

St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School



Policy on Religious Education

Policy Written & Agreed:

Ratified by Full Governing Body:

To be reviewed:

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September 2024

September 2025

St Nicholas Catholic Primary School
Whole School Policy on Religious Education

This Religious Education policy:-

- reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole staff;
- was discussed, written and agreed by the whole staff;
- has been approved by the Governing body.

The implementation and ownership of this policy is the responsibility of the whole staff.

The overall accountability and effectiveness of the policy will be the responsibility of the Executive Principal, Head of School (who is also the RE Co-ordinator) and Senior Leadership Team.

At St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School, we consider the teaching of Religious Education as our core purpose; bringing the word of God and God’s love to all. We believe that we are all created in God’s image and called by God to live a life of service to him. We strive to live the teachings of the Gospel in our daily lives.

As a Catholic school we regard every individual as unique and special in God’s family. This policy is designed to support every member of our school, taking into account their unique and special nature as part of God’s Catholic community.

Mission Statement

‘Together with Christ we love, live and learn.’

1.0 Aims of Religious Education:

Religious Education in our school should:

- Nurture children’s faith.
- Promote in a gradual way their understanding and appreciation of Catholic teaching and practice.
- Develop their involvement with the Church and School Community.
- Help pupils to develop personal, spiritual and moral values, respect and tolerance for others and an understanding of interdependence between groups and nations.
- Develop the skills required to be able to examine and reflect on religious belief and practice, including those from other faiths and cultures.
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder.
- Involve parents in the spiritual development of their child.

2.0 Curriculum Planning

St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School follows the Archdiocese scheme of work entitled ‘Learning and Growing as the People of God’. This scheme provides progression from Reception to Year 6 in the key areas of Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life of Christ. It also allows opportunities for monitoring and assessment. The scheme is intended to link in with other curricular areas and it should be resourced by using Bibles, Sacramental programmes, Multicultural resources and other resources appropriate to the programme of study.

RE is allocated 10% of the curriculum in line with the expectations of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Please see table below:

	EYFS & KS1	KS2
Total curriculum time per week	23 hrs 0 minutes (1380 minutes)	23hrs 50 minutes (1430 minutes)
Total RE curriculum time per week	2 hrs 30 minutes (150 minutes)	2hrs & 30 minutes (150 minutes)
% of time spent on RE	10.86%	10.48%

All teaching staff teach a unit of work based on another world religion once per academic year as part of the R.E. long term plan. This allows pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths in the world, as well as exploring the way faith affects the lives of believers and informs their life decisions. Through these lessons, they are given opportunities to reflect on the benefits and challenges of living in a multi-cultural and diverse society.

Gospel values are highlighted and discussed in other areas of the curriculum such as English, Art and Design & Science. This will ensure that RE is encountered across the curriculum. Furthermore, teachers provide, where appropriate, opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their Computing Skills through RE lessons.

3.0 Assessment in RE

Assessment for Learning

Each child has an R.E. exercise book which is marked developmentally during every R.E. lesson with a ‘Close the Gap’ comment added after the lesson for at least one lesson per week. These questions are carefully worded by teachers to further develop pupils’ understanding. As well as marking in books, teachers make observations during the RE lessons to assess children’s next steps and adapt planning appropriately to cater for children’s needs. Recording of children’s work takes many forms – pictorial, written, wall display, role plays, discussions etc.

End of Unit Assessments

The Monitoring and Assessment Focus follows a four year rolling programme, where one strand each year is assessed. Three units of work are assessed each year in each year group. Teachers assess each child in the class against the criteria provided in the diocesan scheme. The assessments are recorded on the Diocesan provided Excel Spreadsheet which is kept on the school’s Google Drive.

One focus child from each class is also assessed against the R.E. Age Related Expectations. This takes place at the end of each unit.

It is also the responsibility of the RE Co-ordinator to monitor and review progress of groups of children in RE across the whole school and share the findings with the whole staff so that improvements can be made. Staff moderate RE judgements on a regular basis and moderation of RE work takes place between other Catholic Primary schools.

R.E. progress is discussed during termly Pupil Progress Meetings between the Head of School and each class teacher.

4.0 Reporting to Parents

Each child’s progress in R.E. will be reported to parents three times a year, through parental consultations in the Autumn and Spring terms, and through an end of year report. During Parental consultations, the Class Teachers discuss the child’s R.E. work, learning, progress and targets with parents.

