OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

"With God all things are possible"

At Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School, we will inspire our children to achieve personal excellence for themselves and for the glory of God.

Religious Education Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator
Spring 2026	**Spring 2027**	**Diane Kelly**

Interim Headteacher:	Sophie Gibbs
Chair of Governing Body:	TBC

Misson Statement

"With God all things are possible"

At Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School, we will inspire our children to achieve personal excellence for themselves and for the glory of God.

We believe that with Christ as our teacher and Mary as our model, we will grow spiritually. Therefore, this policy should be read in conjunction with our school's Prayer and Liturgy Policy.

Introduction

Our Lady Immaculate Primary School is a community of Catholic faith and religious education, where that faith seeks understanding, places Christ at its centre, and children learn that with God all things are possible.

At the heart of our Catholic education lies the vision of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God. We aim to educate each child, in their uniqueness, to understand that Jesus is a role model and that the Church's moral and social teaching provide us with a sure guide for living.

In our School community, parents are regarded as the primary educator of their child. Our Religious Education supports families to fulfil the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and to grow spiritually. Every decision is made with the children in mind, serving our Mission, following our Virtues, British Values and Global Values.

A central message of our Catholic faith is that although we are all different, God loves each one of us regardless of background, gender or ability. Our Lady Immaculate is an inclusive school which provides a religious education within a broad and balanced curriculum. We recognise that within that curriculum the individual needs of children should be recognised and catered for.

We are proud to be part of, and active participants in, the parish of Our Lady Immaculate Church. We aim to work with our parish priests and local parishioners to build our community of faith. We have strong links with Fr. Martin Hardy, our RE Foundation Governor and Parish Priest. In addition, Fr. Martin and Fr. Damien Wade regularly visit the school and the children attend services at the Church.

At Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School, we aim to fulfil and serve our missionary mandate in an atmosphere of inclusion, community and faith.

Religious education as the heart of the curriculum

1. Religious education is at the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.

2. Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.

3. Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of said curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.

4. In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% of curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

RED, 2023

Compliance with the Religious Education Directory

1.The Religious Education Directory includes the programmes of study approved by the Bishops' Conference for the various age groups. The competence for approving these programmes of study is currently exercised by the Department of Education and Formation, but the Bishops' Conference can delegate this function to another department, commission, or committee of the Conference.

2.Catholic schools are required to comply with the Religious Education Directory (full compliance is expected in primary schools from September 2026). See Our Lady Immaculate, RED Implementation Plan (Appendix A).

RED, 2023

Implications of the primacy of religious education in the curriculum

1.Religious Education is to be properly organised, coordinated, taught, and resourced.

2.In primary schools there is to be a Coordinator of Religious Education who is to have at least parity in status and remuneration with those of any other curriculum area.

RED, 2023

The importance of the Religious Educator

'God had appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets and third teachers' (1Cor 12;28)

In any school, the engagement of the teacher with the young at their critical formative period should evoke a sense of privilege and awe. If Catholic schools are places of human formation, the task of the teacher cannot be underestimated since it takes the human to form the human. Time and again, the Church proclaims the irreplaceability of the teacher at the heart of education. They are essential to a school's success. It has become almost a truism that students listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

At Our Lady Immaculate, we aim to bear witness through the teaching of Religious Education and as active participants in the religious life of the school.

- As teachers we aim to witness to what we teach. 'Where religious education is taught by a person who bears witness to their belief, they can bring the lived dimension of a life in Christ into their classroom community.' RED 2023.

- We aim to have a genuine expertise in the subject of Religious Education. Our role is to lead and accompany our students on an intellectual journey. We aim to not limit our theological literacy to the classroom but contribute to the formation of children as a whole person.

- Where the teaching of religious education may at times be undertaken by colleagues who are not Catholic, we aim to develop their skill and maximise access to resources and events that facilitate appropriate levels of theological literacy.

- We aim to develop our classrooms and school as safe spaces to discuss difference. 'Religious education teachers – perhaps especially those for whom faith is a living reality – must not be brittle when they encounter disagreement and dissent in their lessons. Ultimately, as well as being competent in subject knowledge, they must be agile conductors of classroom debate, resilient custodians of religious wisdom, and sensitive mentors to enquiring students.' RED, 2023

Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Headteacher** has the primary responsibility in promoting the ethos outlined in the Mission Statement and in ensuring that this policy is implemented. The Headteacher 'is the spiritual leader of the school' (CES). The Mission Statement is central to all decisions made.
- **All stakeholders** have, by virtue of agreeing to work in a Catholic school, a responsibility to uphold the Catholic ethos of the school.
- **The RE Subject Leader** is responsible for the promotion and development of

the school's RE programme. They assist colleagues in planning effectively to enable each child to achieve to the best of their ability. The RE Subject Leader is there to advise, support and liaise with colleagues, lead discussion, set an example of good classroom practice and be involved in leading and developing good practice amongst all staff.

