St Philip Howard's Catholic Life and Mission Policy

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 St Philip Howard responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Mission Statement

We are part of God's family. We follow the way of Jesus by loving, learning and doing our best.

Our mission statement is the foundation of school life so all:

- Pupils have a clear understanding of its meaning and can articulate this at an age-appropriate level
- Staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities *e.g. behaviour expectations, interaction between staff, displays, assemblies, links in lesson*
- Parents and the wider community are informed about the statement through *school signage, our newsletter, email footers, school policy documents, website and at parents' meetings.*

School Environment

Visitors to St Philip Howard 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 St Philip Howard 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., we have a display that the children have created with the artist____, which represents our diversity and

[1] CSI Inspection Handbook, page 2

has our school values within it, you are also greeted with our Catholic Social Teaching display; filled with certificates and letters to the school, as well as our school banner and our house tokens.
- All rooms have a crucifix/cross
- All of the classrooms have a prayer table as a focal point; reflective of the liturgical colours, a prayer tree, prayers, the Bible open to either this week's Gospel reading or what is relevant to their learning.
- Each primary classroom has a 'liturgy' box with liturgical coloured cloths and good quality religious artefacts
- There are displays in the corridors which reflect our Mission Statement and the current liturgical season

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 principles of Catholic Social Teaching, using resources designed for schools such as the Rooted in Love or CAFOD resources. We use age-appropriate resources to explore the teaching of the Magisterium in this area, including encyclicals such as Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti, as well as the DoCat, a condensed version of the Social Doctrine of the Church. In this way we are building our pupils' character (virtues) and moral compass, enabling them to respond to social and ethical issues in the world.

Pupils 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 the Caritas Ambassador Programme.

Relationships, Sex and Health 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.

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. In assemblies, RE, PSHE and RSE pupils learn about Catholic Social Teaching and Fratelli Tutti. Pupils learn that they must look after the environment and stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. As a result, there are various projects, fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year co-ordinated by the;

- Chaplaincy Team: who do nearly new uniform sales to help those within the community access good quality uniform for much cheaper prices, they take part in the Caritas Ambassador Programme

[2] CSI Framework

- At Remembrance, the year 6 house captains sell poppies and related merchandise to raise funds for the Royal British Legion.
- The Wellbeing team every year raises money for Young Minds during the Hello Yellow campaign, raising money and awareness for the importance of mental health.
- The Eco team have enhanced the way we recycle in the school and have planted more trees around the boundary of our school. They also regularly go out for litter picking. They also took part in the Green Blue Peter badge where they looked at bees as pollinators; making bee bombs to plant around school and researching how important they are for the environment.

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 Catholic life. There are planned opportunities for pupils to engage in campaigns for social justice:

- Work for climate change e.g. Living streets, CAFODS COP26
- Supporting Fairtrade Fortnight
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness

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 St Philip Howard plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of the RE Lead and 6-10 children from year 4 and 6. 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/RE classroom prayer focal point
- Maintaining and developing communal prayer garden
- Writing and leading Rosary prayer services during the
- Undertaking large projects such as developing a prayer garden
- Supporting and organising campaigns for social justice
- 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

School Community
St Philip Howard 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 a RJED policy
- We accompany members of our community who identify as LGBT+ and have a anti-homophobia policy
- We have assemblies about religious festivals when they are celebrated in our local area.
- 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. St Philip Howard recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works collaboratively with local Catholic schools in clusters; Holy Family, Our Ladys and Pope Paul, in the Deanery and across the Diocese, we also work with our local non-Catholic schools to ensure school flourishes.

At St Philip Howard 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 training such as CCRS and Foundation Stones. New teachers are enrolled on the Diocesan New to Catholic Education or ECT training as part of their induction to teaching in a Catholic school.

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

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year which include: curriculum meetings, parents evenings, whole school Masses, events organised by the friends; September Community BBQ, Christmas Fayre, etc. , class assemblies, year group productions- year 2 nativity, year 4 passion play and year 6 leavers production.

They are encouraged to participate with their children for example:

- During October and May, parents are encouraged to join our Rosary Service before school run by the chaplaincy team.
- 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 enhanced the provision we offer for our pupils and families.

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. St Philip Howard operates an open-door policy.

Parish Links
Links with the local parish are a vital part of Catholic life in school. The parishes which serve our school are Mary Church and St Peters church.

- Pupils visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church. KS2 children go to a Friday Mass at the church each term, as well as children throughout the school going to visit.
- The priest also supports the teaching of curriculum RE in school by visiting to talk about various topics such as baptism, reconciliation and vocation. The priest also comes in so that children can receive the sacrament of reconciliation at Advent and Lent each year.
- Links with the priest are strengthened as he celebrates various Masses in the school with the pupils and staff, and has meetings with RE Lead and headteacher to plan dates for the diary.
- 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 school choir often sing at the First Holy Communion Masses to bring together the school community and parish
- The parish are often invited to participate in Masses held at school
- The school staff are encouraged to attend the First Holy Communion Masses wherever the children are making them.

The Coordinator/Lead for Catholic Life and Mission
The Coordinator for Catholic life and mission is *Orla Burnham Slade*

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Catholic Life and Mission Senior Leader/Coordinator and headteacher and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole 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 Teachings 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 e.g. Hello Yellow for Young Minds, mental health week, Holocaust Memorial Day, Black History Month.
- 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

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