St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools

Walking with Mary, growing in Christ

Love one another
Always do our best
Look after the world

Approved: November 2026

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 Education is 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 Mary's Priory Catholic Schools respond to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Mission Statement

As a Catholic school with Christ at the centre of all that we do, St Mary's Priory is a faith-filled community committed to nurturing everyone so they may flourish and fulfil their God-given potential. Guided by our patron, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the teachings of Jesus, our purpose and identity are lived out through our school mission: "Walking with Mary, growing in Christ."

We live our mission every day by focusing on three core actions, which are enabled and strengthened by our school values:

- We love one another: Supported by our values of Respect and Compassion, we follow Mary's example of love and devotion, building a kind and inclusive community where we love as Jesus loved us.
- We always do our best: Driven by Ambition and Resilience, we commit to excellence in all that we say and do, growing in wisdom, character, and faith.
- We look after the world: Guided by our shared responsibility as stewards of creation, we care for and protect the environment that God has entrusted to us, ensuring our common home is preserved for future generations.

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

[1] CSI Inspection Handbook, page 2

- Staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities *e.g. behaviour expectations, interaction between staff, displays, assemblies, House points are linked to our saints*
- 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 Mary's Priory Catholic Schools, 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 Mary's Priory Catholic Schools, every effort is made to provide a spiritually uplifting, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment:

- The entrance to our school is welcoming and reflects our Catholic identity. We have a statue of Mary, after whom our school is named, pictures of our school saints, our mission statement, pictures of Pope Leo XIV and Pope Francis.
- All classrooms have a cross displayed on the wall alongside an RE display board.
- All primary classrooms have a prayer table with a cloth that reflects the current liturgical season and good quality religious artefacts.
- As a school, we have an RE resource cupboard containing a range of resources and high-quality religious artefacts.
- In each hall, there is an alcove dedicated to Mary, and our Mission Statement is displayed prominently on the walls.
- In the Junior Hall, where we gather for assemblies, our four House Saints are displayed.
- We have diverse images of Mary in both the Infant and Junior Halls, reflecting that she is the Mother of us all.
- We have a diverse range of saints displayed in the Junior Hall, reflecting both our diverse community and the universal nature of the Church.
- Every class has a Catholic Social Teaching display board either inside or outside their classroom, which is updated to reflect the theme being studied.
- We have displays throughout the school celebrating the different groups that children are part of, including the School Council, Prayer Leaders and Mini Vinnies.
- We have a prayer garden and a remembrance garden that children can use for both personal prayer and shared acts of worship and celebration.
- Our Infant Hall has a display board designed to show how we live our Catholic mission
- Our Infant school has chalked boards that change regularly depicting our Catholic Social Teaching values.

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

[2] CSI Framework

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:

- Mary's Meals Schools Feeding Schools Award
- CAFODs Live Simply
- Oscar Romero award

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 RHE 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 and RHE* 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 part of our commitment to Catholic Social Teaching and serving others, the Chaplaincy Team coordinates a range of charitable initiatives, fundraising events and outreach projects throughout the school year. These opportunities encourage pupils to live out the Gospel values of compassion, generosity and service by supporting those in need both locally and globally. Examples include:

- Harvest: Children are encouraged to donate food to local foodbanks, soup kitchens and the school's own foodbank.
- October and November: We collect coats and warm clothing for people experiencing homelessness across London.
- Advent: We raise funds for Samaritan's Purse through seasonal fundraising activities.
- Lent: Pupils lead a variety of fundraising initiatives to support CAFOD and its work with communities around the world.
- Throughout the year, we support a range of charitable causes, including CAFOD, Mary's Meals, Macmillan Cancer Suppo**rt** and anti-racism initiatives.
- The school also responds to charitable appeals suggested by pupils and staff whenever possible.
- Our Eco-Leaders promote environmental stewardship by improving recycling practices across the school, reducing use of energy, increasing biodiversity within the school grounds and researching the impact of local traffic and air quality on pupils' health.

This active involvement in charitable giving and social action helps pupils develop a sense of responsibility, solidarity and care for God's creation.

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:

- Mark Refuge Week

- Work for climate change - Walk to school week, working with SLT on school climate action plan
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness
- Where possible, inviting in MPs or writing to them – understanding that members of local and wider community have roles that can bring about change

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 Mary's Priory Catholic Schools plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of the RE Lead working with two pupils from each class in. Our Chaplaincy Team is called the Mini Vinnies, inspired by and named after our House Saints, St Vincent De Paul. We also have two Prayer Leaders per year group. Between the two groups, they help and support each member of the school community to grow in their faith by:

- Maintaining and developing class prayer table
- Maintaining and developing communal area of prayer garden and Lexie's garden
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school Celebration of the Word.
- Offering opportunities for informal pupil led prayer during break or lunch times
- Organising retreat days
- Undertaking large projects such as developing a prayer garden and remembrance garden
- Undertaking projects such as fundraising for charities and RE resources
- Keeping the pupils updated with information about donations to charity, such as for foodbanks, coat collections/donations, Mary's Meals and CAFOD
- 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

School Community
St Mary's Priory Catholic School 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 an RJED policy
- We actively support staff and pupils of other faiths should they require an area to pray
- We have assemblies about religious festivals when they are celebrated in our local area.
- We also have an area that our Muslim students can use during lunchtime in Ramadan.
- 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 Mary's Priory Catholic Schools recognise 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, we also work with our local non-Catholic schools within our local community.

At St Mary's Priory Catholic Schools, 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, whole school Masses, celebrations of the word, prayers which take place both in school and at St John Vianney's Church and St Thomas Mores Church.

They are encouraged to participate with their children for example:

- Class Prayers and prayer books are sent home to encourage prayer life at home
- During October and May, parents and carers are invited into school to pray the rosary
- The Wednesday word is emailed to parents weekly. It brings the upcoming Sunday Gospel into family life each week, offering a simple activity that strengthens family bonds and supports faith at home.
- Parents are encouraged to join the PSA 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.

Parish Links
As we are not attached to a parish, we have fostered a relationship with two nearby Churches, St John Vianney's Roman Catholic Church and St Thomas More's Roman Catholic Church. These relationships are a vital part of Catholic life in school as:

- Pupils visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church.
- The priest 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 liturgies in the school with the pupils and staff.
- Training in new altar servers (only those who have made their First Holy Communion)
- 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 Coordinator/Lead for Catholic Life and Mission
The Coordinator for Catholic life and mission are the RE Leader and the Headteacher.

Policy Monitoring and Review
This policy is monitored by the RE Leader and the 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. 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