



Nottingham Roman Catholic
Diocesan Education Service

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy



With God's Guidance We Love, Learn, Respect and Forgive

**Part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Academy
Trust**

Catholic Life and Mission Policy

Written	07.10.26
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Review (November 28)	
Date of Next Review	November 2027

Our vision and mission

At St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we believe that every child is created in the image and likeness of God, possesses inherent dignity and is called to recognise and develop their God-given gifts.

Our Catholic mission, **Love, Learn, Respect and Forgive**, is at the heart of everything we do. It shapes our relationships, our curriculum, our decisions and our aspirations for every member of our school community. We seek to create a Christ-centred environment in which everyone feels welcomed, valued, safe and supported to flourish.

We are proud to be a Catholic school where faith is lived through words, actions and relationships. We strive to ensure that the teachings and example of Jesus Christ are evident throughout school life, inspiring pupils and adults to act with compassion, integrity, justice and hope.

Our school is a community of faith and learning, bringing together pupils, families, staff, governors, our parish, the Diocese of Nottingham and St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Together, we work to nurture the spiritual, moral, social, emotional and academic development of every child.

We recognise and celebrate the rich cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of our community. We welcome families of different faith traditions and those with no religious affiliation, while remaining clear and confident in our distinctive Catholic identity.

Through this policy, we aim to ensure that Catholic Life and Mission is not an isolated aspect of school provision but the foundation upon which our whole school community is built.

Our Catholic mission in action

Our mission statement provides a shared language and framework for the way we live and learn together.

Love

We follow the example of Jesus by showing kindness, compassion, generosity and care. We recognise the dignity of every person and seek to ensure that all members of our community experience genuine love, belonging and acceptance.

Learn

We believe that every child is a unique gift from God, with the capacity to grow, achieve and flourish. We promote a love of learning, encourage curiosity and provide ambitious educational opportunities that enable pupils to develop their talents and fulfil their potential.

Respect

We treat others with dignity, recognising that every person is made in the image of God. We value diversity, promote fairness and encourage pupils to listen to others, celebrate differences and contribute positively to our school and wider community.

Forgive

We follow Jesus' example of mercy, reconciliation and forgiveness. We encourage pupils and adults to reflect on their actions, take responsibility, repair relationships and understand the importance of making positive choices.

These values are embedded through teaching, prayer, worship, relationships, behaviour expectations, pastoral care, leadership opportunities and service to others.

Aims of Catholic Life and Mission

The purpose of Catholic Life and Mission at St Joseph's is to ensure that the Catholic faith is experienced, understood and lived throughout the school community.

We aim to:

- Keep Jesus Christ at the centre of our school's life, work and decision-making.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the Catholic faith and their relationship with God.
- Ensure that our mission statement is reflected in the attitudes, behaviour and actions of pupils and adults.
- Foster a culture of welcome, inclusion, dignity, respect, forgiveness and compassion.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for prayer, worship, reflection and spiritual development.
- Encourage pupils to put their faith into action through service, charitable work and care for creation.
- Promote Catholic Social Teaching, helping pupils understand the importance of human dignity, solidarity, the common good and preferential care for the poor and vulnerable.
- Strengthen partnerships between home, school, parish, Trust and Diocese.
- Develop pupil leadership and enable children to take an active role in shaping the Catholic Life of the school.
- Ensure that every pupil, regardless of background, faith, ability or circumstance, can participate fully in school life.
- Evaluate the impact of our provision and continually improve the experiences and outcomes of our pupils.

The distinctive nature of our Catholic school

St Joseph's is a Catholic school serving an inner-city community in Leicester. Our community includes pupils from Catholic, other Christian, other faith and non-religious backgrounds, alongside families with diverse cultural and linguistic experiences.

This diversity enriches our school and provides opportunities to develop mutual understanding, respect and a commitment to the common good.

We recognise that some pupils and families experience disadvantage or additional barriers to learning and participation. Our Catholic identity calls us to respond with compassion, fairness and practical support, ensuring that no child is overlooked or excluded.

We seek to create a school in which every child knows that they matter, that their voice will be heard and that they are valued as a unique individual.

