



St Joan of Arc School
Growing together

Policy

Catholic Life and Mission

2026-27

Mission Statement

Through Love, Service, Respect and Courage, we grow closer to God.

Policy devised: April 2026 | Review Date: July 2027

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 Joan of Arc Primary School** responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Mission Statement

Through Love, Service, Respect and Courage, we grow closer to God.

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

¹ CSI Inspection Handbook, page 2

- 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*
- Parents and the wider community are informed about the statement through school signage, our newsletter, school policy documents, and the school website.

School Environment

Visitors to St Joan of Arc Primary School are aware of the distinctive Catholic nature of the school through the physical environment, including the presence of our mission statement across communal areas and in all classrooms, our school values and the symbols and images used across the school.

At St Joan of Arc 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. We have a statue of our patron saint, St Joan of Arc displayed proudly. There is a large mosaic cross and two display boards just past the entrance, one display showing our school values and one for Mini Vinnies, which are our school faith leaders
- All classrooms have a prayer table with a display board and prayer table. The classes all have a cross displayed, the school mission statement, prayer leaders and prayer focus, the Bible and the liturgical colours displayed. Along with a range of religious artefacts used for collective worship
- 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 Mini Vinnies, our sporting achievements and a wide range of children's work is displayed in communal areas
- The school has an outdoor prayer garden. It is well maintained and can be used throughout the school day
- Banners are displayed in the school representing the 4 houses and values of our school mirrored by the mission statement

Through these intentional expressions of faith, the environment of St Joan of Arc nurtures spirituality, belonging and a shared sense of mission, making our Catholic identity visible, lived, and deeply rooted in daily school life.

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 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. Each half term focuses on a specific theme of CST. Children attend an assembly

² CSI Framework

on the theme, engage in a CST lesson and meet with the parish priest to consolidate their knowledge and actions on CST.

Autumn 1	Care of Creation
Autumn 2	Preferential Option for the Poor
Spring 1	Solidarity and Peace
Spring 2	Community and Participation
Summer 1	Dignity of Workers
Summer 2	Dignity

Pupils and staff are encouraged to engage with a range of awards that recognise the work that we do to implement Catholic Social Teaching.

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 and RSE pupils learn about Catholic Social Teaching and Fratelli Tutti. Pupils learn that they must look after the environment and stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. As a result, there are various fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year co-ordinated by the Mini- Vinnies Team:

- During Advent, children donate a selection of items to the St Vincent de Paul charity.
- During Lent we raise funds for a nominated charity.
- The Eco team have enhanced the way we recycle in the school and have worked alongside the Mini-Vinnies to maintain and enhance the school's prayer garden.
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes throughout the year chosen by the pupils e.g. Comic relief or odd socks day.

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.

Our charitable outreach is rooted in the themes of Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor.

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 to school week
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness
- Teach Racial Justice Equality and Diversity
- Through our school values (love, service, respect and courage)
- Supporting Fairtrade by teaching it through Catholic Social Teaching and our Science curriculum

Mini Vinnies – faith leaders

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. The faith leader provision at St Joan of Arc plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

The Mini Vinnie Team are the faith leaders of the school; this consists of a group of children from years 3- 6 and the Catholic Life and Mission lead. Our Mini Vinnies are peer-elected leaders who first stepped up by nominating themselves for the 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/RE classroom prayer focal point
- Maintaining and developing communal prayer areas
- Supporting prayer leaders in writing and leading prayers during whole school Celebration of the Word
- Offering opportunities for informal pupil led prayer during break or lunch times
- Undertaking large projects such as developing a prayer garden/eco-area
- Keeping the pupils updated with information about donations to charity, such as for foodbanks and CAFOD
- Supporting and organising campaigns for social justice
- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence and joy where applicable
- Writing and leading whole school acts of worship
- Visiting our local care home
- Work towards certification regarding implementing CST in the school

School Community

St Joan of Arc 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 celebrate numerous festivals and focuses throughout the year i.e. black history month
- We are inclusive of all members of the school community
- We cover different faiths throughout the year in RE to promote an understanding of other beliefs and values
- We ensure our pupils are provided with food that meets their (religious) requirements, if necessary
- We host an international evening celebrating foods and music from different cultures

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 Christian Values of love, service, respect and courage – see our Behaviour Policy.

Through our work in RE, children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family. St Joan of Arc 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 Joan of Arc, 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 encouraged to enrol 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, year group assemblies, celebration assemblies, Christmas and summer fairs, open mornings and PA led events e.g. quiz night or the auction

They are encouraged to participate with their children for example:

- Parents are encouraged to join the PA 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
- Prayer books are sent home with a child from each class weekly, to encourage families to pray together and write their own prayer to share with the class
- Parents are warmly invited to the class masses throughout the school year
- Parents are encouraged to become class reps and/or talk to the class rep to help organise and host a range of events for our school community. All funds raised, support and enhance the provision we offer for our pupils and families
- Parent reps for each year group attend a Parent/Caregiver forum held termly to discuss relevant issues

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. St Joan of Arc operates an open-door policy.

Parish Links

Links with the local parish are a vital part of Catholic life in school. We are fortunate to be neighbouring St Joan of Arc parish which enables many opportunities for working closely together.

- Pupils visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church. Along with focused sessions throughout the year e.g. stations of the cross
- Links with the priest are strengthened as he visits every Friday to talk to the children about Catholic Social Teaching alongside prayer and worship
- The priest also supports the teaching of curriculum RE in school by visiting to talk about various topics such as baptism, reconciliation and vocation
- Children in our school are given the opportunity to become altar servers; the parish priest provides all necessary training
- 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

The Coordinator/Lead for Catholic Life and Mission

The Coordinator for Catholic life and mission is Sarah Kelly

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by Ben Fuiava, the RE lead and assistant headteacher, 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.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Senior Leader/Coordinator for Catholic Life and Mission

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 or Black History Month
- 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 and headteacher 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

[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group for Catholic life and mission, which might include, the coordinator, the headteacher, the deputy, staff, pupils, governors, and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the coordinator to lead this group.]

**This Policy is reviewed annually
or earlier if necessary by:**

The Leadership Team

It was last reviewed in

April 2026

It will next be reviewed in

July 2027

