

Diocese of Nottingham
Working in partnership with the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Trust

Catholic Life and Mission Policy
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

<i>Written by</i>	<i>Updated</i>
<i>Senior Leadership Team</i>	<i>September 2025</i>

*'Belonging, Caring and Sharing,
Safe in the arms of God's love.'*

St Patrick's Catholic Life and Mission Policy

Introduction: 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 Patrick's responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Intent:

Our aims for our Catholic life and Mission will be to enrich the lives of the children, including:

- As a Catholic academy, religious education and formation are at the heart of our school curriculum developing the Catholicism and spirituality of our pupils.
- At St Patrick's, we continually strive to develop the full potential of the school community in an environment permeated by the Catholic faith and promoting Gospel values. At the heart of our mission is the family, school and parish: each supporting and working in mutual co-operation for the benefit of the children.
- We are seeking to enrich the lives entrusted in our care through a broad and balanced curriculum designed to meet the needs of each pupil. Teaching of the Catholic faith and how our lives should be shaped by these beliefs and values.
- The school provides opportunity for young children to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically and emotionally and share their qualities, abilities and ambitions thus fulfilling individual potential.
- Growth of faith by relating the Gospels to their lives and levels of understanding.
- Understanding that we are all one body in Christ and that we have a duty to show love to our brothers and sisters around the world.
- Understanding of Catholic Social Teaching principles and how these can shape our words, actions and decisions.

¹ CSI Inspection Handbook

We feel that the best way to achieve these aims is by a three way process involving the home, school and parish. We endeavour to make these links whenever possible, acknowledging that the foundations of our Catholic Mission are presented to children from a very wide range of backgrounds and commitment to the faith.; everyone is encouraged to love others and live out our Catholic mission.

School Community

St Patrick'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 policy is driven by our belief that all are unique and made in God's image and likeness. (See our Behaviour Policy)

Children and staff are encouraged to engage with a range of awards that recognise the work that we do to implement Catholic Social Teaching. This includes Eco schools and Faith in Action.

St Patrick's recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works collaboratively with local Catholic schools in clusters, in the Trust and across the diocese. Through our work in RE children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family.

At St Patrick'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 Early Careers Programme as part of their induction to teaching in a Catholic school.

Parents/Carers

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

Information on the Ten:Ten programme (Relationships, Sex and Health Education Curriculum) for all year groups is shared with parents/carers.

Parents/carers are invited into school to attend Retreat day celebrations. Prayers; led by classes, Celebrations of the Word and any other performances and plays.

Parents/Carers are also regularly invited to support with homework activities related to different times of the church's year.

Parents/Carers 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 St Patrick's Parish Church and events such as the Christmas Celebration.

Parents/Carers are encouraged to participate with their children during their Advent and Lenten journeys.

Parents/Carers 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/carers are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. St Patrick's 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 St Patrick's RC Church, Forest Town. Our parish priest is Canon John who is assisted by Father Liam Carpenter.

Children visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church. Canon John 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 services in the school with the children and staff, including Mass and the commissioning of the Chaplaincy Team. We support the work of the parish Justice and Peace group 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 and involvement in church events.

Implementation:

Mission Statement

"Belonging, Caring and Sharing: Safe in the arms of God's love."

The mission statement of St Patrick's 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 on which we build the Catholic life of the school and we aim to achieve our mission by:

- Establishing, maintaining and developing a Catholic ethos which is permeated in everything we do and is apparent to all those who enter the school.
- Instructing, explaining and demonstrating the gospel values and how we aim to love out our lives.
- Creating a distinctive Catholic culture where all members of the school community lead virtuous lives
- Providing frequent opportunities for conscious and active participation in Prayer and Liturgy.
- Creating a place where faith is central.
- Providing an enriched curriculum which is creative, inspiring and inclusive for all pupils.
- Being an outreaching centre of God's mission on earth in promoting the virtues of faith, respect, courage, love and unity.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of its meaning and can articulate this at an age-appropriate level

- Enabling all staff to embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities *e.g. class prayers, whole school liturgical prayers, displays, jubilee pledge*
- Being an outreaching centre of God's mission on earth in promoting the virtues of faith, respect, courage, love and charity.
- Ensuring that the Gospel values are permeated through all policies such as inclusion, behaviour, curriculum etc.
- Providing opportunities for parents/carers to encounter Christ with their child; child masses, Celebration of the Word, confession, adoration, homework activities linked to current RE topics or related to the Bishop's themes and other times of the year, such as Remembrance day etc.
- Whole school retreat days
- Word of the Week films which are shared on our You tube channel and on Instagram.
- Further strengthening links with our parish and those in need through sharing posts on social media, Christmas cards, Thankyou cards, singing at the local care homes.
- Fundraising opportunities throughout the year.

