ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Religious Education Policy

September 2026

Contents Page

o St John's Catholic Primary School Mission Statement

o Vision and Mission of Catholic Schools *('To know you more clearly' RED Directory)*

o Overview of Religious Education

o Leadership of Religious Education

o Teaching of Religious Education

o Monitoring of Religious Education

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of St. John's Catholic Primary School is to grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus by being: responsible, caring, prayerful, creative, independent, thoughtful, curious and respectful. We live our Mission by:

- Ensuring that our attitudes and values are transmitted through a curriculum that is consistent with the Catholic faith
- Delivering a curriculum that is relevant, varied, interesting, stimulating, balanced and appropriate
- Developing policies and schemes of work which recognise that R.E. is an integral part of the curriculum
- Developing sound teaching and effective classroom management
- Generating a positive attitude to learning where realistic expectations of pupils and high standards of work are expected
- Using a variety of teaching approaches that reflect the needs of individual pupils
- Participating in projects which focus on the needs of others including local and international charities

St. John's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school, established by the Church to serve the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Trowbridge, St. Bernadette's, Westbury and St. Thomas More, Bradford-on-Avon.

The Vision and Mission of Catholic Schools

'*The Church sees education as an integral part of its mission to proclaim God as the Creator, Christ as Redeemer and the Holy Spirit as inspirer of all that is good in human living. The people of God have always looked to Christ as teacher, and teaching forms an integral part of God's redemptive work in Christ. Therefore the process of education is holy, and since the world in which we live belongs to God, all teaching and learning are related to God in some way.'*

• Catholic schools are established to support parents in their responsibility for their children's education, and to contribute to the fulfilment of the Church's mission to educate.

• Catholic schools provide the context within which teaching and learning are planned and take place in a structured way and in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

• The overall purpose of the school is to prepare young people for their life as Christians in the community and to enable them to serve as witnesses to moral and spiritual values in the wider world.

• Catholic schools have the duty to care for the poor and to educate those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged. This care will be evident both in day-to-day relationships, and in school policies and practices.

• The responsibility for enabling the Catholic school to be faithful to its mission is shared, in different ways, by every member of the community. Governors have a legal responsibility to ensure that the school in all aspects is managed and organized in the light of Christian values and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

• In a Catholic school the head teacher is challenged to follow the example of Christ in providing direction and leadership for a community of faith which is part of the mission of the Diocese, and encouraging members of that community to share in leadership as appropriate, and to contribute their own gifts and insights.

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is central to the life and mission of our school and underpins our Religious Education policy. At St John's Catholic Primary School we refer to the seven CST themes as follows*, Dignity of the Human Person, Family & Community, Option for the Poor and Vulnerable, Rights and Responsibilities, Dignity of Work, Solidarity and the Common Good and Stewardship.*

Rooted in the Gospel and the lived tradition of the Church, CST provides a moral and spiritual framework that helps pupils understand how faith calls us to act justly, love generously and live responsibly in the world. Through Religious Education, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the dignity of every human person, our call to serve the common good, and our responsibility to care for one another and for creation.

The seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching are the golden thread running through everything we do as a school. They shape our curriculum, inform our relationships, and guide our approach to teaching, learning and pastoral care. By embedding these principles across school life, we aim to form young people who not only know about their faith, but who are inspired to live it out through compassion, solidarity and a commitment to justice. In this way, Religious Education supports pupils in becoming

thoughtful, active citizens who seek to make a positive difference in their communities and become change makers for the good in the wider world.

Overview of Religious Education

Aims of religious education at St John's Catholic Primary School

The aims of religious education are:

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;

2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;

3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;

4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;

5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;

6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;

7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

Outcome of religious education

The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously engaged pupils who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Religious education as the heart of the curriculum

1. Religious education is the *core of the core* curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.

2. Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.

3. Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.

4. Religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time

Compliance with the Religious Education Directory

1. The Religious Education Directory includes the programmes of study approved by the Bishops' Conference for the various age groups. The competence for approving these programmes of study is currently exercised by the Department of Education and Formation, but the Bishops' Conference can delegate this function to another department, commission, or committee of the Conference.

2. Catholic schools are required to comply with the Religious Education Directory.

Leadership of RE

Headteacher's responsibilities:

• Ensure 10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education in line with the Bishops' Conference requirements.

• Safeguard the Catholic ethos of the school, making RE the "core of the core curriculum."

• Oversee the quality of teaching and learning in RE through monitoring, evaluation, and feedback.

