Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Catholic Life and Mission Policy

Policy produced by the school and diocese

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

Our School Mission Statement

Go, shine in the world and live as Jesus lived.

Our school offers a distinctly Catholic education in an inclusive environment, welcoming children and staff of all faiths and none.

'To have eyes for the good things of the Lord is to live by faith, to see life with the eyes of faith.' Cardinal Vincent Nichols

As a community, we have identified **nine core values that stem from the Mission and** are woven in to the very fabric of the school. We expect all members of the school community-pupils, staff, governors, clergy- to model these. These are also closely linked to the **four foundations** of our **curriculum design.**

[1] CSI Inspection Handbook, page 2

1. Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills (value link- excellence)
2. Educating for Hope and Aspiration (value link- determination and inspiration)
3. Educating for Community and Living Well Together (value link-compassion, integrity, friendship)
4. Educating for Dignity and Respect (value link- honesty, integrity, respect)

Determination This means resolution, resolve, willpower. "**Stand firm, and you will win life.**" (Luke 21:19)

Respect This means regard highly, value, honour. "**And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.**" (Luke 6:31)

Friendship This means mutual trust and support. "**Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.**" (1 John 3:18)

Inspiration This means the process of being given passion and/or ideas for a task. **I can do all things through him who strengthens me.**" (Philippians 4:13)

Excellence This means being outstanding or extremely good. "**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord.**" (Colossians 3:23-24)

Community This connects us with each other. **We who are many, are one body in Christ.**" (Romans 12:5)

Compassion This means having a deep awareness and sympathy for another's suffering. **When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.**" (Mark 6:34)

Honesty This means truthfulness, loyalty, fairness, sincerity. **The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.**" (Proverbs 12:2)

Integrity This means having strong moral principles e.g. honesty, decency, fairness, equality; having pure and balanced moral character. **Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.**" (Philippians 4:8)

The distinctive nature of our approach to education can be found in our explicit Christian values, the quality and range of our Prayer and Liturgy (Collective Worship), our Christian ethos and in our Religious Education.

As a Catholic school we believe **every** child is made in the image of God, and therefore we want the best for them. We value our school community as a place where love can flourish.

Our mission and Christian values are at the core of everything we do. In order for us to think about and understand how Jesus lived his life, we underpin our teaching and learning with stories and parables from the Bible. We also provide an environment which fully prepares the children to be confident, compassionate, honest and happy human beings so that they can:

Go, shine in the world and live as Jesus lived

Our School Mission Statement is based upon Matthew 5:14-16

Where does our school mission statement come from?

It has its roots in the Gospel of St Matthew who walked with Jesus during his ministry. ''You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives off light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven.''

Staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities e.g., behaviour expectations, staff relationship guidelines, displays, assemblies, links in lessons.
Parents and the wider community are informed about the statement through school signage, our newsletter, school policy documents, website and at parents' meetings...

Background
Our school is situated within an increasingly diverse community, reflecting a multi-faith and multi-racial community, which we recognise and value. The school aims to reflect the local community while ensuring that the Christian foundations are still maintained.
As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting individual beliefs. Upon introduction to the school, parents/ carers are informed about the Catholic basis of our teaching. It is therefore unlikely that parents/ carers would wish to exercise their legal right of withdrawal. However, should such a case arise, the parents/ carers concerned should consult the Head of school.

Our school aims

Our school aims to provide a caring, stable, stimulating environment where all children can develop to their full potential. Staff are committed to ensuring that the children's time at school is productive and successful. We aim to raise achievement in all aspects of the curriculum; developing self-confidence, motivation, self-reliance and co-operation.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and serve the local community by welcoming children from all backgrounds and faiths. Whilst our ethos is positively Catholic, we value and respect the diversity of our community and aim to set all children on life's path through compassion, thoughtfulness and understanding to one another and respect for one another's differences.

We believe that parents and teachers have a responsibility to ensure that children leave school with:

- the knowledge that they are special in God's eyes
- good skills in English, maths and computing
- a love of learning
- good social skills

- a sense of responsibility towards society in order to make a difference
- the confidence to stand up for themselves in an appropriate way

so that they are well equipped for a successful future.

School Environment
Visitors to Our Lady's are aware of the distinctive Catholic nature of the school through the physical environment, including the presence of images, symbols and statues in all areas of the school.

At Our Lady's 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 e.g., there is a mural of Our Lady above the school entrance, and we have a statue of our school saint Our Lady and information about her in the school lobby
- All classrooms have an attractive, well maintained prayer focal point, which includes a cross
- All classrooms have an attractive, well maintained RE display as it is a core subject
- Each primary classroom has good quality religious artefacts
- There are displays in the corridors which reflect our Mission Statement
- Displays around the school celebrate our pupil groups for example: the School Council, the Chaplaincy team and our charitable giving. This includes a foodbank contribution box in our school lobby
- We have an interactive other World Faiths display
- We display our Christian values prominently in the school hall.

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 of 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. We use the resource Rooted in Love across the school year as follows:

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 the workers
Summer 2: Dignity
Children take part in a Catholic Social Teaching assembly, have a follow up lesson on each theme in class and half-termly homework link to the half-term's theme.

[2] CSI Framework

In addition, every year in the autumn term as a whole school we suspend other subjects and teach ‘Equalities Studies’. The work is carefully planned for each year group so children can learn about tolerance, determination, peace and forgiveness from the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Every year in the summer term as a whole school we suspend other subjects and teach ‘Looking after our world’ as a whole school project week. The work is carefully planned for each year group where children focus on being stewards of God's creation and are therefore motivated to care for the earth and act in ways that will restore and protect the environment.

