



ST. ALBAN'S

CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LEAD THE WAY

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Policy Agreed:	April 2025
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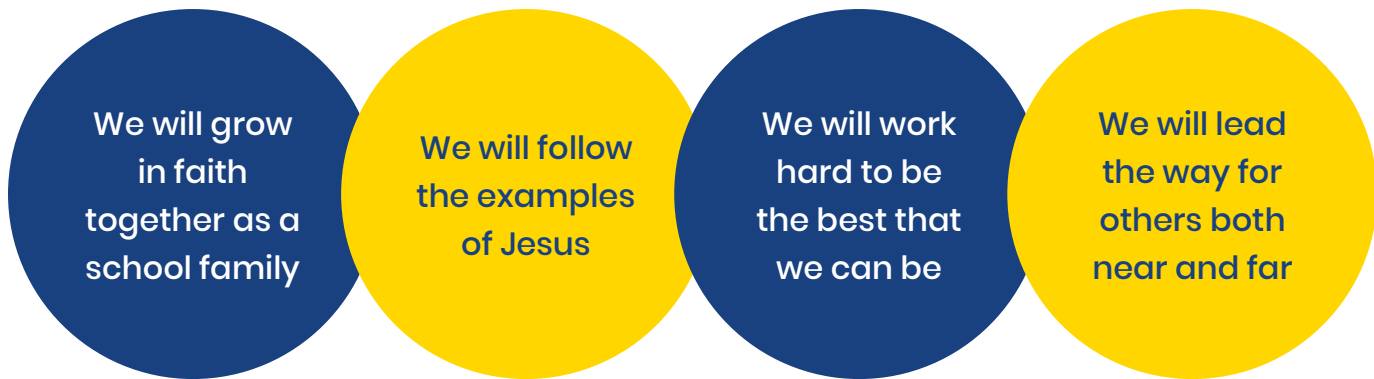
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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement for St. Alban's was created by the children, staff, parents and governors of the school.

St. Alban's Mission Statement



St Alban's Catholic Primary School is a Christian community embracing a partnership between the school, home, and parish. It offers to each member the opportunity to grow in knowledge of the Father through Jesus His Son with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, fostered through prayer, worship and awareness of the scriptures. We believe that every individual is uniquely created and loved by God and therefore has a right to be part of a community where each member is valued and respected for their own worth irrespective of race, colour, creed or ability. The children will be helped to appreciate that they are members of God's wider world in its richness and diversity. Our Curriculum provides a Catholic Christian setting in which all children have an equal opportunity to grow in understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.

INTRODUCTION

Religious education is at the heart of our mission as a Catholic school and forms a core part of our curriculum, fostering an atmosphere of welcome and inclusion. At St. Alban's Catholic Primary, our programme is grounded in sound educational principles that cater to the age and ability of our students, enriched by the school ethos. Through our religious education programme and policy on worship, we emphasize the importance of a personal spiritual life, adherence to objective moral norms, and a strong sense of social responsibility. This framework shapes the aims of our policy, which has been developed with our school community in mind, drawing

on guidance from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Education Service, the Catholic Education Service, and the Department for Education. It is further informed by the ideas and philosophies found in Christ at the Centre (Stock 2013) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC).

Within this environment we believe that:

“...Religious Education is not one subject amongst many but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life.” (Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1988)

“For the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings.” (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium 1998)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Relationship, Sex and Health Education Policy.

Our Mission Statement is central to the life of our school. All members of the school community are encouraged to think of ways in which they can strive to live out the Mission Statement in their everyday lives.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

“The first educators in the faith are parents. It is they, above all others, who establish in their children the first sensitivity and responsiveness to the presence of God, to the practice of prayer and to the patterns of life in the community of faith, the parish. By their example in the home and, their participation in the Mass and the other sacraments, the foundations of a lifelong faith and discipleship in their children are laid down.”

Statement from the Bishop’s Conference of England and Wales on Religious Education in Catholic Schools 2000.

It is with this statement in mind that we recognise and acknowledge the importance of the partnership with the home and parish communities to which our children belong. As the General Director for Catechesis affirms: “This partnership between home and parish is enhanced by the role of the Catholic school in which the educational mission of the church finds a particular and important expression.”

AIMS

The aims of our religious programme are:

- Celebrate individuality—Recognize the inherent dignity and worth of each child as part of God’s creation.
- Foster awe and gratitude—Encourage appreciation for life’s beauty and mysteries.