• Provide access to ongoing professional development for staff, including theological and pedagogical training.

• Ensure curriculum planning and assessment are in line with diocesan guidance and national frameworks.

• Promote high expectations and academic rigour in RE, equal to other core subjects.

• Integrate RE with the wider Catholic life of the school, linking it to prayer, liturgy, and Gospel values.

• Work in partnership with governors, parish priests, and parents to strengthen Catholic identity and mission.

• Celebrate and share pupils' achievements in RE, recognising both academic progress and spiritual growth.

• Lead by example, demonstrating a personal commitment to faith, prayer, and the mission of the Church in education.

Religious Education Leader's responsibilities:

• To be a practicing Catholic or aware and informed on the Catholic faith

• To take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in R.E. throughout the school

• To support colleagues in their development of work plans and implementation of the scheme of work in assessment and record keeping activities

• To monitor progress in R.E. following the policy for monitoring the curriculum within the school and advise the head teacher on action needed within the subject

• To meet with the named governors for Religious Education on a regular basis

• To be a member of the SLT

• Ensure that Religious Education is on the SDP

• To take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of resources for R.E.

• To keep up-to-date with development in R.E. and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate

• To keep governors and head teacher informed of developments in R.E. (termly meeting with appointed governors for Religious Education)

• To attend cluster group meetings arranged by the diocese

• To ensure that the development of the staff in the Catholic Faith is ongoing

• To ensure that staff meetings for R.E. are timetabled

• To ensure that displays relating to R.E. are in keeping with the standards expected throughout the school

• In consultation with the head and governors ensure that the policies of the school are in keeping with the Catholic Faith

• To provide support and guidance for members of staff who are not familiar with the teaching of the Catholic faith

Class teacher's responsibilities:

• Deliver RE as the "core of the core curriculum", ensuring it is taught with the same academic rigor as other core subjects.

• Follow diocesan and national guidance for RE, using approved schemes of work and ensuring lessons are faithful to Catholic teaching.

• Plan engaging, inclusive lessons that enable all pupils, including SEND and disadvantaged learners, to make progress in knowledge, understanding, and faith

• Create a prayerful and respectful classroom environment where Gospel values are lived and witnessed.

• Differentiate learning effectively, providing scaffolding and challenge so every child can access and deepen their understanding.

• Use a range of assessment strategies (oral, written, creative, reflective) to capture pupils' progress and inform future planning.

• Encourage pupil voice, giving children opportunities to question, reflect, and express their faith in age-appropriate ways.

• Link RE to Catholic life and liturgy, helping pupils connect classroom learning to prayer, worship, and service.

• Model Catholic values in practice, both in teaching and in daily interactions with pupils.

• Work with parents, parish, and colleagues to strengthen pupils' spiritual formation and sense of belonging to the Church.

Catholic Standards and Vision

This strategic group is represented by the Headteacher, RE Lead, Deputy Headteacher, RE Governor and Prayer and Liturgy Leader. The Catholic Standards and Vision Group exists to ensure that the distinctive Catholic character of the school is lived out and continually strengthened. Its purpose is to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision for Catholic life, with a particular focus on the teaching of Religious Education, the richness of the school's prayer life, and the way Catholic values are embedded across the whole community. By reviewing practice, celebrating strengths, and identifying areas for growth, the group helps to nurture a culture where faith is at the heart of learning, worship, and daily life. Through this, the group supports the school in fulfilling its mission to provide an excellent education rooted in Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching.

Prayer & Liturgy Faculty

The Prayer and Liturgy Faculty is a broad and inclusive group made up of staff from across the school community, including teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff, the RE lead, RE Governor and parish priest. Together, they work to implement and uphold the Prayer and Liturgy Directory, ensuring that opportunities for prayer, worship, and reflection are central to school life. The faculty plans, reviews, and enriches the liturgical calendar, helping pupils and staff to engage meaningfully in prayer and worship that is age-appropriate, rooted in Catholic tradition, and responsive to the needs of the community. By drawing on the diverse gifts and perspectives of its members, the group helps to foster a prayerful environment where children and adults alike can encounter God and grow in faith.

Teaching of Religious Education

The curriculum

• R.E. is taught using the scheme '*Day by Day'* in accordance with Clifton Diocese and the Religious Education Directory

• The RE curriculum is organised on a two year rolling programme due to mixed classes

• Catholic Social Teaching is at the heart of all teaching and learning and considered the golden thread through our curriculum offer

• 'Building the Kingdom' with Sr Judith Russi, Caritas In Action and Dr Margaret Caswell s '*In God's Name'* scheme supplement our ambitious religious education offer

• Religious Education is taught as a discrete subject and also as part of a cross curricular approach.

