ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children in Care

September 2026

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.

Overall aims

We aim to ensure that children in care excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us happy and secure in themselves, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that education does matter. We will listen to what children in care tell us about what they want from their education and act on this.

St John's Catholic Primary School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and origins of members of the school, pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Objectives

St John's Catholic Primary will support children in care by*:*

- ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll
- balancing high levels of support with real challenge
- ensuring that each child has a high quality Personal Education Plan
- linking each child to a key person they relate well to
- making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities (including the Virtual School team) and specialist agencies
- encouraging and supporting children in care to take responsibility for their learning
- engaging children in care in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities
- intervening promptly if a problem emerges, such as with behaviour or attendance
- giving integrated support in school for each child in care so that they are not made to feel different from other children
- planning for future transitions e.g. to secondary school.

Roles and responsibilities – see annex 2 for full detail

The Governor with special responsibility for children in care in this school is: Clare Farrow

The designated teacher in this school is: Debbie O'Mahony

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All children in care must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping children in care to achieve and enjoy. Discussion about working together to make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through a meeting involving the young person, carers, the social worker, a teacher and the Virtual School. If the young person has an Education Health and Care Plan this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

One to one tuition

Research has shown that children in care benefit from one to one tuition in English and/or maths even if they appear to be progressing in line with age related expectations. This school is committed to prioritising all children in care for one to one tuition.

Additional funding

Children in care are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined by government policy.

The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding for all eligible children in care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes. The dedicated funding for children in Year R to Year 11 is currently called the Pupil Premium Grant for Looked After Children.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

Admission/Induction Arrangements

Children in care are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the statutory guidance on school admissions. On admission to the school or to care, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the school's expectations and processes and the child will meet with the designated teacher for children in care. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our school. Consideration will be given to giving the child a peer mentor. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly, we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When children already on school roll enter care the school will ensure that the student meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the school procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and PEP prepared as soon as possible in the same way as for those children already in care admitted to school.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

Many children in care do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel 'different'. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status.

School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that children in care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting. If in doubt we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

Given the delays that children in care experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that children in care enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

Leaving Arrangements

When a child in care leaves the school we will find positive ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school.

Annex 1 – Definitions and complaints procedure

Children in care

The terms Looked After Child (LAC) and child in care (CiC) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term CiC. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

(i) children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
(ii) children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
(iii) children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
(iv) children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A looked after child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

Legal Framework

This policy follows the statutory guidance for school governing bodies outlined in Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children DfE

Complaints

If a young person, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Headteacher, in which case the complaint will go straight to the chair of governors.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Headteacher's response.

Annex 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Governing Body

- The governing body will ensure that the designated teacher and the named governor undertake appropriate training.
- Ensure that the designated teacher is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Governors will consider an annual report from the designated teacher covering attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, CiC with Special Educational Needs and Disability or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of the virtual school. A suggested template is available on this web page: *Insert Link WVS*
- The governing body, Headteacher and senior leadership team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:
    - the school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of CiC on roll;
    - the school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC;
    - resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CiC.

The role of the Headteacher

- To ensure that, in partnership with the governing body, the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of children in care.
- To make sure that the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting children in care to achieve.
- In partnership with the governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher.
- Oversee the development of the policy on children in care.
- Evaluate the standards and achievement of CiC and report these termly to the governing body and discuss them at meetings with the Virtual School and with the SIA.
- Ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc. that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support children in care.

The role of the designated teacher within the school

The designated teacher (DT) has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how CiC learn and achieve. The DT will:

- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CiC learn
- promote the educational achievement of every child in care on the school's roll
- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put children in care at a disadvantage
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support children in care's learning
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Quality First teaching
- make sure that CiC are prioritised in one to one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school
- set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all children in care and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy

transfer

- act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties
- have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how children in care learn and achieve
- ensure that the school file for CiC holds all the essential information
- arrange for a mentor or peer mentor for each child in care on the roll of the school

The role of all those involved in supporting children in care

- Ensure that all children in care are made to feel welcome and included.
- Have high expectations of children in care's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families.
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a child in care's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children.
- Understand how important it is to see children in care as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers.
- Appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child in care's status.
- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and the child, and what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

School's own policies

- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy

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:	Annually
Next review due:	September 2027