

Trust Exemplar Catholic Life Mission Policy



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust

Signed off by: Wendy Bolivar

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St Cross 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 the school's 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 Cross Catholic Primary School responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

¹ CSI Inspection Handbook, page 2

Mission Statement

Together we grow in God's Love

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 *e.g. behaviour expectations, interaction between staff, displays, assemblies, links in lessons and in cross curricular subjects*
- Parents and the wider community are informed about the statement through *school signage, our newsletter, email footers, school policy documents, website and at parents' meetings.*

School Environment

Visitors to St Cross Catholic Primary School are aware of the distinctive Catholic nature of the school through the physical environment, including the presence of the cross, symbols and statues in all areas of the school.

At St Cross Catholic Primary School 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 *e.g.*, we have a statue of our school saints, a picture of the Pope and our Bishop, religious displays and wooden cross made from one of our school trees.
- All classrooms have a cross and mission statement
- All classrooms have an attractive, well maintained prayer focal point.
- Each classroom has a 'liturgy' box/cupboard 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, the Eco Council committee, the Chaplaincy Team and the Peacemakers, along with our work with the local community and Charities.
- The school has an outdoor prayer garden. It is well maintained and can be used throughout the school day. A statue of Mary is present and this is where our Chaplaincy Team host Rosary Sessions for the children of the school during the months of May and October.

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 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.

² CSI Framework

Pupils and staff are encouraged to engage with a range of awards and certificates that recognise the work that we do to implement Catholic Social Teaching. This includes the Green Flag Award, Level Two RHS campaign for School Gardening, Anti-bullying Alliance, Hertfordshire Heroes Christmas Art competition, Festival of Carols (local town choir singing) and the Rotary Club Billion Seed Challenge.

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.

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. In assemblies, RE, PSHE and RSE pupils learn about Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils learn that they must look after the environment and stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. As a result, there are various projects, fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year co-ordinated by the School Council, Eco-Council and Chaplaincy Team:

- Harvest – children are encouraged to bring in food for the local foodbank. We hold a Harvest Tea for the elderly in our community and the pupils provide entertainment and refreshments.
- At Remembrance, we sell poppies and related merchandise to raise funds for the Royal British Legion. We also set up a Remembrance Prayer book for pupils.
- In Advent, we raise money for the Catholic Children's Society and raise awareness of this charity at our Nativity and Carol services.
- During Lent we raise funds for an Academy Charity or CAFOD through activities chosen by the pupils.
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes throughout the year chosen by the pupils on their Class Saint Day. Pupils are encouraged to bring in a donation and choose a charity they would like to support.
- The School Council support Children in Need and hold a fundraising day.
- The Eco-Council have enhanced the way we care for God's Creation by planting trees, litter picking in the local community, saving electricity and creating bird feeders.

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:

- Work for climate change e.g. Walk/scoot to school week, planting trees and flowers, litter picking, Forest School.
- Supporting Fairtrade Fortnight
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness through the Eco Council

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 Cross Catholic Primary School plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of a group of Year six pupils working with the REC to promote the Catholic faith and encourage pupils across the school to be present and participate in our faith. 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 their Chaplaincy prayer area, ensuring it is the correct liturgical colour.
- Teaching pupils' prayers each Wednesday based on the school prayer progression document.
- Creating and leading whole school assemblies based on a variety of themes throughout the year.
- Leading Rosary Prayer sessions in the Peace garden (Weather permitting) during the months of May and October.
- Reminding our school community about our Mission statement and Values and how we can live these out.
- Taking part in Academy Trust meetings and completing tasks like; creating an Advent display and thinking about changes in the World.
- Encouraging our school community to give generously to the local foodbank and hosting a Harvest tea for the elderly.
- Creating and maintaining a Remembrance Prayer book throughout the month of November.
- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence and joy where applicable
- Keeping the local parish community up to date with their actions through the Parish Magazine.

School Community

St Cross Catholic Primary School 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
- We have two Other Faith weeks throughout the academic year
- We ensure our pupils are provided with food that meets their (religious) requirements

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 Cross 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, we also work with our local non-Catholic schools to ensure all schools flourish.

At St Cross 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 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 the Parish Church, such as the Advent Celebration, Nativity and Easter plays, the May Procession and Feast Days.

They are encouraged to participate with their children for example:

- During Advent the 'Travelling Nativity' is sent home, encouraging a time of sharing and reflection and
- During October and May 'Mary bags' are sent home to encourage families to spend time praying together.
- 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 Cross 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 St Augustine's Church.

- Pupils visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church in RE lessons.
- 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 church 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.
- We also update the Parish magazine each year with the actions undertaken by the Chaplaincy Team.

The Coordinator/Lead for Catholic Life and Mission

The Coordinator for Catholic life and mission is Mrs Joanne Walsh (Head teacher).

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 e.g. mental health week, Black History Month, World Book Day, Cultural Day, Maths Awareness Day and online safety day.
- 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 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

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Catholic Life and Mission Senior Leader/Coordinator (*or headteacher or senior leadership team*) and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every three years, with the Foundation Governors playing an important role in this process.