Our Catholic ethos is therefore expressed through both our distinctive religious character and our commitment to serving the whole community. We invite all pupils to engage respectfully with the life and mission of the school and to understand how Gospel values can inform their relationships and choices.

Prayer, Liturgy and spiritual development

Prayer and Liturgy are integral to the life of St Joseph's. They provide opportunities for pupils and staff to encounter God, reflect on the teachings of Jesus and grow in their understanding of the Catholic faith.

We seek to develop pupils' confidence in prayer and their ability to reflect thoughtfully on Scripture, the liturgical year and the needs of others.

Our provision includes:

- Daily opportunities for prayer and reflection.
- Celebration of the Word that is appropriate to pupils' ages, stages of development and experiences.
- Celebration of the major seasons and feasts of the Church's liturgical year.
- Opportunities to participate in Mass and other appropriate liturgical celebrations.
- Prayerful reflection through Scripture, music, silence, symbols and sacred art.
- Opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and worship.
- Links with the parish and opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church.

Prayer and Liturgy should be purposeful, inclusive and engaging, enabling pupils to participate meaningfully and develop their own understanding of prayer.

Staff should model reverence, respect and reflection, helping pupils recognise that prayer is an opportunity to listen, give thanks, seek guidance and bring the needs of others before God.

The school works closely with the Parish Priest, Father David and Trust Hub Chaplain, Lucy Kearns to enrich the spiritual life of the community and provide opportunities for pupils and staff to deepen their faith.

Further detail about the planning, delivery and evaluation of prayer and liturgy is set out in the school's Prayer and Liturgy Policy.

Religious Education and the Catholic curriculum

Religious Education is central to the mission of our Catholic school and contributes significantly to pupils' understanding of faith, meaning, morality and their responsibilities towards others.

Through Religious Education, pupils develop knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, engage with Scripture and Church teaching, explore important religious and ethical questions, and develop respect for the beliefs and experiences of others.

The school implements the Religious Education Directory in accordance with applicable diocesan and Trust guidance.

Our wider curriculum also reflects our Catholic mission. Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching are reinforced through subject teaching, relationships, discussions, enrichment opportunities and the way pupils are encouraged to approach learning.

We aim to develop pupils who are knowledgeable, reflective, compassionate and confident in making positive contributions to society.

The school recognises that Catholic Life and Mission and Religious Education are closely connected but distinct. Religious Education provides planned curriculum learning, while Catholic Life and Mission is experienced throughout the life of the school.

Further detail about curriculum content, teaching, assessment and standards is set out in the school's Religious Education Policy.

Catholic Social Teaching, service and social responsibility

We believe that faith must be expressed through action. Pupils are encouraged to recognise Christ in others, particularly those experiencing poverty, disadvantage, injustice or exclusion.

Catholic Social Teaching informs our approach to relationships, leadership, charitable work, environmental responsibility and our wider contribution to the community.

We promote the following principles:

- **Human dignity:** every person is valuable and deserving of respect.
- **The common good:** we work for the good of everyone, recognising our shared responsibilities.
- **Solidarity:** we stand alongside others and recognise our connection with people locally and globally.
- **Preferential option for the poor:** we pay particular attention to those experiencing poverty, disadvantage or vulnerability.
- **Stewardship of creation:** we care for the world entrusted to us by God.
- **Participation:** everyone should have opportunities to contribute to the life of their community.
- **Peace and reconciliation:** we seek justice, understanding, forgiveness and the restoration of relationships.

Pupils are encouraged to put these principles into practice through charitable initiatives, fundraising, environmental projects, support for vulnerable people and participation in community events.

Our CAFOD Club, Mini Vinnies, Eco Warriors, School Council and Chaplaincy Team provide opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and make a meaningful contribution to school life.

These groups should help pupils understand not only what they do but why they do it, making explicit connections between Catholic teaching, the needs of others and practical action.

Charitable activities should be age-appropriate, purposeful and respectful of the dignity of those being supported.

Relationships, behaviour and pastoral care

Our approach to relationships and behaviour is rooted in the Gospel values of love, respect, forgiveness and reconciliation.

