

1. Introduction

This policy is a statement of the Mission, aims, principles and strategies for the Catholic Life and Mission at Holy Cross Preparatory School.

‘What Are We To Teach?’ Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales CES: 1994

Spiritual and moral development builds on the initial experiences offered from home. In school, we aim to help each individual to grow as a whole person developing an awareness of themselves and others, as well as the world around them.

We believe that spiritual development is promoted in our school through:

- acts of collective worship where, together as a community, we can pray, sing, reflect and praise together;
- through teaching religious education and learning about God, our faith and living as a Christian;
- by sacramental celebration;
- the quality of relationships offered and experienced in our community by all its members;
- the positive experiences offered in the home;
- the environment and the ethos of the school.

2. School Mission Statement

Holy Cross Prep is a Catholic school under the trusteeship of the school’s charity and the Sisters of The Holy Cross, which provides a Christian education in which the worship of God and gospel values, as well as a knowledge and respect for other faiths and a sensitivity for others, are central to school life.

In the spirit of St Francis, the school is a caring community, which strives to enable each person to realise their full potential spiritually, academically, personally and physically. To achieve this, the school welcomes all faiths and works in partnership with parents, teachers and children to develop the God-given gifts of each person.

3. Catholic Life and Mission

Our Mission statement is a vision of a Christ-centred community which recognises we are all God’s children ‘made in the likeness of God’. At Holy Cross Preparatory School, we aim to develop children’s spiritual thirst and accompany them on a journey of faith in a rich, positive learning environment with Jesus’ teaching and values at the core of our curriculum.

When Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment, the answer is the same in all three of the Gospels in which the question is asked: to love God with 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 every Catholic school.

It is a mission that is clearly echoed in the Second Vatican Council which teaches that the purpose of an education that is distinctly Christian is threefold. Its first purpose is to ensure that all pupils understand the faith that gives the school its identity as a Catholic school. The second, is to ensure that all are invited to learn how to worship God in spirit and truth through

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the prayer and the liturgy of the Church. The third, is the formation of all to live in conformity with the pattern of human goodness, truth and justice that we find in Jesus Christ.

This threefold mission is reflected in the three perspectives.

- 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 mission complements the Religious Education policy, the Prayer and Liturgy policy and the Relationships and Sex Education policy. The aim of this policy to show how faithfully Holy Cross responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service at the church's educational mission.

4. The Holy Cross Way

The Holy Cross Way is a set of values we encourage our pupils to uphold. Inspired by Christian teachings common these provide guidelines for our pupils both inside and out of school as they strive to build a harmonious respectful and compassionate community.

As a Holy Cross girl, I will use my God-given gifts to follow God's path by:

- **Serving** and **helping** others as Jesus did
- Embracing all school life has to offer with curiosity and **gratitude**
- Considering **others before myself** with **love** and **patience**
- Showing **kindness** and **respect** to each other in the world
- Being a **caring**, loyal and **forgiving** friend in every way you live
- Bringing **peace** and resolution in times of conflict
- Being **courteous** and greeting everyone with a smile
- Participating wholeheartedly in school activities
- Being **sincere**, **honest** and speaking the **kind truth**.

I am a Holy Cross girl wherever I am and in everything I do.

5. School Environment

The distinctive Catholic nature of the school is reflected through the physical environment, the presence of images and symbols and the recognition of a learning environment which respects the human dignity of all persons as made in God's image and likeness. Every effort is made to provide space which is spiritually uplifting, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing:

- Rooms have a cross
- All rooms have cared for, attractive prayer area
- Each prayer area has a coloured cloth reflecting the liturgical season and good quality artefacts
- Displays around the school reflect our Mission statement and information relating to the current liturgical season. These displays are often interactive, encouraging pupils to respond in some way.
- Focal points reflect the theme and season for liturgical prayer
- Displays in public areas reflect the work of our faith leaders, eco-councillors and charitable works
- Displays within classrooms reflect the topics being taught in RE, the liturgical season, work produced by pupils, key vocabulary and scripture

- The prayer room is a well-cared for place of pray and liturgy
- The prayer garden is a peaceful, outside space for liturgy and prayer

6. Catholic Curriculum

The Catholic vision of education is distinctive and the beliefs it holds, the values and aspirations it has must inspire the whole curriculum. 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 curriculum, this philosophy permeates all our curriculum and activities as we recognise the needs of each individual member of the community.

Catholic social teaching

At an age appropriate level, pupils are introduced to the six principles of Catholic social teaching: care for creation, human dignity, solidarity and peace, options for the poor and vulnerable, community and participation and dignity of workers using the CAFOD resources. We use child friendly resources to explore the writings of Pope Francis, such as Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti. In this way we are building our children's moral compass and enabling them to respond to social, moral and ethical issues in the world. Our Catholic curriculum leads our charitable outreach and work for social justice.

Relationships and sex education

Relationships and Sex Education is taught in a Catholic context recognising we are all made in God's image and likeness. See the Relationships and Sex Education Policy (based on the Southwark Diocesan Policy) for more detail.

Other faiths

Other faiths are taught as part of the RE curriculum. See 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 another's neighbours. It prepares our children for life in modern Britain, giving them an understanding of the police of others.

7. Charitable service

We aim to foster and develop awareness of the needs of others: locally, nationally and globally, and promote a spirit of generosity and compassion as taught by Jesus Christ. Through the school's charity work, pupils are explicitly taught to stand in solidarity with the poor, vulnerable and in need.

