St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Frizington

Religious Education Policy

Approved November 2026 · Review date November 2027

"In the faithful care of St Joseph, Jesus prospered."

"We care, we belong, we learn together in faith."

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Policy Approval

Item	Detail
Headteacher and RE Subject Leader	Annette Savage
RE Governor	Jacqueline Hampson
Chair of Governors (signed)	Alex Farrell
Approved by	Curriculum committee
Date approved	November 2026
Proposed review date	November 2027

This policy should be read alongside the school's Prayer and Liturgy Policy 2026–27, the Catholic Life Induction Handbook 2026–27 and the school's SEND policy.

1. Our Catholic Mission

St Joseph's is a Voluntary Aided Catholic primary school within the family of schools of the Diocese of Lancaster. We work in partnership with our parents, the parish of St Mary's and St Joseph's, and the wider community.

Our school is named after St Joseph, in whose faithful care Jesus grew in wisdom and in favour with God and people (cf. Luke 2:52). Our mission statement expresses who we are: *St Joseph's is a Catholic Primary School. We are one family. We care, we belong, we learn together in faith.*

Religious Education is central to this mission. In RE, children come to know Jesus Christ and the teaching of His Church more clearly, so that, like Jesus in the home of Nazareth, they can grow in knowledge, in faith and in love of God and of one another.

2. Aims and Objectives

Religious Education at St Joseph's nurtures the Catholic faith and its teachings in our children. By helping children to live this faith, we hope they will grow in their relationship with God and with those around them. RE lets children investigate and reflect on the most fundamental questions people ask, and at its heart is the Christian vision of the human person.

Christ and His teachings are at the centre of all we do. We offer children every opportunity to deepen their faith by learning and living it on their spiritual journey through our school.

Through a carefully planned curriculum, we aim for children to become religiously literate young people. They will have the knowledge, understanding and skills to think spiritually and theologically, and will understand what religious commitment asks of us in everyday life.

Prayer and liturgy lie at the heart of our faith and our ethos. We promote them at every level, together with the skills and attitudes needed to live out the Christian message in the modern world.

RE promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, academic, emotional and physical development within a Christian moral framework, and prepares them for the opportunities and responsibilities to come.

3. The Religious Education Directory

3.1 To Know You More Clearly

All classes from Reception to Year 6 follow the Religious Education Directory (RED), *To Know You More Clearly* (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2023), in line with the Diocese of Lancaster's planning guidance. The RED sets out the general norms for Religious Education approved by the Bishops' Conference, and Catholic schools are required to comply with it; full compliance is expected in primary schools from September 2026. All pupils are invited to encounter Jesus Christ as the living person at the heart of their study, in a way that respects their own religious identity.

Our curriculum lets children explore life's key questions from within the Christian tradition and apply what they learn. We build links with home, the parish, the local community and other subjects, especially RSHE and PSHE, so that RE is woven into the whole life of the school.

At St Joseph's, RE is first of all education in the Catholic faith: pupils learn both about the Catholic tradition and from it. The Bishops' Conference describes RE as the core of the curriculum in a Catholic school and central to the philosophy of Catholic education. It teaches the faith within a community that proclaims the Gospel, and invites each pupil to respond to Christ, growing in faith and knowledge and in their understanding of what it is to be fully human.

3.2 RE, Catholic Life and Mission, and Prayer and Liturgy

RE is an academic subject in its own right, taught with the same rigour as other core subjects. It works alongside, but is distinct from, the school's prayer and liturgy and its wider Catholic life and mission. What children learn in RE about Scripture, the sacraments and the liturgical year deepens their participation in prayer and liturgy, and their experience of prayer and liturgy gives life to what they learn in RE.

Prayer and liturgy are planned separately, in line with the Bishops' Conference Prayer and Liturgy Directory, *To Love You More Dearly* (2023), and the school's Prayer and Liturgy Policy. Time given to prayer and liturgy is not counted within RE curriculum time.

