



St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

"Love one another as I have loved you"

Religious Education Policy

School Mission Statement

Our mission at St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School is to educate our children to reach their full potential in the context of a Catholic community in which each individual shares, or is in sympathy with, the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Christian way of life.

Our core values of **equality, excellence, kindness, forgiveness, perseverance, friendship, courage, service** and **respect** were chosen by our pupils and are based on Catholic Social Teaching. These are the overriding principles to which the whole school aspires, together with our school motto, *"Love one another as I have loved you" John 13:34.*

We seek to make St Elizabeth's School a secure, happy and inclusive environment that is a place:

- of the highest quality teaching and learning;
- of compassion, co-operation and reconciliation;
- where each child is seen and appreciated as a unique individual, made in the image and likeness of God;
- in which every child's talents are developed and their needs met;
- where mistakes are learning opportunities;
- in which all children are empowered to keep themselves safe and healthy;
- where endeavour and excellence are encouraged and celebrated;
- in which cultural diversity is respected and valued;
- where we put our faith into action for the Common Good

We value worshipping and celebrating together, sharing our Christian witness and drawing strength from and serving our local parishes and the wider community.

Approved by:	Curriculum, Pupil Performance and Standards Committee
Status	Statutory
Review Cycle	Annual
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Catholic Social Teaching Statement

This policy is developed and implemented in accordance with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). As a Catholic school community, our policies are more than standard operational guidelines; they are a practical manifestation of the Gospel in action.

In keeping with Catholic Social Principles this policy ensures that all procedures and decisions prioritise:

- The Dignity of the Human Person: Recognising and respecting the inherent value of every individual as made in the image and likeness of God.
- The Common Good: Balancing individual needs with the spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being of the entire school community.
- Solidarity and Subsidiarity: Fostering a supportive network of mutual respect, ensuring voices are heard at all levels, and actively caring for the most vulnerable or disadvantaged among us.

By fulfilling these principles, this policy supports the school's mission to educate the whole person and build a just, compassionate, and Christ-centred environment.

Aim of Policy

This policy has been developed by the Education Service to support the teaching of Religious Education in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Southwark. It has been approved by the Diocesan Trustees. All policies and guidance are reviewed annually.

Introduction

At the heart of every Catholic school is the person of Jesus Christ. This presence of Christ is in the present tense: it is a real presence, in the here and now. Recognition of it impacts everything a Catholic school is and does, not least its Religious Education. "The importance of 'good Catholic schools' has not diminished over time. Whilst their educational and structural forms have had to adapt to political and social changes, the mission of Catholic schools remains unchanged. At the heart of that mission is good Religious Education. Similarly, while changes in culture and society have presented new challenges for Catholic school leaders and teachers, their role as religious educators remains as vital today as ever to the mission of Catholic schools." (*'To Know You More Clearly', The Religious Education Directory for Catholic schools, colleges, and academies in England and Wales*)

General Norms

According to the Religious Education Directory, 'To Know You More Clearly,' Religious Education in Catholic schools must adhere to the following general norms:

Article 1 – Oversight of Religious Education

Formation and education provided in schools is subject to the authority of the Church (can. 397, 806). It is for the Episcopal Conference to issue general norms concerning formation and education in the Catholic religion and for the diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it (can. 804).

Article 2 – Aims of Religious Education

The aims of Religious Education are:

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;
2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

Article 3 – Outcome of Religious Education

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Article 4 – Religious Education as the heart of the curriculum

1. Religious Education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
2. Religious Education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.
3. Religious Education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by Religious Education and have a strong relationship with it.
4. In each year of compulsory schooling, Religious Education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

Article 5 – Compliance with the Religious Education Directory

1. The Religious Education Directory includes the programmes of study approved by the Bishops' Conference for the various age groups. The competence for approving these programmes of study is currently exercised by the Department of Education and Formation, but the Bishops' Conference can delegate this function to another department, commission, or committee of the Conference.
2. Catholic schools are required to comply with the Religious Education Directory.

