

Little Way Catholic
Educational Trust

RE Policy

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Contents

THE LITTLE WAY CATHOLIC EDUCATION TRUST MISSION	3
RATIONALE	3
INTENT AND OUTCOMES	3
IMPLEMENTATION	3
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	4
‘TO KNOW YOU MORE CLEARLY’ RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTORY	4
THE STRUCTURE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHING	4
PLANNING.....	4
TIME ALLOCATION	4
EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	5
IMPACT.....	5
ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING.....	5
RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	5

The Little Way Catholic Education Trust Mission

Our Trust family is united in its shared mission to develop our Catholic ethos in order to transform the lives of every child, family and community we serve, in Jesus' name.

Our vision is to empower every child to excel academically, socially, morally, culturally and spirituality in order that they may flourish as individuals. Assured of the love of God, we strive to educate children within an inclusive and compassionate community which celebrates the gifts and talents of our pupils and removes barriers to learning. We strive to be a community of life-long learners, contributing to a just and loving society.

Our Trust family is a partnership of equals who work collaboratively so that everyone can grow and learn together. We celebrate the diversity of our schools, retaining our individual characteristics, whilst working together for the greater good of our whole community.

Through honesty, respect, service and solidarity we value each other as one family.

All are welcome.

Rationale

Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Clifton is required to teach, develop and resource Religious Education with the same commitment as any other core subject. At LWCET schools, we aim for all to know and love Christ and to open the vision and imagination of the school community to the wonders of living in God's world, and the responsibilities that follow. It is enshrined in the school's Mission Statement.

LWCET schools have a holistic aim to educate the whole person (body, mind and soul) thus helping develop the unique gifts and talents of each individual within a broad and balanced curriculum and nurturing pupils' moral and spiritual development, so they may be equipped to live their Catholic life to the full, sharing in the mission of the Church. Gospel values are at the heart of all we do and the schools strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment that values and works in close partnership with parents/carers, governors, staff, trustees and the wider community to this end.

Intent and Outcomes

In our Trust, we aim:

1. To support every member of the school community on their journey of faith by developing this faith when it is present and to facilitate its emergence when it is not.
2. To promote knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life.
3. To develop religiously literate young people.
4. To encourage pupils to be aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
5. To promote the dignity and freedom of every person as created in the image and likeness of God by making pupils aware of other denominations and faiths.
6. To experience feelings of wonder and awe to the natural world.
7. To develop moral and ethical convictions and ask questions about the meaning and purpose of existence.

Implementation

Religious Education

Religious Education is a core subject which is central to the Catholic life of the school, based on the expectations and aims outlined in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools (To know You more Clearly: The Religious Education Directory for Catholic schools, colleges, and academies in England and Wales 2025).

"Our task is to make that place the Catholic school, with religious education at its heart."

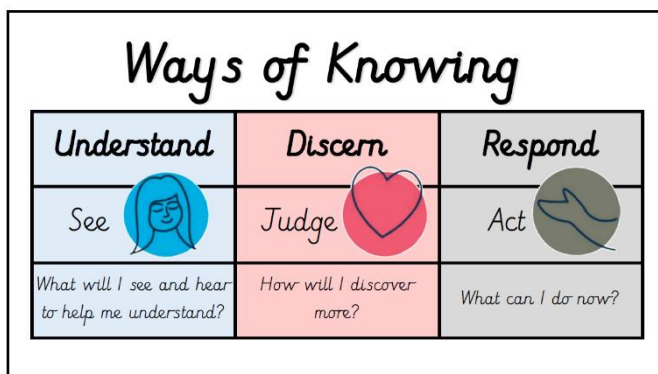
Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (2023)

'To know you more clearly' Religious Education Directory

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 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 which are: hear, believe, celebrate and live. The six curriculum branches studied in each year group are: Creation and Covenant, Prophecy and Promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, Desert to Garden, To the Ends of the Earth, and Dialogue and Encounter.