- Support spiritual reflection—Provide opportunities for contemplation and personal faith development.
- Affirm God’s love—Ensure children understand they are valued and cherished.
- Deepen commitment to faith—Challenge students to examine their lives while respecting diverse beliefs.
- Strengthen relationships—Guide awareness of self, others, and the natural world.
- Encourage moral and spiritual growth—Help children recognize God’s presence in all aspects of life.
- Model Christian witness—Demonstrate faith in action through lived experiences.
- Ground learning in Scripture and tradition—Utilize the Bible, liturgy, and Church teachings.
- Promote social responsibility—Raise awareness of global interdependence and ethical action.
- Cultivate a loving community—Create opportunities for care, cooperation, and trust.
- Provide a strong foundation in Catholic beliefs—Ensure deep knowledge of Roman Catholic teachings.
- Encourage interfaith understanding—Promote appreciation for diverse traditions and beliefs.
- Develop key skills—Strengthen investigation, communication, evaluation, and collaboration.
- Instill virtues—Cultivate wisdom, courage, reverence, and right judgment.
- Inspire excellence and joy—Deliver a curriculum that nurtures academic and spiritual growth.
- Promote respect and stewardship

OBJECTIVES

Within the context of our Mission Statement, Learning and Teaching, Special Educational Needs, Relationship, Sex and Health Education, Assessment, Marking, Recording and Reporting, Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety Policies, the teaching of RE will give children the opportunity to:

- Recognize God’s presence in their lives, understanding His love through prayer, Scripture, and the sacraments.
- Develop a personal response to faith, cultivating values that guide their actions and decisions.

- Engage in thoughtful reflection and dialogue, exploring their beliefs, emotions, and relationship with God.
- Strengthen their understanding of Scripture, gaining wisdom from the Old and New Testaments.
- Deepen their spiritual growth, investigating religious teachings and applying them to daily life.
- Embrace prayer as a vital part of faith, practicing personal and communal forms of worship.
- Celebrate their Catholic identity, participating in Mass, liturgies, and meaningful traditions.
- Build a strong foundation in Church teachings, learning how Catholic values shape their choices.
- Develop respect and appreciation for other beliefs, fostering openness and understanding of different faiths.
- Live out Christian virtues, growing in kindness, integrity, and compassion within their community.

THE CURRICULUM

At St. Alban's Catholic Primary School, religious education is primarily guided by the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RED) To Know You More Clearly. In accordance with the Bishop's mandate, this curriculum will be fully implemented across Reception to Year 6 by September 2025. During the 2024-25 academic year, Years 3 and 4 will continue to follow the previously approved curriculum, Come and See.

We recognise the central role of religious education in our curriculum and dedicate 10% of the teaching week to RE lessons. In Key Stage 1, this amounts to 2 hours and 15 minutes, while in Key Stage 2, students receive 2 hours and 30 minutes of instruction, excluding Collective Worship. In Early Years, the timetable and learning approach remain flexible, yet religious education remains a priority, ensuring children engage fully with the curriculum and develop a strong foundation in faith.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTORY

The Religious Education Curriculum Directory has a clear framework for learning:

- Four Knowledge Lenses: Hear, Believe, Live and Celebrate indicate what should be known by the end of each age phase.

- Ways of Knowing: Understand, Discern and Respond are the skills through which children progress and develop their thinking during the curriculum journey.
- Expected Outcomes set out for each year group what pupils should be able to know, remember and do.
- Curriculum Branches divide the model curriculum into half-term units of study which repeat annually, giving a spiral curriculum which allows children to build progressively on the prior knowledge and develop their understanding year by year.

Each half-term follows the six-branch structure of the RED Curriculum:

1. Covenant (Creation & God's Promises) – Learning about God's faithfulness through biblical figures.
2. Prophecy & Promise – Understanding how the Old Testament points to Jesus.
3. Galilee to Jerusalem – Walking with Jesus in His ministry and teachings.
4. Desert to Garden – Holy Week, Easter, and the transformation of suffering into new life.
5. To the Ends of the Earth – The mission of the Church, the apostles, and our own call to discipleship.
6. Dialogue & Encounter – Engaging with Catholic Social Teaching, world faiths, and interfaith understanding.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

One of the main purposes of classroom RE is to draw pupils into a systematic study of the teaching of the Church and the saving mystery of Christ, which the Church proclaims. The following strategies and aims underpin the delivery of religious education in our school.