We seek to establish a calm, welcoming and orderly environment in which pupils can learn successfully, develop positive relationships and feel confident that adults will listen to their concerns.

All members of the school community are expected to treat others with kindness, respect and fairness. We promote positive behaviour through clear expectations, consistent routines, encouragement and supportive relationships.

When difficulties arise, we aim to help pupils understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility and repair relationships where appropriate. Forgiveness does not remove the need for accountability, appropriate consequences or safeguarding action.

Bullying, discrimination, harassment and other forms of harmful behaviour are not consistent with our Catholic mission and will be addressed in accordance with school policy.

Pastoral care is a shared responsibility. Staff should remain alert to pupils' emotional, social and spiritual needs and work in partnership with families and relevant professionals to provide appropriate support.

The school's commitment to forgiveness and reconciliation must always operate alongside its safeguarding responsibilities and its duty to protect children and adults from harm.

Inclusion, equality and the dignity of every person

At St Joseph's, every child is a valued member of our school family.

Our Catholic commitment to human dignity requires us to challenge discrimination, remove barriers to participation and ensure that pupils with additional needs and those experiencing disadvantage are fully included in the life of the school.

We are committed to ensuring that pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils from all cultural and religious backgrounds are welcomed, supported and enabled to flourish.

We seek to ensure that:

- Pupils experience a strong sense of belonging and are treated fairly.
- Appropriate adjustments and support enable pupils to participate in learning, prayer, worship and wider school activities.
- Pupils' voices are heard and their contributions valued.
- Difference is approached with respect, sensitivity and understanding.
- Families are welcomed as partners in their children's education.
- Resources and opportunities reflect the dignity and diversity of the school community.
- Concerns about exclusion, prejudice or discrimination are taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Our Catholic identity is strengthened when the dignity of every individual is reflected in our everyday actions and decisions.

Pupil leadership and pupil voice

Pupils should be active participants in the Catholic Life and Mission of St Joseph's. We seek to develop children who understand their responsibilities, can articulate the school's mission and contribute to the life of the community.

Opportunities for pupil leadership include the Chaplaincy Team, CAFOD Crew, Mini Vinnies, Eco Warriors, school council and other appropriate roles.

Through these opportunities, pupils can contribute to prayer and worship, charitable activities, environmental initiatives, school improvement and the development of a positive school culture.

Pupils are encouraged to:

- Demonstrate the school's mission in their relationships and behaviour.

- Take responsibility for supporting others.
- Lead and contribute to prayer, worship and celebrations.
- Identify needs within the school and wider community.
- Suggest improvements and contribute to decision-making.
- Reflect on the impact of their actions and identify opportunities for further service.

Pupil voice will inform the evaluation and development of Catholic Life and Mission, ensuring that children's experiences and perspectives contribute to school improvement.

Partnership with families, parish, Trust and Diocese

Catholic education is a partnership between school, home and Church. St Joseph's seeks to maintain positive, respectful and purposeful relationships with families, the parish, St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the Diocese of Nottingham.

Parents and carers are recognised as the first educators of their children. We aim to work collaboratively with families to support pupils' learning, personal development and spiritual growth.

Our partnership with the parish is strengthened through the involvement of the Parish Priest, participation in Mass and other celebrations, and opportunities for pupils to experience the wider life of the Church.

The Trust Hub Chaplain and other relevant Trust and diocesan colleagues contribute to staff formation, pupil retreats, mission activities and the continuing development of our Catholic identity.

We seek to develop partnerships that are mutually supportive and focused on enabling pupils to grow in faith, knowledge, compassion and responsibility.

Leadership and responsibilities

The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body has responsibility for supporting and monitoring the Catholic character of the school in accordance with the Trust's scheme of delegation and governance arrangements.

Governors should:

- Promote and safeguard the school's Catholic mission and identity.
- Understand the strengths and priorities for development in Catholic Life and Mission.
- Engage with pupils, staff and families to understand their experiences.
- Monitor the impact of provision through appropriate visits, reports and discussions.
- Support and challenge leaders in evaluating provision and identifying improvements.
- Ensure that Catholic Life and Mission is considered within the school's strategic development.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that Catholic Life and Mission is central to the school's leadership and daily practice.