4. The Aims of Religious Education

Following the Religious Education Directory (2023), our RE aims:

- To study systematically the mystery of God, the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs Catholics hold and their basis, and the relationship between faith and life.
- To help pupils continually deepen their religious and theological understanding and communicate it effectively.
- To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching, giving pupils a sure guide for living and the tools to engage critically with contemporary culture.
- To give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews in the world today, and the skills for respectful, fruitful dialogue with those who see the world differently.
- To develop pupils' critical faculties so they see clearly how faith relates to life and to culture.
- To stimulate pupils' imagination and a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith.
- To help pupils connect what they learn in RE with other subjects in the curriculum.

5. Legal Position and Curriculum Time

As a Voluntary Aided Catholic school, St Joseph's provides Religious Education in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and the Diocese of Lancaster. Religious Education, Catholic life and mission, and prayer and liturgy are inspected by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

RE is a core subject and is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as English and mathematics. In line with the RED, RE is taught for at least 10% of taught curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the school timetable. This time does not include prayer and liturgy, assemblies or other non-curriculum time. At St Joseph's this allocation applies in every class from Reception to Year 6.

6. Organisation of the Curriculum

6.1 The Magister Programme

Magister is written to deliver the RED and is the only RE scheme used at St Joseph's. It was introduced in 2025–26 and, from 2026–27, is used in every class from Reception to Year 6. All RE planning, teaching, Knowledge Organisers and assessment follow the Magister units. Practical guidance for staff on using Magister is set out in the Catholic Life Induction Handbook.

6.2 Reception

Reception is taught as a separate class and follows the Reception curriculum, using the Magister units for Reception and working towards the RED's expected outcomes for the Early Years.

6.3 Mixed-Age Classes and Rolling Programmes

Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6 are taught as mixed-age classes. Each class follows a two-year rolling programme: pupils study one year group's Magister content in one academic year and the adjacent year group's content the following year. Over their two years in a class, every pupil is taught the full content for both year groups, with no unit missed or repeated.

Class	2026–27 follows	2027–28 follows
Reception	Reception curriculum	Reception curriculum
Year 1 & 2	Year 2 curriculum	Year 1 curriculum
Year 3 & 4	Year 4 curriculum	Year 3 curriculum
Year 5 & 6	Year 6 curriculum	Year 5 curriculum

This pattern repeats on a continuing two-year cycle (2028–29 mirrors 2026–27, and 2029–30 mirrors 2027–28). Teachers adapt each unit so that younger pupils can access the content and older pupils are suitably challenged.

7. Programme of Study

We follow the RED's model curriculum, which has four structural elements: curriculum branches, knowledge lenses, ways of knowing and expected outcomes.

7.1 Curriculum Branches

The year is organised into six branches, one per half-term, rooted in the story of salvation history:

Half-term	Branch
Autumn 1	Creation and Covenant
Autumn 2	Prophecy and Promise
Spring 1	Galilee to Jerusalem
Spring 2	Desert to Garden
Summer 1	To the Ends of the Earth
Summer 2	Dialogue and Encounter

Pupils revisit every branch each year, so their understanding deepens and they can link the knowledge lenses within the narrative of salvation history.

7.2 Knowledge Lenses

Knowledge lenses set out what pupils study and should know by the end of each age phase. Four lenses cover the Catholic faith: Hear, Believe, Celebrate and Live. The study of other religions and worldviews is described through the lenses of Dialogue and Encounter, which share their name with the sixth curriculum branch.

7.3 Ways of Knowing

Ways of knowing are the skills pupils develop as they progress, shown by icons:

- **Understand** (head) – knowing and remembering what is taught.
- **Discern** (heart) – thinking critically about it and making it one's own.
- **Respond** (hands) – putting it into practice.

7.4 Expected Outcomes

Expected outcomes combine the knowledge lenses and ways of knowing. Each age phase has set outcomes describing what pupils should know, remember and be able to do. They are the basis for planning and assessment (see Section 11).

8. Teaching and Learning

Scripture, the teaching of the Church and the life of the liturgical year are at the heart of every RE unit. Teachers prepare by studying the Magister topic material, including the background material for adults, before teaching each unit.

