RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

2026–2027

"Learning, Living, Loving together in Christ."

Policy owner	Headteacher / Religious Education Lead
Approved by	Governing Body
Date approved	October 2026
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1. Policy Statement and Catholic Mission

At Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School, Religious Education is at the heart of our Catholic mission. Our mission statement, "Learning, Living, Loving together in Christ", expresses our commitment to forming children who know and love Jesus Christ, recognise their God-given dignity and gifts, and are prepared to live out the Gospel in their relationships, choices and service to others.

Religious Education is not simply one subject among many. It is the core of the core curriculum in a Catholic school and contributes directly to the formation of the whole person. Through high-quality Religious Education, pupils encounter Scripture and the teaching of the Church, deepen their theological understanding, learn to discern meaning and are supported to respond to faith in their lives.

Our provision seeks to ensure that, by the time pupils leave Year 6, their relationship with Jesus has deepened; they have experienced a rich and memorable Catholic education; and they are increasingly able to recognise their gifts, vocation and responsibility within the Church and wider world.

2. Context and Framework

This policy is informed by the Religious Education Directory, To Know You More Clearly (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2023), Canon Law, and guidance from the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Religious Education is a statutory subject in Catholic schools and is taught in accordance with the Religious Education Directory (RED) and diocesan expectations.

From September 2026, the school implements Discerning Disciples as its curriculum approach for Religious Education, enabling the requirements of the RED to be taught progressively and coherently from the Early Years through to Year 6.

3. Aims of Religious Education

All pupils are given the opportunity to develop spiritually, academically, socially, morally and culturally within a caring Catholic environment where life is centred on Christ's teaching. Each child is encouraged to achieve their God-given potential.

Through Religious Education, we aim to:

- engage pupils in a systematic study of the mystery of God, the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teaching of the Church, Catholic belief and the relationship between faith and life;
- enable pupils to deepen their religious and theological understanding and communicate this with increasing confidence and accuracy;
- teach the Catholic faith authentically through Scripture, Tradition, liturgy, sacramental life and Catholic Social Teaching;
- develop pupils' religious literacy and theological vocabulary;
- develop pupils' ability to understand, discern and respond, so that knowledge of faith leads to thoughtful reflection and meaningful action;
- help pupils develop a personal relationship with Jesus and experience the Good News of the Gospel;
- support pupils in understanding the Church's moral and social teaching and in applying this to contemporary life;
- develop respect, knowledge and understanding of other religions and worldviews and the ability to engage in respectful dialogue;
- develop a sense of social justice, human dignity, stewardship and responsibility for others and creation;
- work in partnership with parents, carers and the parish in the faith formation of our children.

4. Partnership with Parents, Parish and the Wider Church

Parents and carers are recognised as the first educators of their children in faith. The school therefore seeks a genuine partnership with families, communicating the Religious Education curriculum and inviting families to participate in the wider Catholic life of the school.

The school values its close relationship with the parish community. Pupils participate regularly in Mass and other liturgical celebrations, and the school works in partnership with parish clergy in supporting Catholic life, sacramental preparation and the spiritual formation of pupils.

Pupils learn about Our Lady, St Rose of Lima and the saints associated with our school House system: St Oscar Romero, St Teresa of Calcutta, St John Paul II and St Bernadette. The lives of saints provide models of discipleship, courage, service and holiness.

5. Curriculum Entitlement

Religious Education accounts for a minimum of 10% of taught curriculum time each week. This allocation is non-negotiable and is identified explicitly on class timetables.

The 10% allocation refers specifically to curriculum Religious Education. It does not include Prayer and Liturgy, assemblies, hymn practice, RSHE, preparation for Mass, attendance at Mass or other aspects of Catholic life.

Religious Education is taught as a discrete curriculum subject across the school, with appropriate provision and evidence of learning in the Early Years.

6. Discerning Disciples and the Religious Education Directory

Discerning Disciples is the school's approach to implementing the Religious Education Directory. It supports pupils to build secure substantive knowledge of the Catholic faith while developing the ability to think theologically, discern wisely and respond meaningfully.

The curriculum is structured through the six RED branches, revisited annually with increasing depth and challenge:

1. Creation and Covenant
2. Prophecy and Promise
3. Galilee to Jerusalem
4. Desert to Garden
5. To the Ends of the Earth
6. Dialogue and Encounter

7. Knowledge Lenses and Ways of Knowing

Teaching within each branch draws upon the four RED knowledge lenses:

- Hear – encountering Scripture and the Word of God;
- Believe – understanding the teaching, beliefs and Tradition of the Church;
- Celebrate – exploring prayer, liturgy, sacramental life and the worship of the Church;
- Live – understanding how faith is lived through discipleship, moral action and service.

Pupils develop their learning through the RED Ways of Knowing:

- Understand – developing secure knowledge, comprehension and theological meaning;
- Discern – thinking critically and reflectively, making connections and considering meaning;
- Respond – making informed, personal and appropriate responses to what has been learned.