5.0 Display

In order to highlight the importance of Religious Education and the Catholic ethos of the school, displays of a religious nature are evident in each classroom throughout the year. Similarly, such displays are present in the main school hall and in the entrance to the school.

Each classroom has a ‘sacred space’. This prayer focus area is updated with the appropriate liturgical colour on a regular basis. A crucifix, a candle, a Bible, statues, artefacts and posters are prominently displayed whenever possible and changed on a regular basis to reflect the liturgical year.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The RE Co-ordinator (who is also the Head of School) works in collaboration with the Executive Principal, the rest of the Senior Leadership Team, Parish Priest and RE Link Governor.

The RE Co-ordinator will:

- be familiar with each year group of ‘Learning and Growing as the People of God’ and be available to individual teachers for guidance and support and keep staff informed of current thinking in RE; new materials /publications
- distribute and provide training on relevant assessment proformas
- attend RE courses and cluster meetings and share the information gained with staff
- arrange and organise INSET training to meet staffs’ needs
- monitor the progress of the Birmingham Diocesan RE programme and assessment in line with the second edition of “Levels of Attainment in Religious Education” (Bishop’s Conference 2007) throughout the school through evaluating planning, assessments and where possible classroom observations
- organise rotas for Masses in consultation with the Parish Priest and rotas for assemblies and liturgical displays
- be responsible for cataloguing materials and the management of the RE budget
- provide information and support for Sacramental preparation in consultation with the Parish Priest

- establish and work closely with the ‘Chaplaincy Team’ to choose, plan and lead appropriate faith activities across the whole school.
- Monitor and evaluate prayer areas and RE related activities
- Liaise with other local Catholic Primary Schools to moderate work to quality assure RE judgements.
- Organise whole school Masses in consultation with the Parish Priest

Class teacher:

- is responsible for daily collective acts of worship within the classroom and for planning and delivering Key Stage liturgies according to a rota provided by the R.E. co-ordinator
- is responsible for seeking the opportunity to assess the children’s knowledge and understanding
- should read and digest any materials shared by the R.E. leader
- should seek to attend courses and inform the RE Co-ordinator if they feel further development is needed
- responsible for delivering the programme of study ‘Learning and Growing as the People of God’ and utilise RE resources.

7.0 Collective Worship

Collective worship is an integral part of school life at St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School. Different forms of collective worship that take place at our school including:

- During the week pupils from all year groups gather for whole school liturgy and key stage liturgies.
- Mass is celebrated on a rota basis. Class Masses take place every fortnight on a rota basis.
- As a school, we gather for Whole School Masses on Holy Days of Obligation.
- Each classroom has a dedicated prayer focus area where the class face to pray at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Any staff meeting or gathering is opened with an act of worship and prayer.
- Time and opportunities are given for personal prayer and reflection.
- Our ‘Mini Vinnies’ meet on a regular basis to discuss the faith in our school, and they actively lead faith and spiritual activities in school.

8.0 Sacramental Preparation

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist currently takes place in Year Three and preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation takes place in Year Six. In addition to the strategy, which is followed by all pupils, the school provides extra resources, parent information sessions, teaching sessions, Masses and spiritual prayer services for the Catholic children and their families to support them and enable them to take an active part in preparation for these sacraments. All Masses and Sacraments take place at St Nicholas Catholic Church located next to the school.

9.0 Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to the RE curriculum, regardless of religion, gender, culture or special educational needs. Full participation in all aspects of RE is expected. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. With regards to the sacramental preparation in Years 3 and 6, all children follow the units of work in the Strategy and those not receiving the sacrament are expected to support the programme and their peers throughout so that they feel part of our Catholic community and included.

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September 2024

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Catholic Education in England and Wales



Promoting and Supporting Catholic Education in England and Wales



Catholic Education in England and Wales

Contents

A Commitment to Catholic Education 1

The Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education 2

Catholic Schools and the Law 4

The Catholic Church and Education Policy 5

The Quality and Diversity of Catholic Education 7



A Commitment to Education

Education is central to the mission of the Catholic Church. Since 1850, the Church's aim has been to provide a place in a Catholic school for every Catholic child.