- **Governors** support staff in the implementation of the RE policy. The RE Governor works closely with the RE Subject Leader to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

Implementation of RED 'To know you more clearly'

In Year 4 and 5 we follow the Come and See programme of study

In Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6 we follow RED 'To know you more clearly'

See RED Implementation plan for more information (Appendix A)

Aims of Religious Education *as stated in the RED 2023*

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;

2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;

3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;

4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;

5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;

6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;

7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is:

The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. *RED 2023*

"The task of handing on the faith to future generations is both the privilege and responsibility of the local Church. Its primary purpose is to bring young people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ." Cardinal Basil Hume

Process for delivery of R.E.:

The structural elements of the programme of study *as stated in the RED 2023*

The programme of study for Religious Education in Catholic schools presented in this directory has a framework with four structural elements: knowledge lenses, ways of knowing, expected outcomes, curriculum branches.

Knowledge lenses set out the object of study for pupils; they indicate what should be known by the end of each age-phase. They are referred to as lenses, since they are the things we are looking at and they divide the content of the programme of study into four systematic sub-sections for the study of Catholicism and two additional lenses for the study of religions and worldviews, which together comprise the six knowledge lenses of hear, believe, celebrate, live (the study of the Catholic religion), dialogue, and encounter (the study of other religions and worldviews).

Teaching other religions
The first four lenses systematically set out what a study of Catholicism comprises. The two lenses called 'dialogue' and 'encounter' set out the requirements in relation to the teaching of other religions and worldviews.

The first of these two lenses is called 'Dialogue' and is an exemplification of the Church's teaching on the relationship between Catholicism and other Christian traditions, between Catholicism and Judaism, between Catholicism and other religions, and between Catholicism and non-religious or atheistic worldviews. It is called 'dialogue' because it focuses on the importance of dialogue as the only authentic way of living faithfully in a pluralistic world.

The sixth lens is called Encounter. In addition to understanding what the Church teaches about its relationship to other faiths, religions, and worldviews, pupils are also expected to engage in a discrete study of other faiths, religions, and worldviews, modelled on the concentric circles of *Ecclesiam Suam* outlined above. This is partly because of the Church's own commitment to dialogue, partly also because to love our neighbour is also to respect and esteem his or her culture, and finally because to enter into dialogue is a means of learning how to live peaceably with difference. Therefore, as they progress through school, pupils will study:

• Other Christian denominations
• Judaism
• Islam
• Dharmic religions and pathways
• Other religions and worldviews, including non-religious worldviews.

It is important for the avoidance of a comparative approach, and all the risks of relativism this brings, that the study of other religions is a study of how those who profess that religion or worldview understand it on their own terms.

Ways of knowing set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey. Whenever we know something, we always know it in more than one way: we remember it, we critically assimilate it, and we put it into practice. All three are ways of coming to know the things that are the object of our study. The ways of knowing are an evolution of the Age-related Standards in Religious Education, which were themselves an evolution of the Levels of Attainment in Religious Education. The three ways of knowing are: understand, discern, and respond. They are represented in the programme of study by icons: head (understand), heart (discern), and hands (respond).

Expected outcomes are a synthesis of the content outlined in the knowledge lenses and the skills described in the ways of knowing. Each age-phase will have a prescribed set of outcomes that will indicate what pupils are expected to know, remember, and be able to do, using the language of the ways of knowing and applying it to the discrete knowledge within each lens.

Curriculum branches are the way this programme of study presents its model curriculum. The model curriculum presents the expected outcomes in six curriculum branches that correspond to the six half-terms of a school year. The model curriculum is rooted in the narrative of salvation history and leads pupils on a journey in each year of schooling that gives a sequence to the learning. As they revisit each branch in each year of school they come to a deeper understanding of its significance for Catholic belief and practice, which allows them to make links between the four knowledge lenses within the context of the narrative of salvation history. The six curriculum branches are: creation and covenant, prophecy and promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, desert to garden, to the ends of the Earth, and dialogue and encounter.

Teaching and Learning
Teaching and learning strategies from across the curriculum can be appropriately adapted to inspire the learning needs of pupils.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

A central message of the Catholic faith is that although we are all different, God loves each one of us equally, regardless of background, gender or ability. It is therefore vital that we recognise and cater for the individual needs of children, acknowledging that all children have different gifts and talents and that these should be celebrated.

Learning tasks should be matched to the abilities of the children to enable them to achieve success, helping them to develop to their full potential and to develop a positive self-image.

We aim to ensure that resources do not reinforce any kind of stereotypes and that they reflect our own school community. It is important that the children are provided with images, which reflect the multi-cultural society in which we live, enhancing their awareness and knowledge of other faiths and cultures, respecting the rights of the individual at all times. This is essential in preparing children to take their places in a multi-cultural society.

Children with special educational needs, whether they are children with learning difficulties, or children who are able and talented in RE, will be presented with tasks to suit their ability. Differentiation for these children may be in the amount of support offered by the teaching and support staff, or tasks with varying levels of difficulty, including tasks which will extend the more able children's spirituality or knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the topic being covered.