8. Teaching and Learning at OLSR

Religious Education lessons are rooted in secure theological knowledge and are dialogic, reflective and purposeful. Pupils are taught the knowledge they need in order to understand the Catholic faith more deeply, discern meaning and respond thoughtfully.

Our Discerning Disciples planning sequence includes:

- Reflection and connection to Catholic Social Teaching where appropriate;
- activation of prior knowledge and retrieval of earlier learning;
- clear Direct Knowledge Statements (DKS);
- explicit teaching of key vocabulary and a Star Word;
- high-quality direct teaching using Scripture, Church teaching and appropriate theological sources;
- opportunities to discern through discussion, questioning and collaborative conversation;
- evaluation of understanding, including planned hinge questions;
- independent response, including regular extended writing where appropriate;
- retrieval to strengthen long-term retention;
- opportunities to consider how learning can be lived out as a disciple of Christ.

Teachers use modelling and scaffolding carefully, removing support as pupils become more secure. Dialogue is used throughout lessons to uncover prior knowledge, expose misconceptions, deepen theological thinking and enable pupils to articulate their understanding.

Within this sequence, Direct Knowledge Statements identify the essential knowledge pupils must secure. Planned hinge questions check whether pupils are ready to move from understanding into deeper discernment. Pupils are given regular opportunities to use their knowledge to discern rather than simply recall, and each branch includes an age-appropriate substantial or extended response. Retrieval revisits current and previous learning so that important knowledge becomes increasingly secure over time. Teachers make deliberate connections between the RED knowledge lenses of Hear, Believe, Celebrate and Live rather than treating these as isolated elements.

9. Planning and Curriculum Expectations

Long-term planning ensures full coverage of the six RED branches and appropriate progression across year groups. Medium- and short-term planning follows the Discerning Disciples approach and the expectations of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Teachers identify the relevant knowledge, vocabulary, Scripture, theological content, opportunities for discernment and appropriate responses. Prior learning is deliberately revisited so pupils know more, remember more and make increasingly sophisticated connections.

Progression is deliberately planned. Teachers are expected to know what pupils have encountered previously and what their current learning is preparing them for next. Unit markers and retrieval activities support pupils in reconnecting with prior knowledge, while planning identifies the knowledge and vocabulary that must become increasingly secure as pupils progress through school.

Expectations for presentation and quality of work in Religious Education are high. Where a written outcome is appropriate, the standard expected should reflect the pupil's capability in English while recognising that Religious Education also includes discussion, prayerful reflection, artistic response and other appropriate forms of evidence.

10. Scripture at the Heart of Religious Education

Scripture is central to the Religious Education curriculum. Pupils encounter Scripture regularly and progressively, learning both the content of biblical texts and how the Church reads and understands

Scripture. Teachers use age-appropriate Catholic translations and resources and ensure that Scripture is treated with accuracy, reverence and appropriate theological depth.

Through the Hear lens, pupils learn to listen attentively to the Word of God, make connections across Scripture and recognise how Scripture informs Catholic belief, worship and Christian living.

11. Catholic Social Teaching, Virtues and Mission

Catholic Social Teaching is woven meaningfully through Religious Education and the wider curriculum. Pupils are supported to recognise the dignity of every human person and their responsibility to promote the common good, solidarity, care for creation and a preferential concern for those who are vulnerable or marginalised.

The Catholic virtues are promoted across school life and provide a language through which pupils can reflect upon character, discipleship and their response to the Gospel. Religious Education contributes directly to the school's wider mission of Learning, Living and Loving together in Christ.

12. Dialogue, Encounter and Other Religions and Worldviews

OLSR is committed to preparing pupils to live confidently and respectfully in a diverse, multi-faith and multi-cultural society. The Dialogue and Encounter branch of the RED provides explicit opportunities to learn about other religions and worldviews while recognising connections and differences in relation to the Catholic faith.

Where appropriate, learning is enriched through authentic encounter, which may include:

- families sharing their faith and lived experience;
- visitors and faith leaders;
- visits to places of worship;
- guided exploration of religious artefacts and sacred texts;
- age-appropriate research, discussion and questioning.

Any external speakers are considered in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant Catholic Education Service guidance.

13. Sacramental Preparation

The sacraments are taught within the Religious Education curriculum as part of the Church's sacramental life. In addition, pupils preparing for Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, and pupils preparing for Confirmation, receive focused preparation appropriate to the sacrament.

Sacramental preparation is undertaken in partnership with families and the parish. The school encourages families to participate actively in parish life and Sunday Mass as an essential part of Catholic formation.

14. SEND, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Religious Education is an entitlement for every pupil. Planning begins with ambitious curriculum expectations and teachers provide appropriate adaptations so that pupils with SEND can access the same essential theological content as their peers.

Support may include carefully selected vocabulary, visual prompts, concrete resources, modelling, additional explanation, adapted recording methods and appropriate scaffolding. Adaptation should enable access without unnecessarily reducing the ambition or theological integrity of the curriculum.

The school recognises and values pupils from Catholic families, other Christian traditions, other religions and those of no religious affiliation. All pupils are welcomed with dignity and respect.

