

St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School



Catholic Life and Mission 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:	Full Governing Board
Status	Statutory
Review Cycle	Every two years unless required before this
Date written/last review	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2027



St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

"Love one another as I have loved you"

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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 Elizabeth'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

The school mission 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
- All staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities e.g. whole school liturgical prayers, displays, interactions with children and members of our school community etc.
- It is shared with parents and the wider community e.g. through school signage, our newsletters, our policies, website and parents' workshops etc.

¹ CSI Inspection Handbook

School Environment

Visitors to St Elizabeth's 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 Elizabeth's 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
- Each class has coloured cloths and good quality religious artefacts
- There are displays in the school hall, as the centre of school life, with reflection on our Mission Statement, School Values, Catholic Social Teaching and information relating to the current liturgical season
- Focal points for liturgical prayers reflect the theme and season
- Displays celebrate the activities of the Pupil Chaplains, the Mini Vinnies, the Eco-Ambassadors, the School Council, the Sports Ambassadors and the Pupil Parliament Representatives
- Displays within each classroom reflect the RE topic currently being taught, the liturgical season, key prayers and scripture
- There are child-friendly quotes from scripture and saints around the corridors
- The school chapel is a dedicated space for class Celebrations of the Word, pupil prayer / Bible club and parents' prayer.
- The school grounds have a Mary Prayer garden for outdoor prayer, liturgy and Celebrations of the Word.

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.

Children are introduced to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in all classes using the Lighting the Path Programme and 'Rooted in Love' resources. We have a whole school Catholic Social Teaching Week each half-term where every class explores the same Catholic Social Teaching Principle at an age appropriate level. We also teach children about Catholic Social Teaching Principles throughout the whole curriculum and our programme of collective worship. In this way we are building children's moral compass and enabling them to respond to social, moral and ethical issues in the world. #

Our Catholic curriculum leads and supports our charitable outreach and work for social justice.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is taught in a Catholic context recognising we are all made in God's image and likeness.

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

² NBRIA The Distinctive Curriculum of the Catholic School

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 using 'Rooted in Love' resources in every class, pupils are taught to stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable.

We organise and hold charitable outreach activities throughout the year co-ordinated by the Mini-Vinnies, Pupil Chaplains and individual classes:

- Harvest – children are encouraged to bring in food for local foodbanks and the school is collection point for donations at points throughout the year.
- We support CAFOD Fast Days at Harvest and Lent.
- At Remembrance, we sell poppies and related merchandise to raise funds for the Royal British Legion.
- In Advent, a charity of the pupils' choosing is supported through collections after the EYFS and KS1 Nativities and the KS2 Carol Service.
- During Lent we raise funds for a chosen charity through activities chosen by the pupils.
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes through the year such as MacMillan through cake sales and other initiatives.
- We invite residents from the neighbouring care home to attend our performances and our KS1 choir performs for residents in the care home.
- We send Christmas cards to elderly residents.
- We have an ongoing relationship with our local pre-school for children with physical disabilities, raising money and awareness.

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:

- Writing to the Prime Minister regarding the needs of refugees
- Taking part in the 'Cancel the Debt' campaign
- Y6 visit to The House of Lords following letters written concerning Climate Change
- Supporting Fairtrade Fortnight
- Eco-Warriors carrying out litter picking in our local area and campaigning encouraging the school to reduce, reuse, recycle awareness
- Learning about the inspirational lives of those who fought for social justice within the 'Lent Prayer Packet' initiative
- Participation in Black History Month

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 Elizabeth's plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of the RE lead / Deputy headteacher, other staff and pupils who take on roles as Pupil Chaplains and Mini-Vinnies.

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
- Leading Celebrations of the Word with younger children
- Participating projects such as developing the school chapel
- 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
- Writing and leading whole school acts of worship.

School Community

St Elizabeth's 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 Regulation Policy is driven by our belief that all are unique and made in God's image and likeness.

Children and staff are encouraged to engage with a range of awards that recognise the work that we do to implement Catholic Social Teaching e.g. taking part in the Romero Award and the Jubilee Pledge.

St Elizabeth's recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works collaboratively with local Catholic schools in the network of Richmond Catholic Schools and the family of schools in the Christ the Redeemer Catholic Education Trust. Our collaborative work with our Catholic networks includes the following:

- Annual Moderation of RE work for all year groups
- Annual RE INSET Day for all classteachers to enhance RE, Prayer and Liturgy provision
- Joint Masses and liturgies for staff and children
- School to school support
- Staff CPD

Through our work in RE children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family.

At St Elizabeth's 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 @New to Catholic Schools' CPD 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. We share information about what their children are learning in RE lessons in the Class Information Sessions which include a presentation on RE and Catholic Life and in the Termly Topics Information for Parents sent home to all parents. We also share information about the Liturgical Life of the school in the fortnightly RE and Catholic Life newsletter and the weekly newsletter.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year, which include: class Celebrations of the Word, and whole school Masses and liturgies which take place throughout the year, both in school, or at one of our four Parish churches. Parents are also invited to attend Nativity plays, the KS2 Advent Carol Service, and the Passion Play.

They are encouraged to participate with their children Advent when the 'Travelling Cribs Prayer Packets' are sent home, encouraging a time of prayer and reflection and also during Easter when the 'Inspirational People Prayer Packets' are sent home. 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 enhance the provision we offer for our pupils and families.

Parents are encouraged to share their views on the RE and Catholic Life and Mission of the school in the annual RE questionnaires, as well as at parents' evenings. St Elizabeth's operates an open-door policy and we seek and welcome feedback from parents.

Parish Links

Links with the local parish are a vital part of Catholic life in school. The school serves four parishes: St Elizabeth of Portugal in Richmond, St Thomas Aquinas in Ham, Our Lady of Loreto and St Winefride in Kew and Our Lady Queen of Peace in East Sheen. We have four parish priests and we strive to ensure that the school is actively involved in each parish.

Children visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church. Our clergy also support the teaching of the RE curriculum in school by visiting to talk about various topics such as Baptism, Reconciliation and Vocation. Links with our priests are strengthened as they celebrate various services in the school with the children and staff, including Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the commissioning of the Pupil Chaplains. We also hold retreats and CPD for our staff in our parishes and Masses for our trust heads. Our clergy are invited to attend our school performances, and our PTA and social events. Our school community participates in parish events: singing in the Advent Service, attending First Holy Communion Masses and parish celebrations such as a parish bi-centenary. We also share communications with the parish and encourage attendance at church and involvement in church events.

The Coordinator for Catholic Life and Mission

The Coordinator for Catholic life and Mission is Mrs Kerry Diver.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Catholic Life and Mission Coordinator with the headteacher 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 in the monitoring of this policy.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Coordinator for Catholic Life and Mission

- Formulating a written policy for Catholic life and mission
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Catholic life and mission included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that pupils are able to explain the Catholic life and mission of the school, appropriate to their age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds
- Organising themes for outreach, timetable of charitable support, involvement in campaigns
- Developing staff confidence and expertise and enabling them to articulate the mission of the school and its impact on life

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Planning school involvement in national and local projects e.g. the environment
- Use a global planner to ensure relevant days are marked in school e.g. Anti-bullying week, Black History Month, saints' feast days
- Making judgements on outcomes, provision and leadership of Catholic life and mission to inform the ongoing work on the school Catholic Self Evaluation Document

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
- Liaison with the Pupil Chaplains
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation on the Catholic life and mission of the school
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date with current developments

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources and contacts
- Ensuring resources are available to promote the Catholic Life and mission of the school e.g. Mini Vinnies, Catholic Social Teaching, Rooted in Love
- Budgeting efficiently