- In our school, RE is taught discretely and developmentally. It includes the deepening of knowledge and understanding of key theological ideas and their applications to life. It is the policy of this school to give 10% of the timetable to the teaching of RE in accordance with Diocesan guidance.
- Ample opportunities are offered for children to apply and use their knowledge and skills in cross-curricular studies to deepen their understanding of religious truths and think creatively.
- Engagement with difficult questions of meaning and purpose which everyone has to face enables them to think

critically about their own questions of meaning and purpose.

- The development of a sense of self-worth through the children's experience of belonging to a caring community and an awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

At St Alban's we believe in providing the children with rich and varied learning opportunities. Teachers are encouraged to be as creative as possible in their lesson planning and to employ a range of teaching styles including:

- whole class discussion and teaching
- group discussion and feedback
- differentiated activities according to ability
- partner work
- individual research and study

WORLD RELIGIONS PROGRAMME

The World Religions Programme in Catholic primary schools, guided by the Religious Education Directory, is rooted in the principle of Dialogue and Encounter. This approach encourages pupils to explore diverse worldviews while recognizing connections with the Catholic faith.

Throughout the academic year, pupils engage in meaningful encounters that broaden their perspectives and develop interfaith understanding. These experiences allow them to appreciate the richness of different religious traditions and foster respectful dialogue. Opportunities for real-life engagement include:

- Family faith-sharing—Inviting members of the school community to discuss their beliefs and traditions.
- Guest conversations—Listening to invited visitors speak about their faith journeys and experiences.
- Q&A with religious leaders—Engaging in discussions with faith representatives, either online or in person.
- Visits to places of worship—Exploring sacred spaces to deepen their understanding of different traditions.

- Artefact exploration—Handling and studying religious objects to gain insight into various faiths.
- Independent research and discussion—Encouraging inquiry-based learning through reading and conversation.

External speakers are always checked in line with the CES checklist for external speakers, to ensure safe and constructive dialogue and encounter opportunities for our pupils: <https://catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/governance/item/1003587-checklist-forexternal-speakers-to-schools>

PRAYER

Prayer is a central and ever living part of our school day. Through prayer, we seek to deepen the children's relationship with God in a way that is relevant and meaningful to them. We feel that at every stage the children in our care should be encouraged to spontaneously express their joy, wonder, awe, concern, thanks, sorrow, sadness, anger, fear and disappointment through prayer (see Collective Worship policy). From Reception children are taught an attitude of stillness, quiet and openness to the presence of God, experienced in a variety of ways.

Prayer forms an essential part of all acts of collective worship and liturgical celebrations. Each class has their own prayer table which is a focus for the children's prayer. More formal prayers are shared too, such as morning and evening prayers and grace before meals. Children are also encouraged to compose their own prayers. There is a crucifix in every classroom. Staff and Governors pray together before meetings.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

At St Alban's, we believe that spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which the children acquire insights into their personal existence. It is the experience of love, of goodness and beauty. It is a sense of being taken out of oneself; the sense of wonder, of questioning, of awe, or simply the instinct that there must be more to life than this. We believe that enhancing spiritual development helps children to create increasingly coherent narratives about themselves. Through spiritual

development, the children are encouraged to grow in self-awareness and in awareness of their responses to experience, seen especially in the light of faith.

At St Alban's we aim to provide a safe environment in which our children feel confident to open themselves to the truth of their own experience and feelings. We encourage children in their spiritual development by encouraging a questioning and searching attitude about the self which will include "Who am I?" "Where do I fit in?" and "How do I relate to others?"

Staff are also encouraged to develop their awareness of their own spiritual journey and that, like the children, they can experience the excitement of discoveries and should be prepared to risk sharing their experiences with the children.

Moral education at St Alban's is promoted through the R.E. curriculum, Relationship, Sex and Health Education, core values and all other subject areas. It is promoted in interpersonal relationships, enlivened by the whole school Catholic ethos and is concerned with personal decision making on the basis of what is right and wrong.