In this way, we are building our pupils’ character and moral compass, enabling them to respond to social and ethical issues in the world.

Relationships and Sex 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. We use the Ten -Ten resource.

Other World faiths are taught as part of the RED 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. We have a prominent display in our school about other faiths.

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, PSHE, RSE and our whole school project weeks, pupils learn about Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils learn that they must look after the environment and stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. We actively promote the spirit of giving in a charitable way throughout the year through a co-ordinated programme.

As a result, there are various projects, fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year co-ordinated by the Chaplaincy Team and School Council.

We teach children about Catholic Social teaching and global awareness by talking to them about the charities we support and ensuring this is made real for them through assemblies and discussions.

The money we raise from non-uniform days goes to New Ways charity, supporting the poorest children in St Joseph’s School in Turkana, Northern Kenya in Africa. We have a close link with the school and we are visited annually by a member of the school community (Fr Denis) who thanks our children and shows the children how their contribution directly helps the school.

The food and toiletries donated all year long (each class has a different half term on a rolling programme) goes to local people who need help in our community.

We give to The St Vincent De Paul Society who help the homeless in the community through different fundraising activities including movie night.

We give in a global way to the charity Plan International, through which we sponsor two children.

During Lent and Advent we raise funds for CAFOD through activities chosen by the pupils.

We buy a poppy for Remembrance Sunday and send the money to the Royal British Legion.

This planned giving is a part of the annual life of the school.

In these many ways, the children can feel proud that they are making a positive difference to our local neighbours but also our global neighbours and are putting their faith into action.

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.

We have a display in our school called ‘Acts of Kindness’ where children and staff put up acts of kindness which have been done unto them by a member of our school community.

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 meaningfully as part of our annual equalities studies and looking after our world.
We are part of the Camden Climate Charter which focuses on:

1.Sustainability and the curriculum - Embed sustainability across the curriculum to ensure students are well informed and actively contributing to tackling the climate crisis where they can.

2.Single-use plastics - Significantly reduce the use of single-use plastic.

3.Waste - Consider the waste hierarchy in the delivery of school services and activities. Refuse - Reduce - Reuse - Repurpose - Recycle.

4.Food - Educate students about the benefits of eating less meat and offer plant-based options as part of the daily menu. As a Catholic School, we do not serve meat on a Friday.

5.Transport - Promote active ways of travelling to school including cycling, walking and public transport.

6.Energy - Raise awareness about different sources of energy, the associated carbon emissions, and how we can all contribute to reducing our energy consumption.
7.Procurement and circular economy – We use your purchasing power to favour sustainable and ethical products and services for example energy, stationery, food and cleaning products.

Chaplaincy
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. Chaplaincy provision at Our Lady's plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of two chaplains from each class who meet regularly with a senior leader. 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 Celebration of the Word.
- Keeping the pupils updated with information about donations to charity
- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence and joy where applicable
- Writing and leading whole school acts of worship, such as the Remembrance Service
- Accompanying members of the school community, especially in times of need

School Community
Our Lady's school 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 have an equalities policy
- We have assemblies about religious festivals when they are celebrated in our local area.
- We support our Muslim pupils during Ramadan
- We ensure our pupils are provided with food that meets their (religious) requirements.

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.

Through our work in RE, children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family. Our Lady's recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools (the Camden Catholic School Partnership), and other Catholic schools across the diocese. We also work with our local non-Catholic schools to ensure all children flourish.

At Our Lady's Primary School, all children are encouraged to live life to the full and reach their full potential. Members of staff have opportunities and are actively encouraged to take part in the diocesan training.

Parents
Parents are the first teachers of their children, and we work in partnership with them.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year which include:

- Academic Review Day – we have three a year where parents are invited into school during the day to meet with their child's teacher. Twice a year on these days, a written report is shared with parents and children
- Parents invited to Masses in school or at our parish church Our Lady of Hal
- Parents Working Alongside Children in Class
- Parents attending Children Leading Worship and Prayer Services
- Class presentations to parents
- Parents supporting class visits
- Parents supporting with History off the Page
- Weekly coffee mornings
- Y6 Leavers Service
- Y6 Production
- Music concerts
- KS2 carol concert
- Sports day

Parents are also given regular updates about their children's learning through

- Curriculum Overviews – sent home to parents termly
- Weekly newsletters - sent home to parents, emailed and on school website
- Termly Religious Education newsletters - sent home to parents, emailed and on school website
- Regular texts and emails to inform parents about important information
- Reception weekly newsletter
- Nursery weekly newsletter

Parents are encouraged to participate with their children for example during Advent the 'Travelling Cribs' are sent home, encouraging a time of sharing and reflection

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent academic review meetings and parents being actively invited by the school to make an appointment to see a member of staff if they have a worry.

Parish Links

Links with the local parish are a vital part of Catholic life in school. The parish which serves our school is Our Lady of Hal.

- Pupils visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of our church.
- The priest also supports the teaching of curriculum RE in school by visiting to talk about various topics such as baptism, reconciliation and vocation.
- Links with the priest are strengthened as he celebrates various liturgies in the school with the pupils and staff, including Mass
- We support the work of the parish through promoting their campaigns and act as a collection point for donations.
- 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 *the Head of School.*

Policy Monitoring and Review
This policy is monitored by the Head of School and Executive Headteacher and is evaluated and reviewed by 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 Teaching 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
- 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