The Mission statement is shared with parents and the wider community *through school signage, our newsletters, email footers, school policy documents, website and parent/carers meetings*

Prayer and Liturgy

The school day is punctuated with prayer. Teachers and pupils pray at the beginning, lunchtime and end of the school day. Pupils are encouraged to pray spontaneously throughout the day by making use of class prayer areas, prayer stations around school and through prayer journals.

Presentations and performances

- All classes, from Nursery to Year 2 perform a Nativity play or Nativity songs in the Advent term.
- Year three to Year six children each lead an Advent assembly.
- Nursery children present Easter songs and crafts.
- Foundation 2 to Year 2 and then Year 3 to Year 6 children children present an Easter presentation
- Year 6 lead a carol service.
- All children are involved in leading and participating in prayer and liturgy throughout the year.

School Environment

Visitors to St Patrick'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 Patrick'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
- All rooms have a statue of Our Lady and 'Let us Pray 2Gether' resources
- Each class has a 'liturgy' crate 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 in the hall illustrate the Catholic life of the school
- Displays within each classroom reflect the RED topic being taught, the liturgical season, work produced by the pupils, key prayers and scripture
- There are child-friendly quotes from scripture around the corridors
- There is a dedicated indoor sacred space named 'The Sanctuary'
- The school grounds have a peaceful prayer garden, an eco-friendly area, and a forest school 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. 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.

² NBRIA The Distinctive Curriculum of the Catholic School

Impact

Putting our faith into action

Our Catholic life and mission has ambition for the spiritual growth of all pupils, irrespective of their background and starting point. All pupils are aware that we have a special role to live as disciples and ensure that we show love to our brothers and sisters both locally and around the world.

At St Patrick's, we continually measure the impact of our Catholic life and mission by speaking and acting upon the voice of children and all stakeholders.

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, detailed in our Annual Plan of Provision, 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 children and staff, which include:

- Harvest – children are encouraged to bring in food for local foodbanks and the school is a permanent collection point for donations throughout the year. Funds are raised for CAFOD.
- 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, as well as collecting gifts for the elderly
- During Lent we raise funds for CAFOD through activities chosen by the pupils.
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes through the year chosen by the House teams
- Sending Christmas cards to elderly parishioners
- Mary's Meal's
- Faith in Action award is offered to Year 6 pupils who receive their pin on completion as one of our charities across school.
- Working toward CAFOD's Live Simply to support CAFOD as one of our charities across school.

Pupils are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, staff 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:

- Working with the local MP on Safety roads campaign
- Celebrating Refugee Week

- Climate change activities e.g. Switch off fortnight
- Supporting Fairtrade Fortnight
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness
- Supporting themed weeks based upon Catholic Social Teaching

Developing the Prayer and Spiritual Life of all members of our school

We aim to develop the spiritual life of everyone within our community, regardless of their beliefs or none. We provide spiritual development for pupils and staff alike, and invite our families to develop spiritually in connection with the school and parish.

We do this by:

- Providing children with the skills to develop their own prayer life- through scripture, music, drama and prayer. This is progressive and detailed in our Skill Strategy.
- Opportunities for pupil led prayer and worship weekly with support from our hub chaplains.
- Providing opportunities for reflection.
- Travelling Nativity and Travelling Crosses for home-school links.

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

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of *two hub chaplains, the senior leadership team and Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators who work with the Chaplains from Y3-Y6. Chaplaincy is invitational and all pupils are offered the opportunity to participate in the chaplaincy life of the school. It is the hope by providing*

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 having their own missions which include:

- Maintaining and developing class prayer areas
- Maintaining and developing communal prayer areas
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school acts of worship
- Offering opportunities for informal pupil led prayer during break or lunch times
- Organising retreat days, days of recollection
- Undertaking large projects such as developing a prayer garden
- 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, such as the Remembrance Service
- Accompanying members of the school community, especially in times of need

The Coordinator for Catholic Life and Mission

The Coordinator for Catholic life and mission are Mrs Jane Smedley and Mrs Natalia Lowe.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Catholic life and mission Coordinators

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.

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. 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 school chaplain/Chaplaincy team
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising inservice training and ongoing formation on the Catholic life and mission of the school
- Attending appropriate in-service courses e.g. updating Rainbows training, 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 Rainbows, Mini Vinnies, Catholic Social Teaching, Faith in Action
- Budgeting efficiently

[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group for Catholic life and mission, which might include, the coordinator, the headteacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the coordinator to lead this group.]