



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

"Live, love and learn in a caring Christian Community"

Catholic Life and Mission Policy

Catholic Life and Mission

When Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment, the answer is the same in all three of the synoptic Gospels: *'to love God with all your mind, heart, soul and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself.'* This call to love is at the heart of the educational mission of our Catholic school.

It is a mission that is clearly echoed in the Second Vatican Council and Gravissimum Educationis which teaches that the purpose of an education that is distinctively Catholic is threefold -

- 'Firstly, to ensure that all pupils understand the faith that gives the school its identity as a Catholic school.
- Secondly, it is to ensure that all are invited to learn how to worship God in spirit and truth through the prayer and liturgy of the Church.
- Thirdly, is the formation of all to live in conformity with the pattern of human goodness, truth, and justice that we find in Jesus Christ.'¹

This threefold mission is reflected in the three perspectives of the Catholic School Inspection process. Through religious education pupils are invited to love God with all their mind, through collective worship with all their heart, soul and strength and through the Catholic life and mission of the school to love their neighbour as themselves.

This policy on Catholic life and mission complements St Joseph's Religious Education policy, our Prayer and Liturgy policy and our Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy.

The aim of this policy is to show how faithfully St Joseph's responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Mission Statement

"Live, love and learn in a caring Christian Community"

Our mission statement is the foundation of school life so all:

- Pupils have a clear understanding of its meaning and can articulate this at an age-appropriate level
- Staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities *for example through our* behaviour expectations, our staff expectations, our shared worships and our rigorous academic expectations.

¹ CSI Inspection Handbook, page 2

- Parents and the wider community are informed about the statement through weekly newsletters, emails, invites into school, attending Masses and worships, school policy documents, our website and at parents' meetings.

School Environment

Visitors to St Joseph's are aware of the distinctive Catholic nature of our school through the physical environment, including the presence of images, symbols and statues in all areas of the school.

At St Joseph's every effort is made to provide a spiritually uplifting, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment:

- The entrance of our school is welcoming and reflects our Catholic identity. We have our school mission statements, welcome book and images of our religious visitors.
- Our entrance display reflects the liturgical season
- All rooms have a *crucifix/cross*
- All *classrooms have an attractive, well maintained prayer focal point.*
- Each classroom *has a 'liturgy' box with liturgical coloured cloths and good quality religious artefacts*
- There are displays in the corridors which reflect our *Mission Statement and the current liturgical season*
- Displays around the school celebrate our pupil groups for example: *the School Council, Eco-Council, Chaplaincy Team. Floor books in each class and around the school reflect the continued work in school.*
- *Our school has a prayer garden which children can use at their own choosing, throughout the day. The studio area is currently being developed into an indoor prayer area.*

Curriculum

'The Catholic vision of education is distinctive and the beliefs it holds, the values and aspirations it has must inspire the whole of the curriculum.'²

Our school is a community of learning with a distinctive educational philosophy which is based on the Gospels. Whilst Religious Education is at the core of the core curriculum, this philosophy permeates all our curriculum and activities as we recognise the needs of each individual member of the community.

At an age-appropriate level, children are introduced to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, using resources designed for schools such as the Rooted in Love or CAFOD resources. We use age-appropriate resources to explore the teaching of the Magisterium in this area, including encyclicals such as *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, as well as the DoCat, a condensed version of the Social Doctrine of the Church. In this way we are building our pupils' character (virtues) and moral compass, enabling them to respond to social and ethical issues in the world.

Pupils and staff are encouraged to engage with a range of awards that recognise the work that we do to implement Catholic Social Teaching.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is taught in a Catholic context recognising we are all made in God's image and likeness and fulfils the Department of Education, CES and Diocesan requirements. See our RSE Policy.

² CSI Framework

Other faiths are taught as part of the RE curriculum, Dialogue and Encounter. See our RE policy. Learning about the religion and cultures of those who do not share the Catholic faith is one of the ways in which Catholic schools embody the call to love one's neighbour. It prepares our children for life in modern Britain, giving them an understanding of the beliefs of others.

Charitable outreach

We aim to foster and develop an awareness of the needs of others: locally, nationally, and globally, and promote a spirit of generosity and compassion as taught by Jesus Christ. In assemblies, RE lessons, PSHE and RSE pupils learn about Catholic Social Teaching and Fratelli Tutti. Pupils learn that they must look after the environment and stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable.

Our Chaplaincy Teams supported by Year 6 leaders take part in projects over the year:

- Harvest – children are encouraged to bring in food for local foodbanks and the school is a permanent collection point for donations throughout the year.
- At Remembrance, we sell poppies and related merchandise to raise funds for the Royal British Legion. We also take part in the local community remembrance service.
- In Advent, we invite parents to join in our reverse advent calendar. We then link with our local foodbank and support them in creating food parcels.
- During Lent we raise funds for CAFOD through activities such as The Big Lent Walk.
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes throughout the year chosen by the pupils e.g. a fun run for the RSPCA or MacMillan cake sale. (linked with our Parents Association)
- The Eco-Council group have enhanced the way we look at energy use in our school. They are also in the process of developing nature areas around the school.