Partnership in Education

The Catholic community works in close partnership with Central Government in England and in Wales, and with Local Authorities in its provision of education. This partnership is enshrined in a variety of administrative and financial arrangements. Catholic schools, funded jointly by the State and the Church, make up 10% of the total maintained sector of England and Wales. Most are owned by Diocesan Trustees who appoint the majority of governors. The governing bodies employ all staff and have the responsibility for admissions and the curriculum. The Church now has:

- 1,811 Primary Schools
- 377 Secondary Schools
- 49 All-age Schools
- 798,687 Pupils
- 48,234 Teachers
- 15 Sixth Form Colleges
- 4 Universities
- 13 University Colleges and Higher Education Institutions

Catholic schools are an integral part of the voluntary sector. This sector, which includes Anglican, Methodist and Jewish Schools as well as a few others, represents about one-third of state funded provision in England and Wales. In the 22 dioceses, there are teams of officers who offer support to schools on legal, administrative and educational matters while the Catholic Education Service works at a national level to promote and safeguard the interests of Catholic education and those working in Catholic schools and colleges.



Parental Choice

Catholic schools contribute to the diversity of educational provision which allows parents a genuine choice of schools which will educate their children in accordance with their religious and philosophical convictions. Catholic schools are popular with parents and in many parts of the country there is an increasing demand for places which, in some areas, the Church is struggling to meet.

Community Support

Catholic schools are an integral part of the Catholic community, which contributes funding and the use of assets worth many millions of pounds annually to enable Catholic schools to operate as part of the state funded sector as a contribution towards the common good of society.

The Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education

Whatever their status- Voluntary Aided, Academy, Non-Maintained Special, Sixth-Form College or Independent- Catholic schools and colleges are established to support Catholic parents in their responsibility for the academic, physical, spiritual, moral and religious education of their children in accordance with the teachings of the Church. Catholic education endeavours to make the person of Jesus Christ known and loved, and to place Him and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre of the educational enterprise. In placing ‘Christ at the Centre’¹, Catholic education seeks to invite all into a life of discipleship within the Body of the Church. This means that Catholic Schools are committed to promoting:

The Search for Excellence

Christians are called to fulfil their potential and strive for excellence in all aspects of their lives. Catholic education therefore strives to offer students every opportunity to develop their talents to the full through their academic work, spiritual worship and extracurricular activities.

1. Christ at the Centre, Catholic Truth Society, 2nd Edition, 2012

The Uniqueness of the Individual

Within Catholic schools and colleges, each individual is seen as made in God's image and loved by Him. All students are valued and respected as individuals so that they may be helped to fulfil their unique role in creation. It is important therefore that we provide high quality pastoral care throughout our schools and colleges in order to support the individual needs of each student.

The Education of the Whole Person

Catholic education is based on the belief that the human and the divine are inseparable. In Catholic schools and colleges, management, organisation, academic and pastoral work, prayer and worship, all aim to prepare young people for their life as Christians in the community.

The Education of All

Their belief in the value of each individual leads Catholic schools and colleges to have the duty to care for the poor and to educate those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged. Service to those who are amongst the most disadvantaged in our society has always been central to the mission of Catholic education.

Moral Principles

Catholic education aims to offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on the Christian virtues. In religious education in particular, the Church aims to transmit to them the Catholic faith. Both through religious education and in the general life of the school, young people are prepared to serve as witnesses to moral and spiritual values in the wider world.



Catholic Schools and the Law

From 1870, when the “dual system” of county and voluntary schools funded by the State was first established, through to the Academies Act of 2010 and beyond, the Catholic community has sought and won rights in law which safeguard and promote the denominational character of its state funded schools. These legal rights are central to the continuing success of Catholic education. Key aspects of these legal rights and responsibilities relate to:

Foundation Governors

The Trustees of Catholic schools have the legal right to appoint a majority of foundation governors to the governing body. This ensures that the school is managed and organised in the light of Christian virtues and the teachings of the Church.

Appointment of Teachers

The governing bodies of Catholic schools and academies appoint and employ their own teachers and other staff. Wherever possible, Catholic teachers are appointed in order to maintain and support the Catholic ethos of the school. 69% of primary teachers in Catholic schools in England and 44.2% of secondary teachers are Catholic. In Wales, 76% of primary teachers and 38% of secondary teachers are Catholic.