Pupils learn through a wide range of activities, including discussion, drama and role play, art, music and poetry, extended writing, reflection and stillness. Each unit has a Knowledge Organiser, which pupils keep in their RE books and which shows the key objectives for the unit. Teachers record their weekly RE planning on the school's planning sheet.

RE homework is set in line with the school's homework policy, on the same basis as other core subjects, and often involves families, for example talking together about a Scripture passage or a prayer.

9. Adaptive Teaching, Inclusion and SEND

Every pupil, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, is entitled to a rich and ambitious RE curriculum. Pupils can show measurable progress through a range of learning experiences, without being bound by age-related expectations.

At St Joseph's we recognise that each child is uniquely created by God and must be valued, respected and treated as special. We have a particular duty to include and provide for pupils who find learning harder and those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged.

Adaptive teaching addresses the whole class while responding to individual needs. Teachers use pupils' prior attainment to plan targeted support, so that every pupil can experience success. This is a hallmark of good teaching and is integral to the Teachers' Standards and the Early Career Framework. Support for individual pupils is planned with the SENDCo in line with the school's SEND policy.

10. Equal Opportunities and Other Faiths

10.1 Equal Opportunities

All children have the same opportunities in RE. Pupils who are not Catholic take part in the religious teaching and, as far as possible, in every aspect of the school's religious life; only Catholic children receive the Sacraments. Pupils are never asked to profess a faith they do not hold.

To ensure access for every child regardless of ability, background, sex, culture or faith, activities and expectations are adapted to individual needs, and planning includes different levels of challenge within a topic where appropriate.

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from Religious Education. Any parent considering this is asked to discuss it with the Headteacher.

10.2 Teaching of Other Faiths

At St Joseph's, children learn about religions other than their own. As a Catholic school we are committed to respecting other faiths. Learning about them helps children challenge prejudice, which so often grows from stereotypes and ignorance, and shows reverence for others' beliefs and practices. We hope this study also enriches children's own spiritual journey.

Alongside what the Church teaches about its relationship with other faiths, pupils study other religions and worldviews in their own right, following the concentric circles of *Ecclesiam Suam*. As set out in the RED and the Magister units, pupils study as they move through school:

- Other Christian denominations and Christian unity
- Judaism
- Islam
- Other religions and worldviews, including Dharmic religions in Year 6

11. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in RE establishes what children know, understand and can do. It does not assess faith or the practice of faith. Teachers build the RED's expected outcomes into planning from the start, so that assessment shapes teaching. The key question at the planning stage is: *what must I do, in this branch, to enable children to achieve the outcomes I know they can achieve?*

- Pupils are assessed against the expected outcomes listed on each Magister Knowledge Organiser, which are dated as they are achieved.
- Teachers continually gather evidence through observation, questioning, discussion and pupils' work, and pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning at the end of a task, lesson or unit.
- In Reception, a baseline assessment of children's understanding of the basic signs, symbols and words of the Catholic faith is completed, ideally within the first six weeks, using the Diocese of Lancaster format, and is revisited at key assessment points through the year.
- Each child's progress is tracked on Insight.
- Assessment information is analysed each half-term and interventions are put in place where needed.
- Staff moderate pupils' work as a whole-school team after every curriculum branch, and with other local Catholic primary schools.
- Moderation evidence and outcomes are recorded on the Diocese of Lancaster Moderation App.
- The RE Subject Leader attends the annual diocesan moderation, where judgements are verified by the Diocese.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in RE are reported to parents and carers in the annual written report and discussed at parents' evenings, in the same way as English and mathematics.

12. Leadership, Monitoring and Evaluation

In line with the RED, RE is properly organised, coordinated, taught and resourced. As a small school, St Joseph's Headteacher, Annette Savage, also leads RE as RE Subject Leader, and is responsible for leading, managing and supporting the teaching of RE and staff training in it (see Appendix 1).