Prior to Lent, a period of almsgiving, the pupil house captains lead the school on choosing a new charity to support for the following year, exposing pupils to a range of worthy causes locally, nationally or globally. Throughout Lent, classes find various ways to raise funds including sponsored walks and reads, organising an annual upcycle fashion show, school productions. Biannually classes produce a sustainable product to sell at a STEAMterprise fair, with profits going to the chosen charity.

There are various other fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year, coordinated by the pupil house captains.

- Macmillan breast cancer – families and former parents join together to support the Macmillan big coffee morning

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- Harvest – families donate to the local foodbank or give monies to CAFOD
- CAFOD – family fast day envelopes
- Natural disaster relief funds – whole school and pupil led activities as needed e.g. collecting clothes, cake sales, teddy bear sales
- Pupils sing Christmas carols at a local care home
- A local organisation for the elderly join the audience for the Christmas Nativity performance
- Christmas gifts are donated for local young mothers and their families

Holy Cross Kingston has a strong link with the Holy Cross Chalala in Zambia. For many years, the school community collects preloved books and educational toys to send to Zambia to support the education of their fellow pupils on the African continent. Each year, the Zambian pupils visit our school to share in one another lives. The Chalala school is also the recipient of funds raised for new classrooms and more recently a school library and tech resource centre.

Our school's parents association, The Friends of Holy Cross, support the schools charitable works and raise further funds through their own activities e.g. summer ball and Christmas Fair. In particular they support the continued education of the Chalala school.

Pupils are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in the community. It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture a generous giving of self, and an appreciation and respect for others.

Working for social justice

Pupils are taught the importance of standing up for social justice as an important aspect of Christian life. There are planned opportunities for pupils to engage in campaigns for social justice:

- Climate change activities e.g. the Blue week, conservation projects
- Supporting Fairtrade Fortnight
- Writing to the local MP regarding relevant issues
- More sustainable living - Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness

8. Chaplaincy

The spirituality and prayer life of the school are an evident part of its Catholic life and mission. The Prayer and Liturgy policy details the school provision. Chaplaincy provision plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

The school's roots stem from the Sisters of the Holy Cross who started the school in 1927 and they continue to be involved in school life through trusteeship and volunteering in school to support faith and pastoral provision. The school has a strong link with St. Ann's parish church and the local parish priest is a regular visitor to school.

Our faith steering group, comprising of staff members, meet regularly to strengthen, guide and monitor the faith life of the school. They provide a termly report to the trustee committee with responsibility for monitoring

Our active pupil faith leaders, comprising of pupils from all junior classes, meet fortnightly and are led by pupils from year 6 under the guidance of our assistant head and RE lead. Their role is to discuss, plan and implement new initiatives in line with the school's Mission Statement and ethos. Faith leaders support and develop the faith journey and collective worship throughout the school.

They do this by:

- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence, joy and service
- Maintaining and developing class prayer areas
- Maintaining and developing communal prayer areas, including the prayer room
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school acts of worship
- Supporting SLT members with their Monday whole school collective worship e.g. reading the Gospel, acting scenarios.
- Undertaking large projects such as developing and maintaining the prayer garden
- Representing the school community at local events e.g. New Malden Remembrance Parade

An early morning 'Time for God' meditation group for parents and former parents, meets weekly in the Prayer Room lead by Sr Ursula for spiritual nourishment.

Pupils from the Juniors volunteer and apply to represent the school as a faith leader.

9. School Community

Holy Cross is a welcoming place for children, families and members of staff from all faiths and none. 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.

Children and staff are encouraged to engage with a range of awards that recognise the work that we do to implement Catholic social teaching e.g. citizenship, Eco schools. The school choirs meet during lunchtimes throughout the week and regularly contribute their talents during whole school celebrations and Masses.

Holy Cross recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works collaboratively with local Catholic schools in the deanery of Kingston. Through our work in RE and our strong link with the Holy Cross School in Zambia, our pupils learn about the Universal church and how we belong to one global family. Links with the diocese are strengthened through attendance at schools Masses and activities.

At Holy Cross all are encouraged to live life to the full and reach their full potential. Members of staff have opportunities to take part in continuing professional development through the Diocese and the Catholic Independent School Conference (CISC) group who provide a developing Catholic head teacher programme. Some members of staff play active roles in their local parishes as Eucharist ministers and catechists, while others actively support charities.

10. Parents

Parents are the first teachers of their children and we work in partnership with them. They are encouraged to support RE lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and discussed with their children work being completed when preparing to receive the Sacraments.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year, which include: class liturgies, curriculum meetings, whole school Masses and services, and liturgical prayers which take place throughout the year. They are encouraged to participate with their children during Advent and Lent encouraging a time of sharing and reflection.

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Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires as well as its meet the teacher meetings and parent evenings. The school operates an open door policy at all times.

11. Parish links

Links with the local parish are a vital part of Catholic life in school.

The parish which serves our school is St. Anns. Pupils visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church. Links with the parish and parish priest are strong. He celebrates Mass, reconciliation, blessings and providing spiritual direction. He is a known and approachable member of the school community joining for events e.g. Christmas fair, performances and prize-giving.

Parents are well informed at the beginning and throughout the year about dates for Masses and parish events.

Reviewed: September 2024

Next review: September 2027