Article 6 – Implications of the primacy of Religious Education in the curriculum

1. Religious Education is to be properly organised, coordinated, taught, and resourced.
2. In primary schools there is to be a Coordinator of Religious Education who is to have at least parity in status and remuneration with those of any other curriculum area.

Article 7 – Interpretation

'School' means a Catholic school as understood in canon 803, and includes all Catholic maintained schools, independent schools (including academies), non-maintained special schools, and sixth form colleges.

Article 8 – Transitional provisions

1. This Religious Education Directory replaces all previous norms from 1 September 2025.
2. Until 1 September 2025, in any aspect within the scope of this Directory, schools may choose to comply with this Directory or the Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012.
3. These transitional provisions do not derogate from any requirements which do not derive from this Religious Education Directory.

Religious Education Curriculum

Programmes of study must comply with the expectations of the Religious Education Directory. The pedagogy of teaching RE has changed to learning about the faith as a world view; rather than, 'We believe...' it is 'Catholics believe...'. This considers the reality of a decreasing number of Catholic pupils and teachers in our schools. Children come into the classroom with their world view as no one is a blank canvas. The children are then presented with opportunities to respond and reflect on scripture so they can gain a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith and synthesise this into their developing world view.

The Religious Education Directory is based on a model of encounter and dialogue, driven by the ways of knowing, underpinned by this pedagogy. It uses a text-centred curriculum with content focused predominately on the Bible.

The directory is broken into 4 knowledge lenses:



Hear: Scripture and religious texts



Believe: What the Church teaches



Celebrate: Prayer, liturgy, sacraments and sacramental



Live: What it means to live a Christian life

With two further lenses used to study other world faiths:



Dialogue: the relationships between Catholics and other religious traditions



Encounter: different faiths, religions and world views

It is also broken into Ways of Knowing which identify the skills children should be developing as they work through the programme of study.

Content	Engagement	Interpretation
Centred in Catholic world view and what the church teaches	Some Catholics believe... Critical thinking Dialogue	Arriving at wise judgements and reflective responses
Truth-seeking	How do we know that...	Rational Judgement

Primary School

- School governors and leaders are required to ensure that the curriculum content of taught Religious Education meets the requirements of the Religious Education Directory as well as any additional requirements of the Local Ordinary;
- Currently there is one recommended scheme of work: Source to Summit, Lighting the Path, an online resource published by Oxford University Press.

Teaching of Other Religions:

- It is expected that pupils in our Catholic schools learn about and from other faith traditions as this will help to prepare them for living as full members of our diverse society;
- The Religious Education Directory contains an expectation that EYFS, KS1, KS2 and KS3 schools teach other world faiths in the summer term using the Dialogue and Encounter lenses.

Planning, assessment and recording of Religious Education:

- The Catholic Education Service (CES) and the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA) regularly publish and update documents containing the age-related standard for Religious Education. In addition, the Education Commission produces support documents for the assessment of the subject;
- It is expected that the processes for monitoring pupil progress has the same rigour as those for the other core subjects. In all phases it is expected that planning for curriculum Religious Education follows the framework chosen by the school;
- The recommended schemes of work provide guidance through their web-based resources.

Leadership of Religious Education

The governors and headteacher are responsible for ensuring that Religious Education has a high profile, and is taught as a core subject, within the curriculum of the Catholic school. Each school must ensure:

- that there is a named person who is responsible for leading curriculum Religious Education;
- that the postholder is a practising Catholic. As the post of leader of Religious Education is a reserved post, the Education Service must be invited to exercise advisory rights on behalf of the Archbishop in the appointment process;
- in the primary phase, it is expected that schools appoint a practising Catholic to the post, informing the Education Service of the name of the postholder;
- in all phases, that the leader of curriculum Religious Education should have parity in status and remuneration with the leaders of other core curriculum subjects within the school/college;
- that curriculum Religious Education is well resourced, both in regard to content and the continuing professional development of those teaching the subject;
- that there is regular and comprehensive monitoring of curriculum Religious Education which clearly demonstrates the impact the subject has on the school.