Admissions

In line with the Catholic community’s commitment to making Catholic education available for every Catholic child, Catholic schools are provided primarily to assist parents in educating their children in the Catholic faith. In order to ensure this, the governing body in a Catholic school is the Admission Authority, responsible for drawing up its own admissions policy within the parameters set by the diocesan bishop. This enables Catholic schools to admit pupils first and foremost on religious grounds; giving priority to Catholic children.

However, Catholic schools are not exclusive to Catholic pupils, and are based on inclusive Christian principles. Where there are sufficient places, Catholic schools also welcome other pupils. Currently, 29.8% of pupils in Catholic schools and colleges in England are of other denominations and faiths or none. This figure is higher in Wales where it is 42% of pupils.

Transport

Since Catholic schools tend to recruit pupils from a wide catchment area, many children travel long distances in order to have a Catholic education. When considering the provision of transport for pupils, Local Authorities are required to take account parents' wishes to send their children to Catholic schools on denominational grounds.

The Curriculum

The governing body of Catholic maintained schools are responsible for policy relating to the secular and religious education curricula. This ensures that the whole curriculum of the school, including all subjects of the National Curriculum, is informed by and promotes Catholic teachings under the supervision of the local bishop.

The Catholic Church and Education Policy

The Catholic community values the ways in which its long established partnership in education with local and national government has enabled it to develop and strengthen the distinctive nature of Catholic education in England and Wales. It is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of education in Catholic schools and colleges, and seeks continuing recognition of and support for their significant contribution to state education from politicians, administrators and officers of education agencies.

In the light of its long experience, its achievements in state funded education and of its current concerns, the Catholic community will continue to examine education policies and party manifestos in order to ensure that:

- The trustees and foundation governors of Catholic schools and colleges are enabled, through legislation, to maintain the distinctive nature of Catholic education for current and future generations of pupils and students;
- There is a place in a Catholic school for all Catholic children whose parents wish them to be educated in a denominational context;



- All schools are funded equitably at local and national levels and that collaboration between schools and colleges is not jeopardised by systems of funding;
- Measures are in place to enable all pupils and students to achieve their potential and that disadvantaged children, in particular, have the necessary support to enable them to play their full part in the life of the school and the community;
- Opportunities are provided, through initial education and in-service development, for Catholic teachers to be trained to teach effectively in Catholic schools;
- All teachers are valued and appropriately rewarded for their service to the community and, especially, to the children they teach and their parents;
- The vocation to teaching is widely recognised and celebrated within and outside the profession.

The Quality and Diversity of Catholic Education

Analysis of Ofsted data statistics from the Department for Education shows that Catholic schools and academies generally have more diverse populations than other schools and outperform the national average in exam results.

At age 11, Catholic schools in England outperform the national average English and Maths SATs scores by 5%. This is echoed in GCSE results, where Catholic schools also outperform the national average by 5%. As well as this, 82% of Catholic primary schools and academies have Ofsted grades of good or outstanding. This is in comparison to a national average of 79%.²

A significantly higher proportion of pupils in Catholic schools in England are from the most deprived areas. 18.4% of pupils at Catholic maintained primary schools live in the most deprived areas compared with 13.8% nationally. 17.3% of pupils at Catholic maintained secondary schools live in the most deprived areas compared with 12.2% nationally.³

². This information is taken from the Ofsted 2013 quarterly releases of official statistics and the Department for Education England statistics. These statistics are not available for Wales.

³. These statistics are taken from IDACI data for England and are not available for Wales.

Catholic schools in England have a greater proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities. 34.5% of pupils in Catholic maintained primary schools are from ethnic minority backgrounds compared with 28.5% nationally. 30.2% of pupils in Catholic maintained secondary schools are from ethnic minority backgrounds compared with 24.2% nationally.

In Wales the national census reported that the proportion of pupils of minority ethnic origin in primary schools was 9.3% and 7.5% in secondary schools. Catholic schools are much more ethnically diverse with higher proportions in most ethnic categories. 24% of pupils from Catholic primary schools are of minority ethnic origin. This figure stands at 17.5% for Catholic secondary schools.



This document has been revised and approved by the Catholic Bishops'
Conference of England and Wales
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For further information please contact:
Catholic Education Service, 39 Eccleston Square, London
SW1V 1BX
www.catholiceducation.org.uk | 020 7901 1900