Spiritual and moral development is promoted in all aspects of school life, since God is present in all things: curriculum subjects, extra-curricular activities, interpersonal relationships, collective worship – each are avenues into understanding and experiencing God, thus enabling pupils to make sense of how God is active in our world. Therefore, every member of staff in our school has a role to play. All share in the nurturing of the whole person and by their witness to Christian values, help create the ethos in which all can grow, spiritually and morally, and be formed in the likeness of Christ.

Children's spiritual growth is aided by opportunities for religious experiences, meditation and reflection; collective worship allows pupils to explore and share beliefs, appreciate the discipline of silence and prayer, raise and address moral, personal, social, national and international concern (see Collective Worship policy).

RESOURCES

All teachers responsible for planning and teaching Religious Education participate in half-termly diocesan training sessions focused on curriculum directory resources. Each teacher has a copy of the appropriate Religious Education Directory for his/her class. Children at both Key Stages have access to Bibles in their classroom.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A wide variety of strategies are used by teachers in order for each child to participate in the learning of RE to the best of their ability. These are outlined in our Special Educational Needs Policy.

MARKING, ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

Religious Education assessment plays a vital role in monitoring students' progress, ensuring their learning aligns with diocesan and national guidelines. By evaluating achievements against the expected goals outlined in the Religious Education Directory, educators provide structured support that fosters deeper understanding and critical thinking in spiritual and ethical topics.

Assessment and feedback in Religious Education are carefully structured to support students' growth. Teachers evaluate pupils within each branch through observations, self-assessments, and external moderation at termly Deanery R.E. Coordinators meetings, ensuring effective tracking of progress. We focus on verbal contributions in class discussions, engagement, and the quality of written work in storytelling and interpretation.

Feedback is designed to challenge students' thinking and enhance their learning, following the school's Feedback Policy. It may be delivered verbally to encourage reflection. Pupil attainment is recorded every half term on the school's assessment system, with progress regularly monitored by the RE Lead and SLT. Moderation takes place both internally and with local Catholic schools, ensuring consistency in expectations across the diocese.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

At the beginning of the Autumn term, each class holds an induction evening, during which parents receive a comprehensive overview of the Religious Education curriculum and guidance on how they can support their child's learning. Additionally, a detailed curriculum overview is provided to parents each term, outlining the topics covered and any other pertinent information.

Formal parent consultations take place during the Autumn and Spring terms, offering parents the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and review their work. Parents also receive information about their child's attainment in Religious Education through termly reports and a final end-of-year report.

MONITORING

Religious Education books and planning are routinely monitored by the RE Lead and the Headteacher to ensure consistency and quality. The leadership team and RE Lead conduct regular visits to RE lessons, utilizing Step Lab coaching to enhance teaching in alignment with other curriculum areas.

The RE Lead meets termly with the RE Governor to provide updates, review data, assess provision, and conduct book reviews, learning walks, and pupil voice exercises. Additionally, RE work is moderated internally through CPD sessions with staff and collaboratively with RE leaders from Xavier Trust to maintain high standards of teaching and learning.

APPENDIX 1 – WHY DO WE PRAY?

Why do we Pray?

It is important to introduce children to different kinds of prayers to help them to understand the different reasons for praying.

1. Traditional Prayers

It is important to teach children traditional prayers. They hear them at home, at church and in school. These prayers have stood the test of time and they come to us as part of the richness passed down from generation to generation. We should not discard them lightly. The Rosary, for example, is a beautiful family prayer. Of course, there is always the danger that familiar prayers will become so routine that the children might say them without thinking about what they mean. For this reason, it will help very young children if actions are included in prayer. Here are three simple examples that we use at school:

- a) It is always important to get ready for prayer. At school we could say “Join your hands, close your eyes (or bow your heads) and get ready to talk to God,” followed by a short pause. This ensures a still, quiet attitude, ready for prayer.
- b) The Sign of the Cross is one of the first things that children learn. We make the sign of the cross on ourselves to remind us that when Jesus died for us on the cross, He redeemed us. While we make the sign of the cross, we name the three persons of the Blessed Trinity.
- c) The Our Father is one of the first prayers that children learn, even though the very young find it long and difficult to remember. It also has a traditional vocabulary and some very long words.

2. Prayers of Invocation

Invocation litany means a “calling in”. In prayers of invocation we ask for God’s presence with us.

3. Prayers of Contrition

We tell God about the wrong things we have done. We tell him that we are sorry and ask for his forgiveness

4. Prayers of Meditation