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

Assessing and Recording Achievement

As a Catholic school our main concern is with the development of:
• the whole child;
• the formation of the Christian character;
• the ability to take their place in society;
• the fulfilment of academic potential.

To this end the profiling of the pupil's whole person development is as important as the assessment of academic outcomes.

Children are assessed at the end of each Branch of Learning or Come and See Topic against the Expected Outcomes. Children's academic progress is tracked on Insight. We use assessment against the expected end of year outcomes as a guide to pupil attainment and use this in line with our Assessment for Learning policy.

Reporting to parents is through written reports where Religious Education is a discrete subject. There are also opportunities to share progress in Religious Education through Parents' Consultation Evenings.

Information Technology

Children have access to laptops and other ICT equipment, which will be used to enhance R.E. teaching and learning.

How Schools will be Inspected

All Catholic schools, academies and colleges are subject to canonical inspection by their diocesan bishop. Some schools and academies are subject to a Section 48 or 50 inspection (or their academy equivalents) and for those schools the canonical inspection fulfils this statutory function.
Section 5 and section 28 inspectors must not inspect religious education or the content of collective worship. This is the legal prerogative of the Catholic Bishop.
An inspection under the National Framework makes judgements on the Catholic life and mission of the school, **religious education**, and collective worship. Schools will be inspected every 5 years if judged Good or better.
When inspecting religious education, inspectors will consider and evaluate:
• Pupil outcomes: how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.
• Provision: the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in religious education.
• Leadership: how well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.
(CSI Handbook-Inspection)

Right of withdrawal from Religious Education

Parents have the right of withdrawal from Religious Education for their children. The school has a separate Policy for the Withdrawal from Religious Education.

R.E. IN-SERVICE

Catholic Teachers Certificate (CCRS)
All Teachers are encouraged to secure this qualification in Religious Education. It is expected that the RE Subject Leader and all aspiring to Senior Leadership in Catholic schools will obtain this.

Annual in-service for all staff

It is recommended that one day's in-set is allocated to the Catholicity of the school.
An ongoing record is kept of all staff CPD.

Consultation Process

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the staff and governors of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School and will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis.

Governors are responsible for the R.E. Curriculum

This is managed by the Headteacher on a day to day basis.

Primary RE Lead Job Description

‘God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers’
(1 Cor 12:28)

The role of the RE Subject Leader along with the Head Teacher, has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to Religious Education. Key areas of responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- To be responsible to the Headteacher and colleagues for the monitoring of teaching, assessment and planning of Religious Education based on the development of the children at each stage. Monitoring occurs in order to support staff and should include classroom observation, book scrutiny, planning, discussion with pupils and feeding back findings to staff and actioning next steps.

- To manage resources and facilities for Religious Education.

- To liaise with the Brentwood Diocesan Education Service particularly through attendance at the Co-ordinators’ meetings, and inform the Headteacher and colleagues of current standards and developments within Religious Education.

- Ensure that Religious Education is given 10% of the curriculum time.

- Encourage and support colleagues to obtain the CCRS certificate.

- Ensure new initiatives from the Vatican, Diocese and Parish are fully embraced and implemented within school life.

- Work collaboratively with the Head Teacher to ensure that Prayer and Liturgy, remains central to the school’s mission, including appropriate Feast days and Holy Days of Obligation.

- Ensure that Religious Education contributes positively to the broad and balanced curriculum of the school through co-operation and dialogue with other subject leaders.

- To advise individual colleagues and induct new members of staff as required on the Religious Education process and teaching methods.

- To plan alongside the headteacher and leadership team the implementation plans for the RED and PLD to ensure compliancy by the target dates of September 2026 for RED and September 2025 for PLD.

- To facilitate in-house moderation of pupils' books as appropriate.

- To track data and use this, in consultation with the Headteacher, to set realistic targets in RE.

- In consultation with the Headteacher to communicate with parents, governors and the parish community regarding issues associated with Religious Education.

- To maintain a Subject Leader's file containing:
- The Religious Education Policy and Guidelines.
- Assessment and monitoring procedures for teaching and learning and evidence of that monitoring.
- Action plan which details the roll out programme for implementation of the RED and PLD
- Audits and reports to Headteacher about progress made in RE.
- A record of Staff Professional Development in RE
- Data and current targets in RE.

- Working with the Headteacher and colleagues, to undertake a regular audit/review of Religious Education in line with the school development plan.

- To be familiar with the current (CSI) inspection framework and to consult with the Headteacher to complete the school's CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).

- To keep up to date with developments regarding the Religious Education Directory, Prayer and Liturgy Directory, Catholic Life and Mission Directory and attend relevant training.

- Review the RE policy and update when necessary.

- Liaise with appropriate outside Agencies both within the Diocese, Deanery, Parish and wider community to ensure the promotion of Religious Education within the school.

- The Post Holder is also required to:
- Promote and support the Catholic ethos and mission statement of the school.
- Undertake duties set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.
- Undertake such particular duties which the head teacher or in his/her absence the Senior Leadership Team may reasonably direct.