Teaching of Religious Education includes:

Quality First Teaching of Religious Education (RE) should provide engaging, inclusive, and challenging learning experiences that enable all pupils to develop a deep understanding of the Catholic faith and apply it to their lives. Lessons should be well-structured, making use of clear learning intentions, differentiated strategies, and a variety of teaching approaches to meet the diverse needs of learners. In particular, capturing the voice of SEND and disadvantaged learners is vital: this involves creating

opportunities for them to share their ideas and reflections in ways that suit their strengths, whether through discussion, creative expression, visual supports, or assistive technology. Teachers should actively listen to and record these contributions, ensuring they shape lesson planning and assessment. High-quality RE teaching also incorporates scaffolding, modelling, and accessible resources, alongside rich questioning that encourages every child to think critically and spiritually. By valuing the voice of all pupils—especially the most vulnerable—Quality First Teaching ensures that every learner feels included, respected, and able to contribute meaningfully to the school's faith journey.

Recording and reporting of Religious Education

- Children's written reports including R.E. attainment are shared with parents twice per year
- Parents' Consultation meetings are used to celebrate progress/achievements in RE twice per year

Expected end of age-phase outcomes

Each age-phase will have a prescribed set of expected outcomes that will indicate what pupils are expected to know, remember and be able to do, using the language of the ways of knowing and applying it to the discrete knowledge within each lens. It is against these

expected outcomes that Teachers will assess pupil progress, both formatively and through summative assessments.

These age-related expectations also provide a basis for consistency of expectation in all schools across England and Wales. In turn, this will allow the Catholic Schools Inspectorate to make judgements about the quality of religious education in each school inspected under the National Framework for the Inspection of Catholic School, Colleges and Academies.

The model curriculum offers an ambitious and detailed programme for pupils from Early Years to the age of 14. It fulfils the requirements of the Catholic Schools Inspectorate framework.

Monitoring Religious Education

- Termly Catholic Standards and Vision Meeting including Headteacher, RE Lead, Prayer & Liturgy Lead and RE Governor
- Termly Staff Team CPD focused on RE teaching and learning
- Governor reports: Intent (Autumn Term) and Impact (Summer Term)
- Headteacher Report presented at FGB includes a review of RE, Catholic Life and Mission and Collective Worship, five times per year
- ECT and new Teachers mentoring and team teaching
- Annual RE Training and Development Day ay Ammerdown
- Lesson observation and learning walks by Headteacher and/or R.E. Leader
- External monitoring including Emmaus Partnership and Diocese representatives
- Book Study Approach
- Phase Team moderation of RE exercise books

• Pupil Voice

• Pupil reviews

Resources to support RE Teaching & Learning

• Day by Day scheme of work matched to the RED

• You Cat for Teachers

• Caritas In Action book

• Dr Margaret Carswell resources

• Elaine Arundell resources

• St John's Framework

• Well resourced prayer table linked to the liturgical calendar

• Age appropriate Bibles and prayer books for children

• 'You Cat' for kids text for UKS2

• Message wrapped in words book

• St John's Catholic Primary School candle

• Religious artefacts including statues, rosaries and cross linked to the liturgical calendar

• Table cloths for the prayer table to reflect the liturgical colours

• Prayer box to support child led prayer

The budget for Religious Education and Prayer and Liturgy is in line with other core subjects.

Health & Safety

When using candles in RE lessons, it is important to balance their symbolic and spiritual value with clear health and safety precautions. Candles can provide a powerful focus for prayer and worship, but their use must always follow the school's health and safety policy and risk assessment procedures.

Teachers should ensure that candles are placed on a stable, non-flammable surface, well away from edges, displays, or flammable materials. They should never be left unattended when lit, and pupils should be supervised at all times. It is advisable that only adults light and extinguish candles, unless older pupils are trained and closely monitored as part of a planned activity. A fire extinguisher or fire blanket should always be accessible, and windows or doors should be opened if smoke builds up. Where possible, battery-operated LED candles can be used as a safer alternative, particularly with younger children, whilst still maintaining the sacred atmosphere. Ultimately, the safe use of candles allows prayer and liturgy to be meaningful, reflective, and secure for everyone.

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body.

Head teacher : Mrs K O'Rourke

Chair of Governors : Mrs C Doogue

Review cycle:	Annual
Next review due:	July 2027