The Structure of Religious Education Teaching

The programme of study for Religious Education in Catholic schools has four structural elements:



- Knowledge lenses – setting out what pupils are studying
- Ways of knowing – setting out the skills pupils are developing (depicted as head, heart and hands)
- Expected outcomes – setting out what pupils will be able to do at the end of each phase
- Curriculum branches – the programme of study

Planning

LWCET schools use the 'Day by Day' scheme created by Arundel and Brighton Diocese. This is supplemented by resources created by the Schools and Colleges Departments in Clifton and Plymouth. Planning is tailored to the specific needs of the children so that the learning is accessible and engaging. We are implementing the *Religious Education Directory* by following the plan set by Clifton Diocese.

Time allocation

The time allocation for Religious Education is 10% of the taught week in each key stage, in accordance with the guidelines from the Bishops of England and Wales.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Early Years classes, Religious Education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the Religious Education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. RE is included in 'Understanding the World' and 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development' areas of learning. Children complete a baseline assessment in recognising religious words, actions and objects at the beginning of EYFS and at the end.

Impact

Assessment and Monitoring

Assessment data is submitted to the RE leader at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6. Teachers use pupil work, floor books, verbal contributions, branch quizzes and RED outcomes to inform them of pupil's attainment and an overall RE judgement is given – either well below the expected standard, working towards the expected standard, working at the expected standard or working at greater depth. Assessment moderation is conducted between teachers and across phases and schools at least once per year.

Monitoring is conducted by the senior leadership team and RE leader in a number of ways including:

- ✓ Book looks
- ✓ Learning walks
- ✓ Pupil conferencing
- ✓ Assessment data analysis
- ✓ Pupil progress meetings

Findings are reviewed and next steps identified. These are shared with the senior leadership team, school governors, Trust CEO and board of trustees through executive summaries three times a year.

Right of withdrawal from Religious Education

Religious Education (RE) is a core component of the curriculum in all Catholic schools and is central to the distinctive mission and identity of our Trust. As religion and belief continue to play an increasingly visible role in public life, it is important that all pupils are given the opportunity to explore religious and non-religious worldviews, develop respect for others, and engage meaningfully with questions of faith, ethics, and identity.

Under the Education Act 1996, parents (or pupils aged 18 or over) have the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from all or part of Religious Education. No reason is required to exercise this right. While schools must comply with such requests, we encourage parents to understand the aims and scope of the RE curriculum before deciding to withdraw. The Headteacher may invite parents to discuss the request in more detail, including whether it applies to the entire curriculum or only specific content.

A Catholic Context

All schools in our Trust are Catholic by foundation. As such, the Catholic life and mission of the school are woven through every aspect of school life—from the relationships we foster, to how we teach and celebrate together. This means that:

- While it is possible to withdraw from RE lessons, it is not possible to withdraw from the broader Catholic life and mission of the school, as it is embedded across the curriculum, daily routines, displays, celebrations, and community activities.
- Our schools seek to be inclusive communities. Choosing to withdraw a child from RE can risk creating an exclusive experience for that child, which we would respectfully discourage.

Important – Limitations to Withdrawal

- If a pupil is withdrawn from RE, the school has a duty to supervise the pupil, but not to provide alternative teaching. Pupils may be asked to work independently in another supervised space (e.g., a library or breakout area).
- Parents are encouraged to provide appropriate learning materials that reflect their own faith or worldview for their child to use during this time.
- Religious content may still be encountered in other areas of the curriculum (e.g., History, PSHE, Citizenship, English), and there is no right to withdraw from these subjects. Spontaneous discussion of religious matters may also occur as part of normal classroom interaction.
- Schools are not expected to incur additional costs or resources in accommodating a withdrawal from RE.

Managing the Process

- Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing and will be acknowledged by the school.
- While not a legal requirement, schools may offer a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the implications of the request.
- The withdrawal will remain in place until rescinded in writing by the parent or pupil (if over 18).
- It is considered good practice for withdrawal requests to be reviewed annually, to ensure they remain appropriate and understood.

¹ School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.69(1).

² The term 'trust deed' is defined widely: see section 579(1) of the Education Act 1996.

³ Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 19, paragraph.4; Instrument of Government, clause 2.

⁴ *The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement* (December 2020); *Academy articles of association: For use by Catholic academies* (February 2019).

⁵ School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.70(1).

⁶ School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 20; Instrument of Government, clause 2.

Guidance on the right of withdrawal from religious education and/or collective worship – July 2024

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