.
- To develop an understanding of and respect towards the natural world.
- To develop in children an understanding of man's unique role in creation and their opportunities and limitations.
- To help children develop those fundamental life skills which are necessary in order to achieve all other aims.

Curriculum Model

Our curriculum is broadly based on nine themes found in the early chapters of the book of Genesis. Each theme provides the starting point for one term's work, developed initially by parents and teachers and followed, as part of a three year cycle, at an appropriate level, by all pupils from Reception to Year 9.

	Autumn term	Spring term	Summer term
Year A	Beginnings	Work	Water
Year B	Dry land	Living things	People
Year C	The earth in space	Communication	Nations



We do not follow the National Curriculum at Bethany School because we are committed to developing our own distinctively Christian curriculum, based upon biblical principles and led by God. However, we will continue to keep abreast of current educational thought, sift and weigh it and be

discriminating in its use. The whole school, including the curriculum, comes under the scrutiny of the government's schools inspectors. Inspections of the school have resulted in very encouraging and complimentary comments. Parents are committed to actively supporting and building on the work done in the school curriculum, at home.

Bethany School is able to prepare pupils for a range of G.C.S.E. examinations. Courses, which are offered, include:

- Mathematics
- English Language
- English Literature
- Combined Science: Trilogy (two subjects)
- French
- Art
- Design and Technology
- Religious Studies
- History

- Drama
- Computer Science

The GCSE Options booklet is available on request.

More detailed curriculum materials which emphasise our distinctively Christian, topic-based approach can be viewed at the school.

This material includes:

Topic Theme Outlines

Biblical Contexts for Topic Themes

Curriculum Grids which give an overview of main curriculum areas

Schemes of Work for the current term

School Organisation

The school organisation is based around the five main class groups.

Reception: reception and year 1	(ages 4 – 5)
Infant: years 2 and 3	(ages 6 – 8)
Junior: years 4 – 6	(ages 9 – 11)
Senior: years 7 – 9	(ages 12 – 14)
GCSE: years 10 – 11	(ages 15 – 16)

Throughout the school, pupils are taught using a variety of approaches including traditional ways with, for example, spelling, grammar, tables and mental arithmetic as well as more recently developed methods and tools (e.g. ICT).



Daily Routine

Detailed information is available in our Organisation of the School Day document, but an outline of our programme is given below.

	8.30 9.00	9.00 – 10.30	10.30 10.45	10.45 – 12.15	12.15 13.00	13.00 – 2.30
Monday	Prayers	Teaching session 1	Break	Teaching session 2	Lunch	Teaching session 3
Tuesday		Teaching session 1		Teaching session 2		Teaching session 3
Wednesday		Teaching session 1		Teaching session 2		Family Afternoon
Thursday		Teaching session 1		Teaching session 2		Teaching session 3
	8.30 – 10.00	10.00 10.15	10.15 – 11.45	11.45 12.15		
Friday	Teaching session 1	Break	Teaching session 2	Prayers	No afternoon school	

A distinctive feature of Bethany School is the Family Afternoon. This is the part of the school timetable planned, organised and staffed by the parents. Activities include visits, walks, craftwork, games, visiting speakers, films or sport and where possible they are linked to the Topic Theme. Parents are expected to be involved on each Family Afternoon and are responsible for their own children. A Family Afternoon Brochure is available from the school.



At Bethany School we have deliberately chosen to have a shorter school day and for the school week to finish at lunchtime on Friday. Holiday dates are generally in line with the state school holidays but on occasions may be slightly longer.

Parents understand that they are committed to being involved in the education of their own children and that this time can be used for some form of home education.

Staffing and Parental Involvement

Bethany School currently employs five full time and five part time teachers. Parents and friends, some of whom have teaching experience, but all with relevant gifts and expertise also teach or assist with the teaching across the full range of age and ability. This means that we have up to twenty staff directly involved with the children each week; so class sizes tend to be small. Parents work at home with their children and are also responsible for other aspects of school life. Examples include: repairs, financial matters, administration, duties, fund raising, display and publicity. Each year parents commit themselves to assisting in specific areas. Every adult who has a curriculum responsibility and works with the children has to have the relevant DBS checks.



Admission Procedure

Visits to the school should be arranged so that parents (and children) can see the school in operation and feel fully informed before applying for admission. The Organisation of the School Day Document, the Commitments Document and the Behaviour and Discipline Policy are referred to and issued during the school visit. Both parents will need to visit the school before application forms can be accepted. When application forms are received further discussions with the family are arranged. The informal

meeting with two of our Governors is designed to see if the needs of the family and the school can be satisfactorily met. The class teacher may also be asked to spend some time with the child before admission is finalised. If a place at Bethany School is to be offered then the date for entry will be decided at the Governors' Meeting following the home visit.

The Financial Commitment

Bethany School receives no financial support from the government or Local Authority. We rely upon the sacrificial giving of each family who will all commit to give something. This method of financing the school assumes a high level of financial sacrifice from each family. The running costs of the school are substantial and almost all our income comes from the families involved with the school, supplemented by gifts from friends and occasional grants from financial trusts. Gifts are generally given on a monthly basis, by standing order and if possible, using a covenant scheme. At Bethany School we **give** to a cause we believe in rather than **pay** for a private education.

The Future



We intend that Bethany should remain a small, friendly school run by and for the parents and children involved with the school. We do not want the school to become so large that we lose the caring, informal, family feel. When our

school is full we would hope that parents seeking a Christian education for their children would be able to set up the next Christian Family School with help, encouragement and support from Christian Family Schools Limited and everyone at Bethany.

Further Information

In the experience of most of our families, an understanding of Christian Education is a process, which involves an unfolding of truths from God's word and a realignment of our own understanding of the nature and purpose of Education.

We expect that families will be interested in a more purposeful study of the challenging concept of Christian Education and each year we run an induction course for new families.

The themes covered include:

What is Biblical Parenting?

What is a Christian Family School?

What is Christian Education?



The school's policy folder is located in the school office and is available to view on request. School policies are also posted on the school website.

Policies include:

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Safeguarding

- Complaints (including number of formal complaints each year)
- Curriculum
- First Aid
- Health and Safety (including DDA Accessibility Plan)

Particulars of the academic performance of the school is posted on our website or available from the school office on request. Information regarding staff employed by the school, and their qualifications, is available and can be obtained by contacting the school.

We are happy to come and speak about Bethany School to churches, teachers, student groups or groups of interested parents. If you would like to hear more about Christian education or have any questions or concerns, please contact the school.

Please contact us to arrange a visit...

Head Teacher: Mr. David Charles

Chair of Governors: Mr. Ben Udejiofo

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