Pupils are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in the community. It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture a generous giving of self, and an appreciation and respect for others.

Working for Social Justice

Pupils are also taught the importance of standing up for social justice as an important aspect of Catholic life. There are planned opportunities for pupils to engage in campaigns for social justice:

- Writing to our MP for the 'Make the Change' campaign
- Work for climate change e.g., Switch off fortnight, walk to school week, water saving etc
- Supporting Fairtrade Fortnight
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness

Chaplaincy

The spirituality and prayer life of the school are an evident part of its Catholic life and mission policy. The Prayer and Liturgy policy details the school provision. Chaplaincy provision at St Joseph's plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of member of our Year 6 group led by the Prayer and Liturgy Lead. Their role is to support each member of the school community to grow in their faith and to be part of the pastoral care system in school. They do this by:

- Maintaining and developing class prayer areas/RE classroom prayer focal point

- Maintaining and developing communal prayer areas/chapel
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school Celebration of the Word.
- Offering opportunities for informal pupil led prayer during break or lunch times
- Organising retreat days, days of recollection
- Undertaking large projects such as developing a prayer garden/eco-area
- Keeping the pupils updated with information about donations to charity, such as for foodbanks and CAFOD
- Supporting and organising campaigns for social justice
- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence and joy where applicable
- *Writing and leading whole school acts of worship, such as the Remembrance Service*
- *Accompanying members of the school community, especially in times of need*

School Community

St Joseph's is a welcoming place for children, families, and members of staff from all faiths and none. We value everyone as precious and unique creations made in God's image. We therefore go the extra mile to understand each person's needs and enable them to live and pray in fidelity to their own beliefs and commitments, for example:

- We actively work to make our school anti-racist and have a RJED policy
- Staff are given safe space to pray should they wish to

Recognising that Christ is at the centre of our school we strive to support and value each member, especially the most vulnerable. Our behaviour policy is driven by our belief that all are unique and made in God's image and likeness. See our Behaviour Policy.

Through our work in RE children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family. St Joseph's recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works collaboratively with local Catholic schools in the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust, across the diocese, we also work with our local non-Catholic schools to ensure all school flourish.

At St Joseph's all are encouraged to live life to the full and reach their full potential. Members of staff have opportunities to take part in the diocesan training such as CCRS and Foundation Stones. New teachers are enrolled on the Diocesan New to Catholic Education or ECT training as part of their induction to teaching in a Catholic school.

Parents

Parents are the first teachers of their pupils, and we work in partnership with them.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year which include: curriculum meetings, whole school Masses, celebrations of the word, prayers which take place both in school and at St Joseph and the English Martyrs Church.

They are encouraged to participate with their children for example:

- During the year 'prayer bears' are sent home in the EYFS and KS1 and Prayer Books in KS2 to encourage families to spend time praying together
- During October and May, parents are encouraged to join our Rosary Club before school

- Parents are encouraged to join the PTA to help organise and host a range of events for our school community. All funds raised support and enhanced the provision we offer for our pupils and families.

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. St Joseph's operates an open-door policy.

Parish Links

Links with the local parish are a vital part of Catholic life in school. The parish which serves our school are St Joseph and the English Martyrs.

- Pupils visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church.
- The priest also supports the teaching of curriculum RE in school by visiting to talk about various topics such as baptism, reconciliation and vocation.
- Links with the priest are strengthened as he celebrates various liturgies in the school with the pupils and staff, including Mass and the commissioning of the Chaplaincy Team.
- We also share communications from the parish priest with our school community to encourage attendance at church, participation in the sacraments and involvement in church events.

The Coordinator/Lead for Catholic Life and Mission

The Coordinator for Catholic life and mission is Lisa McLaughlin.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Catholic Life and Mission Senior Leader and the Headteacher and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every three years, with the Governors playing an important role in this process.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Senior Leader/Coordinator for Catholic Life and Mission

Responsibility:

- Formulating a written policy for the school's Catholic life and mission
- Ensuring that there is a strategic development plan for Catholic life and mission included in the school development plan
- Developing staff confidence and expertise and enabling them to articulate the mission of the school and its impact on life
- Ensuring that pupils can explain the Catholic life and mission of the school, appropriate to their age, aptitudes, and faith backgrounds
- Ensuring pupils understand Catholic Social Teachings and are given the opportunity to pro-actively respond to their demands locally, nationally, and globally
- Organising a timetable of charitable support and involvement in social justice campaigns that are linked to the strategic development plan.

Planning, recording, monitoring, and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Ensuring relevant non-liturgical days are marked in school
- Monitoring and evaluating the school's Catholic life and mission; making judgements on outcomes, provision and leadership of Catholic life and mission to inform the ongoing work on the school Catholic Self Evaluation Document (CSED)

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance of Catholic life and mission in the life of a Catholic school
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Catholic life and mission
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Catholic life and mission
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaising with the school chaplain/Chaplaincy team
- Liaising with the Diocesan Education Service

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation on the Catholic life and mission of the school
- Attending appropriate CPD courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources and contacts
- Ensuring resources are available to promote the Catholic life and mission of the school