- Teaching and learning in RE are monitored at least twice a year, or more often at the discretion of the Headteacher, through lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and planning.
- Findings from monitoring and assessment inform the school's self-evaluation of Religious Education and its improvement priorities.
- All staff who teach RE take part in RE professional development each year, including staff meetings led by the RE Subject Leader, Magister training and Diocese of Lancaster courses. New staff are supported through the Catholic Life Induction Handbook.

13. The Role of Governors

The Governing Body shares responsibility for the Catholic character of the school and for the quality of Religious Education. Governors:

- approve this policy and review it annually;
- ensure that RE is treated as a core subject, with at least 10% of curriculum time, and is properly staffed and resourced;
- monitor standards and progress in RE, receiving reports from the RE Subject Leader

- through the RE Governor, Jacqueline Hampson, take part in monitoring activities and contribute to the school's self-evaluation of Religious Education.

14. Policy Review

This policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually by the RE Subject Leader and the Governing Body. It will be reviewed sooner if guidance from the Bishops' Conference, the Diocese of Lancaster or the Catholic Schools Inspectorate changes.

Appendix 1: The Role of the RE Subject Leader

The RE Subject Leader is responsible for:

- Working with senior leaders and governors to monitor teaching, learning, planning and standards through lesson observations and work scrutinies.
- Organising and maintaining the school portfolio of pupils' work.
- Organising in-house moderation after each curriculum branch, and the school's use of the Diocesan Moderation App.
- Self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Ensuring the curriculum is appropriate and relevant to pupils' needs and interests, and that the rolling programmes give every pupil full coverage of the RED.
- Attending training, keeping up to date with current thinking and policy, and feeding back to staff.
- Organising and leading in-house staff training.
- Identifying staff training needs so that all staff can teach RE effectively.
- Supporting and advising colleagues in teaching RE.
- Reporting to governors on standards and provision in RE.
- Liaising with governors, parents, the parish and the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service on RE matters.
- Auditing, managing and developing RE resources within the agreed budget.

Appendix 2: RE Key Concept Vocabulary

Three essential concepts per branch for each year group, chosen from the key vocabulary in Appendix 3. In mixed-age classes, pupils use the vocabulary for the year-group content being taught that year (see Section 6.3).

Branch	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Creation and Covenant	Love; Father; Holy Spirit	Creation; Father; Creed	Covenant; Baptism; Sin	Creator; Dignity; Genesis	Covenant; Faith; Forgiveness	Covenant; Exodus; Commandments	Creation; Fall; Baptism
Prophecy and Promise	Mary; Nativity; Love	Annunciation; Hail Mary; Jesus	Advent; Prophet; Annunciation	Advent; Joseph; Mass	Advent; Prophet; John the Baptist	Psalm; David; Advent	Mary; Old Testament; Salvation History
Galilee to Jerusalem	Glory Be; Magi; Celebrate	Son of God; Mission; Light	Miracle; Parable; Forgiveness	Parable; Miracle; Kingdom of God	Messiah; Incarnation; Anointing of the Sick	Beatitude; Our Father; Transfiguration	Sacraments; Cana; Lazarus
Desert to Garden	Lent; Easter; Holy Week	Lent; Crucifixion; Resurrection	Forgiveness; Reconciliation; Sin	Last Supper; Eucharist; Mass	Lent; Forgiveness; Sin	Lent; Sin; Prayer	Holy Week; Crucifixion; Stations of the Cross
To the Ends of the Earth	Holy Spirit; Pentecost; Church	Holy Spirit; Pentecost; Ascension	Holy Spirit; Pentecost; Prayer	Holy Spirit; Pentecost; Discipleship	Church; Apostles; Creed	Holy Spirit; Confirmation; Discipleship	Resurrection; Witness; Saint
Dialogue and Encounter	Community; Faith; Jesus	Church; Parish; Judaism	Neighbour; Hebrew; Respect	Exodus; Islam; Passover	Islam; Christian; Common Good	Bible; Old Testament; Hebrew	Common Good; Unity; Dialogue

Appendix 3: RE Key Vocabulary

Vocabulary children encounter or are exposed to in each branch of the curriculum.