The Headteacher should:

- Lead the development and promotion of the school's Catholic vision.
- Ensure that the mission statement informs school policies, priorities and decision-making.
- Work with the parish, Trust, Diocese and governors to strengthen Catholic provision.
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate support and formation.
- Monitor the impact of provision and establish priorities for improvement.
- Ensure that inclusion, safeguarding and the dignity of every person remain central to school life.

The Catholic Life and Mission Lead

The designated lead supports the Headteacher in coordinating, developing and evaluating Catholic Life and Mission.

Responsibilities may include:

- Coordinating the school's Catholic Life and Mission development plan.
- Supporting pupil leadership groups and initiatives.
- Promoting Catholic Social Teaching across the school.
- Working with the Parish Priest and Trust Hub Chaplain.
- Gathering and evaluating evidence of pupils' experiences.
- Supporting staff in making connections between the mission statement and everyday practice.
- Contributing to self-evaluation, governor reports and improvement planning.

All staff

All staff share responsibility for upholding and promoting the Catholic ethos of the school.

Staff are expected to model the school's mission, treat all members of the community with dignity, support pupils' spiritual and personal development, and contribute to a culture of inclusion, respect and high expectations.

Staff should help pupils recognise how Gospel values can inform their choices, relationships and responsibilities.

Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to participate actively in the life of the school, demonstrate the mission statement in their actions, respect others and contribute to the common good.

They should be supported to develop their understanding of Catholic values and to take increasing responsibility for their learning, relationships and service to others.

Parents, carers and the wider community

Parents, carers, the Parish Priest, Trust Hub Chaplain and wider community are valued partners in the life and mission of the school.

Their involvement supports the development of a welcoming Catholic community in which pupils can grow in faith, confidence and responsibility.

Staff formation and professional development

We recognise that the quality of Catholic Life and Mission depends on the shared understanding, commitment and example of the adults who work within our school.

We therefore seek to provide opportunities for staff to develop their understanding of the Catholic faith, the school's mission, Catholic Social Teaching and the practical implications of Gospel values in education.

Staff formation may include prayer and reflection, professional development, Trust and diocesan training, retreats, collaboration with chaplaincy colleagues and opportunities to reflect on the impact of our mission in everyday practice.

We encourage staff to reflect on how their relationships, decisions and professional practice contribute to a school culture in which every child is known, valued and supported.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Catholic Life and Mission will be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure that the school's mission is lived consistently and that provision continues to meet the needs of pupils and the wider community.

Evaluation will consider both the quality of provision and its impact on pupils' experiences, attitudes, relationships and opportunities.

Evidence may include:

- Pupil voice and discussions with pupil leadership groups.
- Feedback from parents, carers and staff.
- Learning walks and observations of the school environment.
- Evaluation of prayer, worship, celebrations and mission activities.
- Evidence of pupils' participation in charitable work and service.
- Records of parish, Trust and chaplaincy involvement.
- Governors' visits and monitoring reports.
- Relevant inspection findings and diocesan or Trust guidance.
- The school's Catholic Self-Evaluation and development planning.
- Evidence of inclusion, belonging and the participation of different pupil groups.

Leaders will identify strengths, areas for development and priorities for improvement. Findings will inform the school's Catholic Life and Mission development plan and, where appropriate, the wider school improvement plan.

Monitoring must be proportionate, purposeful and focused on improving pupils' experiences rather than simply collecting evidence.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if required by changes in Church, diocesan, Trust or statutory guidance.

Related policies and documents

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Mission Statement.
- Religious Education Policy.
- Prayer and Liturgy Policy.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Equality Information and Objectives.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Relationships and Health Education / RSE Policy.
- School Development Plan and Catholic Life and Mission Development Plan.
- Relevant St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and Diocese of Nottingham guidance.

"Love, Learn, Respect and Forgive"

At St Joseph's, we seek to ensure that every child is known, valued and supported to flourish, growing in faith, developing their God-given gifts and learning to make a positive difference to the lives of others.