



Holy Cross Catholic Primary

“Building relationships with God and each other, working hard in faith and hope to give our best in all things.”

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School



Catholic Life & Mission Policy

Ms M. Ellis – Religious Education Leader

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Autumn 2025

To be reviewed: Autumn 2027



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Catholic Life and Mission Policy

‘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 Holy Cross Catholic Primary responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church’s educational mission.

Mission Statement

Building relationships with God and each other, working hard in faith and hope to give our best in all things.

The mission statement of Holy Cross Catholic Primary 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 corner stone of school life:

- 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 such as class prayers, whole school liturgical prayers, displays and our Catholic Life and Mission calendar of events which follow Catholic Social Teachings.
- It is shared with parents and the wider community through school signage, our newsletters – main Head Teacher and Olive Branch RE Newsletter, email footers, school policy documents, website and parents meetings

¹ CSI Inspection Handbook



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Alongside our Mission Statement we encourage our core values of our school; Respect, Honesty, Tolerance, Justice, Forgiveness.

We also recognise Jean Baptiste Debrabant's vision that: "A Christian based education is a sure hope for the future of religion and society."

School Environment

Visitors to Holy Cross Catholic Primary 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 Holy Cross Catholic Primary every effort is made to provide a spiritually uplifting, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment, for example;

- All rooms have a cared for, attractive prayer area
- All rooms have a statue of Our Lady (age / need appropriate)
- Each class has a 'liturgy' box with coloured cloths and good quality religious artefacts
- There are displays in the corridors with reflection on our Mission Statement, information relating to the current liturgical season
- Focal points for liturgical prayers reflect the theme and season
- Displays, Portfolios and Newsletters document the activities of the Faith Council, Catholic Social Teaching Team, School Council and our work with the local community.
- Displays within each classroom and within the main school environment reflect the RED Branch being taught, the liturgical season, work produced by the pupils, key prayers and scripture.
- There are child-friendly quotes from scripture around the corridors
- All children and staff have access to the Holy Cross Chapel and prayer garden

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.

At an age-appropriate level children are introduced to the nine principles of Catholic Social Teaching, using the CAFOD resources. We use child friendly resources to explore the writings of Pope Francis, such as Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti. In this way we are building their moral compass and enabling them to respond to social, moral and ethical issues in the world. Our Catholic curriculum leads our charitable outreach and work for social justice.

² NBRIA The Distinctive Curriculum of the Catholic School



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Relationships, Sex and Health Education is taught in a Catholic context recognising we are all made in God's image and likeness. See our RSHE 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. Through timetabled work on Catholic Social Teaching as well as Catholic Life and Mission events, pupils are taught to stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable.

There are various fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year co-ordinated by the Faith Council, Catholic Social teaching Team (CSTT) and School Council for example;

- Harvest – children are encouraged to bring in food for local foodbank
- At Remembrance, we sell poppies and related merchandise to raise funds for the Royal British Legion.
- In Advent, we support CAFOD with their World Gifts initiative as well as a charity chosen by the Faith Council.
- During Lent we raise funds for a charity chosen by the children.
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes through the year such as our partner LSU school in Africa, our parish priest's – Fr Francis 'African family' charity.
- Each half term there is different focus of Catholic Social Teaching principles which the CSTT use to plan events and fundraising alongside the Faith Council.

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, *for example*;

- Supporting Thurrock foodbank
- Recognising Refugee Week
- Fairtrade Fortnight
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness

Chaplaincy – Faith Council

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 Holy Cross



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

Our Faith Council consists of the Deputy Head Teacher / RE Lead and Head Teacher working with two children from each class in Key Stage 2. The Faith Council are chosen by their peers through a secret ballot at the beginning of each academic year.

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 including those of spontaneous prayer
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school acts of worship
- Offering opportunities for informal pupil led prayer during lunch times
- Organising Mission Week
- Undertaking large projects such as developing ‘outside Prayer Areas and the 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, joy or other areas of need such as ensuring children across the school know how to genuflect and make the Sign of the Cross correctly
- Writing and leading whole school acts of worship, such as Reconciliation services
- Accompanying members of the school community, especially in times of need
- Evaluating worship – whole school, class and at other times

School Community

Holy Cross Catholic Primary 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 policy is driven by our belief that all are unique and made in God’s image and likeness. See our Behaviour Policy.

Holy Cross Catholic Primary recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works collaboratively with the Christus Catholic Trust and with others across the diocese. Through our work in RE children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family.

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary 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 and non-Catholic teachers are proactively inducted to the school and have access to all CPD including a weekly RE Clinic.



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Parents

Parents are the first educators of their children and we work in partnership with them. They are encouraged to support Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete optional homework tasks and discuss with their children work being completed when preparing to receive the Sacraments.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year, which include; class assemblies, curriculum meetings, whole school Masses and liturgical prayers which take place throughout the year both in school and at Holy Cross Parish Church and events such as Easter Celebrations of the Word and Nativities. They are encouraged to participate with their children with Prayer Bags that are sent home each week throughout the year.

Parents are invited to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. Holy Cross Catholic Primary 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 South Ockendon. Our parish priest is Fr Francis. Children celebrate mass at Holy Cross Church each half term where they can see the different aspects and features of a church. Fr Francis also supports the prayer life of Holy Cross Primary by for example celebrating mass at school and reconciliation services. Links with the priest are strengthened as he celebrates other events such the commissioning of the Faith Council and blessing of the chapel. The Faith Council and CSTT work with Fr Francis to support the parish with activities such singing at First Holy Communion Mass. We also share communications from the parish priest with our school community to encourage attendance at church and involvement in church events.

The lead for Catholic Life and Mission

The Lead for Catholic life and mission is the Deputy Head Teacher, who is closely supported by the Head Teacher.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Catholic life and mission Lead and / or Headteacher and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years.



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Appendix 1

The Role of the Leader 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. Holocaust Memorial Day,
- 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 Faith Council and CCST
- 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 e.g. CAFOD CPD, 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 e.g. resources for Catholic Social Teaching, CAFOD
- Budgeting efficiently