

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Catholic Life and Mission Policy



September 2025

Catholic Life and Mission

'When Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment, the answer is the same in all three of the Gospels in which the question is asked: 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 every Catholic school. It is a mission that is clearly echoed in the Second Vatican Council which teaches that the purpose of an education that is distinctively Christian is threefold (*Gravissimum Educationis* 2). Its first purpose is to ensure that all pupils understand the faith that gives the school its identity as a Catholic school. The second, 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. The third, 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 the Religious Education policy, the Prayer and Liturgy policy and the Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy.

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

Mission Statement

Mission Statement

St. Mary's school community follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, working together to develop the whole child, in a spiritual, moral, academic, physical, social and emotional way, within a caring and supportive environment.

The mission statement of St Mary's Catholic Primary School is highly visible throughout the school environment. It clearly reflects the school's role in the educational mission of the Church, promoting Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Our mission statement is a touch stone of school life so that:

- Pupils have a clear understanding of its meaning and can articulate this at an age-appropriate level

¹ CSI Inspection Handbook

- All staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities including but not limited to class prayers, whole school liturgical prayers and displays.
- It is shared with parents and the wider community through school signage, our newsletters, school policy documents, website and parents meetings.

School Environment

Visitors to St Mary's Catholic Primary School are aware of the distinctive Catholic nature of the school through the physical environment, the presence of images and symbols and the recognition of a learning environment that respects the human dignity of all persons as made in God's image and likeness.

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

- All rooms have a crucifix
- All rooms have a cared for, attractive prayer area
- All rooms have a statue of Our Lady
- Each class display/prayer area will reflect the liturgical season
- There are displays in the corridors with reflection on our Mission Statement, information relating to the current liturgical season
- Focal points for liturgical prayers reflect the theme and season
- Displays in the hall document the activities of the School Council and other groups within the school
- Displays within each classroom reflect the 'To Know You More Clearly' topic being taught, the liturgical season, work produced by the pupils, key prayers and scripture
- There are child-friendly quotes from scripture around the corridors

Catholic 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 six principles of Catholic Social Teaching, using the Rooted in Love resources. We use child friendly resources to explore the writings of Pope Francis, such as *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*. In this way we are building their moral compass and enabling them to respond to social, moral and ethical issues in the world. Our Catholic curriculum leads our charitable outreach and work for social justice.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is taught in a Catholic context (supported by TenTen resources) recognising we are all made in God's image and likeness. See our RSHE Policy.

Other faiths are taught as part of the RE curriculum. 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. Through timetabled work on Catholic Social Teaching pupils are taught to stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable.

² NBRIA The Distinctive Curriculum of the Catholic School

There are various fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year including:

- Harvest Festival – children are encouraged to bring in food for local foodbanks and the school is a permanent collection point for donations throughout the year.
- During Advent, money is collected for a local hospice
- During Lent we raise funds for CAFOD through activities chosen by the pupils.
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes through the year such as MacMillan through cake and biscuit sales and other initiatives.
- A variety of charity and outreach work is carried out throughout the year as result of pupil selected missions in line with Catholic Social Teaching.

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 Christian life. There are planned opportunities for pupils to engage in campaigns for social justice: Climate change activities e.g. Switch off fortnight

- Recognising Fairtrade Fortnight
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness
- Supporting Just One Tree appeal

Chaplaincy

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

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of the Senior Members of staff and the RE team.

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
- Maintaining and developing communal prayer areas
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school acts of worship
- Offering opportunities for informal pupil led prayer during break or lunch times
- Undertaking large projects such as developing a prayer garden
- Keeping the pupils updated with information about donations to charity, such as for foodbanks and CAFOD
- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence and joy where applicable
- Accompanying members of the school community, especially in times of need

School Community

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a welcoming place for children, families and members of staff from all faiths and none. 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.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works collaboratively with local Catholic schools in clusters, in the Trust and across the diocese. Through our work in RE children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family. At St Mary's Catholic Primary School 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 continuing professional

development and formation programme. New teachers are enrolled on the Diocesan Early Careers Programme as part of their induction to teaching in a Catholic school.

Parents

Parents are the first teachers of their children and we work in partnership with them. They are encouraged to support Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and discuss with their children work being completed when preparing to receive the Sacraments.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year, which include: class masses, curriculum meetings, whole school Masses and liturgical prayers which take place throughout the year both in school and at Mary Mother of God Parish Church and events such as the Christmas Carol Concert.

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. St Mary's catholic Primary School 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 is Mary Mother of God. Our parish priest is Fr John.

Children visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church. Links with the priest are strengthened as he celebrates various services in the school/parish with the children and staff, including a variety of masses. We also share communications from the parish priest with our school community to encourage attendance at church and involvement in church events.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the RE Team and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