Branch	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Creation and Covenant	Father; Holy Spirit; love; Son; wonderful; family; world	God; Father; Creation; Our Father; Creed; Pope Francis; Laudato Si'	God; Covenant; Sin; Psalm; Sacraments; Baptism; Father; Bible; Old Testament; New Testament; Noah	Genesis; Poetry; Creator; Image and likeness; Dignity; Equality	Covenant; Joseph; Forgiveness; Virtue; Faith; Love; Abraham; Sarah; Isaac; Hope	Covenant; Exodus; Moses; Sinai; Commandments; Virtues; Grace	Creation; Baptism; Fall; Eden; Evolution; Salvation
Prophecy and Promise	Mary; love; Nativity; manger; stable; celebrate	Jesus; Bible; Annunciation; Angels; Visitation; Hail Mary; Gloria	Advent; Annunciation; John the Baptist; Magnificat; Prophet; Advent wreath; Isaiah; Zechariah	Sunday; Advent; Joseph; Mass; Angel; Liturgy of the Word	Advent; Prophet; John the Baptist; Elijah; Jesse tree; Christ the King	Psalm; Advent; Samuel; David; Anointing; Antiphon	Old Testament; Mary; Magnificat; Salvation history; Fulfilment; Lucan; Matthew; Protagonists; Mother of God; Religious order
Galilee to Jerusalem	Magi; Glory Be; welcome; celebrate; actions; care	Light; Presentation; Temple; Mission; Son of God; Candlemas	Baptism; John the Baptist; Miracle; Parable; Temptation; Sin; Forgiveness; Sorrow; Reconciliation	Miracle; Parable; Magi; Kingdom of God; Adoration; Epiphany	Messiah; Christ; Incarnation; Kingdom; Anointing of the Sick; Nicene Creed; Marginalised	Our Father; Virtue; Beatitude; Sermon; Petition; Transfiguration	Sacraments; Cana; Bethesda; Lazarus
Desert to Garden	Holy Week; Easter; Lent; Good Friday; new life	Temptation; Last Supper; Crucifixion; Resurrection; Ash Wednesday; Lent; Easter; Palm Sunday; Family Fast Day	Forgiveness; Sin; Light; Easter Vigil; Kyrie Eleison; Reconciliation; Water	Last Supper; Mass; Sacrament; Eucharist; Communion	Lent; Holy Week; Parable; Sin; Forgiveness; Mercy; Works of Mercy	Ash Wednesday; Lent; Sin; Prayer; Deadly Sin; Fasting; Conscience; Death; Judgement; Heaven; Hell	Anoint; Crucifixion; Holy Week; Bethany; Discourse; Pilate; Stations of the Cross
To the Ends of the Earth	church; Pentecost; Sunday; Holy Spirit; parish; Good News	Emmaus; Holy Spirit; Ascension; Pentecost; Church; Glory Be; Gospel	Holy Spirit; Ascension; Pentecost; Prayer; Saul; Fruits of the Spirit; Peace; Self-control	Emmaus; Holy Spirit; Pentecost; St Paul; Discipleship; Concluding Rite	Church; Creed; Mary; Pope; Apostles; Apostolic; People of God; Communion of Saints	Discipleship; Holy Spirit; Anoint; Confirmation; Chrism; Bishop; Baptismal Grace	Resurrection; Adam; Mary Magdala; Martyr; Witness; Saint; Charity
Dialogue and Encounter	Jesus; parish; faith; community; friend; believe	Christian; Church; Parish; Community; Sign of the Cross; Jew; Judaism; Torah	Hebrew; Samaritan; Neighbour; Respect; Sabbath; Shabbat; Synagogue; Christian Unity	Exodus; Islam; Passover; Unleavened; Muslim; Ramadan; Sawm; Adhan	St Paul; Christian; Common Good; Islam; Damascus; Liturgy; Rite; Five Pillars	Bible; Old Testament; New Testament; Hebrew; Aramaic; Greek; Tanakh; Shema; Mezuzah	Common Good; Dialogue; Worldview; Catholic Social Teaching; Unity; Dharmic; Hinduism; Sikhism; Buddhism; Jainism