15. Assessment, Feedback, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in Religious Education is the responsibility of the class teacher and is integral to teaching. Assessment is used to identify what pupils know and understand, how effectively they can discern, and how appropriately they can respond.

Assessment evaluates pupils' knowledge, understanding and their ability to use religious knowledge to discern and respond. It does not assess a pupil's personal faith, spirituality, religious commitment or the depth of their personal belief.

Teachers use a range of evidence, including questioning, discussion, hinge questions, retrieval, written outcomes and age-appropriate discernment tasks. Evaluation within lessons enables teachers to identify misconceptions and adapt subsequent teaching.

Feedback is purposeful and supports pupils to improve their knowledge, theological accuracy and quality of response. Live verbal feedback may be used where this enables pupils to act immediately on guidance.

Assessment information is reviewed by the RE Lead and Senior Leadership Team in accordance with diocesan expectations. Outcomes in Religious Education are shared with parents through consultation meetings and end-of-year reports.

16. Relationship with Catholic Life and Mission and Prayer and Liturgy

Religious Education is distinct from, but contributes directly to, the Catholic Life and Mission of the school and to Prayer and Liturgy. Knowledge encountered through Religious Education enables pupils to participate more meaningfully in the prayer and liturgical life of the school, while experiences of Catholic life, mission and worship provide authentic contexts in which pupils can recognise and live what they have learned.

16. Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality and impact of Religious Education are monitored by the RE Lead and Senior Leadership Team as part of the school's curriculum monitoring cycle. Monitoring is developmental and is used both to assure quality and to identify support and professional development.

Monitoring may include:

- learning walks and lesson visits;
- scrutiny of pupils' work and outcomes;
- review of planning and curriculum coverage;
- pupil voice;
- staff voice and professional dialogue;
- assessment information and moderation;
- monitoring of classroom RE environments and prayer focal points;
- review of provision for pupils with SEND and other groups;
- reporting to governors and evaluation against school development priorities.

Standards in Religious Education are expected to be as ambitious as those in other core areas of learning.

17. Role of the Religious Education Leader

The Religious Education Leader, working with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, provides strategic and professional leadership for Religious Education.

Responsibilities include:

- supporting and developing high-quality teaching and curriculum implementation;

- monitoring planning, teaching, pupils' work and assessment;
- ensuring the minimum 10% curriculum entitlement is protected;
- supporting staff through modelling, coaching, professional dialogue and appropriate training;
- leading moderation and supporting consistency of expectations;
- maintaining appropriate resources;
- keeping abreast of developments in the RED, diocesan guidance and the Catholic Schools Inspectorate framework;
- liaising with the Archdiocese, parish, deanery and other appropriate partners;
- contributing to school self-evaluation and development planning;
- reporting to the Headteacher and governors on standards, provision, impact and priorities;
- reviewing this policy and associated curriculum documentation.

18. Staff Formation

All staff contribute to the Catholic ethos and mission of the school. The school provides opportunities for prayer, reflection and professional formation so that staff can deepen their understanding of Catholic education and confidently fulfil their role.

Teachers responsible for Religious Education are supported to understand the RED and the Discerning Disciples approach. Relevant diocesan training and continuing professional development are used to strengthen subject knowledge, pedagogy and theological confidence.

19. Prayer Focal Points and the RE Environment

Each classroom has a prayer focal point which reflects the liturgical year and supports the prayer life of the class. Pupils are encouraged to contribute appropriately to these spaces.

Focal points may include liturgical-coloured cloths, Scripture, a crucifix, statues or sacred images, battery-operated candles, pupil prayers and work, and appropriate vocabulary linked to current learning. The school mission statement and key prayers are visible and form part of the lived Catholic identity of the school.

20. Resources

The school maintains resources to support Scripture, the liturgical year, saints, sacramental preparation, prayer and liturgy, Catholic Social Teaching, other religions and worldviews, and the teaching of the RED. Resources are reviewed and developed in response to curriculum need.

Classrooms have access to age-appropriate Bibles and religious artefacts. Resources for sacramental preparation and the liturgical year are made available to relevant year groups and staff.

21. Health and Safety

The school's Health and Safety Policy applies to all aspects of Religious Education. Staff must ensure that candles, incense and other liturgical resources are used safely and with appropriate consideration of pupils' medical and sensory needs. Children must not be left unsupervised with lit candles.

22. Right of Withdrawal

Parents have a legal right to request that their child is withdrawn from all or part of Religious Education and/or acts of collective worship. The school encourages any parent considering withdrawal to discuss the matter with the Headteacher so that the nature and purpose of Religious Education in a Catholic school can be explained fully. Any request will be managed in accordance with current legal and diocesan requirements.

23. Governance

Governors support and challenge leaders in ensuring that Religious Education is central to the school's Catholic mission, is appropriately resourced, receives its required curriculum allocation and is taught to a high standard. The relevant link governor(s) maintain appropriate contact with school leaders and receive updates on provision, monitoring and improvement priorities.

24. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to statutory, diocesan or curriculum guidance require it.

Date approved	October 2026
Approving body	Governing Body
Signed	Father Gary Buckby
Next review	Autumn 2027