St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School

Religious Education Policy 2026

Our Mission Statement

"We are God's work of art."

Help each other
Be happy
Follow the light of Jesus
Include everybody
Everybody do their best in every way

Be friends with everyone
Be responsible for your own actions
Follow the light of Jesus
Work to the best of your abilities
Parents, teachers and children support each other.

Chair of Governors	**Anne-Marie Pennington**
Headteacher	**Mairead O'Neill Dowell**
Date	**September 2026**
Review Date	**September 2027**

RE/HDP/2026

1. Introduction

St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School is a Catholic community in which every person is recognised and valued as unique, created in the image and likeness of God. Our mission statement, “We are God’s work of art”, expresses our belief in the dignity, worth and God-given potential of every child.

Religious Education is at the heart of the school’s mission. It is the core of the core curriculum and contributes to the formation of the whole person: spiritually, morally, intellectually, emotionally, socially and culturally. Through Religious Education, pupils are invited to know and understand the Catholic faith, encounter Christ, engage with Scripture and Catholic tradition, reflect on the meaning and purpose of life, and grow in respect for people of different religions and worldviews.

2. Background and Catholic Identity

St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School serves its families, parish and wider community. All pupils and families are welcomed into the life of the school and are treated with dignity and respect.

The school recognises parents and carers as the first educators of their children in faith. We therefore seek to build a strong partnership between home, school and parish so that children experience a coherent witness to Gospel values and are supported in developing their relationship with God and with one another.

3. General Aims and Philosophy

Religious Education is for all pupils, regardless of their religious background or level of faith commitment. It aims to:

- lead pupils to a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and its traditions;
- enable pupils to encounter and engage with Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church;
- develop religious literacy and the ability to think theologically, ethically and spiritually;
- help pupils recognise and appreciate the religious and spiritual dimensions of life;
- encourage pupils to ask searching questions, reflect on their own beliefs and commitments, and listen respectfully to those of others;
- develop knowledge and respectful understanding of other religions and worldviews;
- support pupils in recognising their responsibilities towards other people, the common good and care for creation;

- enable every pupil to make progress through a coherent, sequential and appropriately challenging curriculum.

4. Structure and Management of Religious Education

Governors

Governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have responsibility for ensuring that:

- Catholic Life and Mission drives school improvement;
- Religious Education remains the core of the core curriculum;
- the Religious Education curriculum complies with the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales and the Religious Education Directory;
- Prayer and Liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and are provided in accordance with the relevant Church guidance;
- Religious Education is appropriately resourced and receives a level of priority consistent with its central place in a Catholic school;
- the quality, standards and impact of Religious Education are monitored and evaluated.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school community, ensures that:

- school decisions are underpinned by the mission, vision and values of St Robert Bellarmine;
- Religious Education has appropriate curriculum time, staffing, leadership and resources;
- Prayer and Liturgy are central to school life;
- staff receive appropriate formation, training and professional development;
- Religious Education, Catholic Life and Mission, and Prayer and Liturgy are regularly monitored and evaluated;
- the school works in partnership with Archdiocese, parish and families.

The Religious Education Lead

- is a visible witness to the Catholic faith and supports the Catholic mission of the school;
- provides clear leadership for Religious Education across the school;
- ensures the curriculum is fully compliant with the Religious Education Directory and relevant diocesan guidance;
- supports teachers with curriculum knowledge, planning, teaching, adaptation and assessment;
- monitors teaching, pupils' work, curriculum coverage, assessment and pupil outcomes;
- promotes the spiritual development of pupils through close links with Catholic Life and Mission and Prayer and Liturgy;

- recognises the primary role of parents in the religious education of their children and promotes strong home-school-parish relationships;
- keeps staff informed of developments in Catholic education and Religious Education;
- supports moderation and ensures that identified areas for development are addressed.

The Role of the Class Teacher

- plan, teach, adapt and evaluate Religious Education in accordance with the Religious Education Directory and agreed school planning;
- ensure lessons are ambitious, inclusive and appropriate to pupils' age, prior learning and needs;
- use Scripture accurately and reverently and develop pupils' religious vocabulary;
- provide opportunities for questioning, discussion, reflection, creativity and independent thinking;
- assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and use assessment to inform future teaching;
- provide a stimulating classroom environment, including an appropriate focal point for prayer and reflection;
- model respect for Catholic teaching and for the beliefs and traditions of others.

5. Religious Education in the Classroom

The school recognises both the explicit, timetabled teaching of Religious Education and the wider opportunities throughout school life in which pupils encounter Gospel values, Catholic social teaching, prayer, reflection and the lived witness of the Catholic community.

At least 10% of curriculum teaching time is allocated to Religious Education. Prayer and Liturgy are additional to this allocation and are not designated Religious Education curriculum time.

6. The Religious Education Directory

St Robert Bellarmine follows the Religious Education Directory (RED), To know You more clearly, for Catholic schools, academies and colleges in England and Wales. The curriculum is rooted in Scripture, Catholic tradition and the narrative of salvation history and is planned to be coherent, sequential and progressive from the Early Years through Year 6.

The model curriculum is organised through six curriculum branches corresponding broadly to the six half-terms of the school year:

- Creation and Covenant
- Prophecy and Promise
- Galilee to Jerusalem
- Desert to Garden
- To the Ends of the Earth
- Dialogue and Encounter

Learning is developed through the knowledge lenses Hear, Believe, Celebrate and Live. Dialogue and Encounter enables pupils to learn about Christianity in dialogue with other religions and worldviews and to develop respectful understanding of religious diversity.

Teachers use the prescribed outcomes and model curriculum within the RED, alongside approved Archdiocesan guidance and resources, to ensure that the curriculum is at least as coherent, progressive and demanding as required.

7. Teaching and Learning

A range of teaching and learning approaches is used to enable all pupils to participate successfully. These may include:

- direct teaching and teacher explanation;
- reading, hearing and interpreting Scripture;
- questioning, discussion and debate;
- individual, paired and collaborative work;
- writing in a range of forms, including theological responses, reflection and prayer;
- art, music, drama and creative response;
- use of high-quality texts, artefacts and digital resources;
- visits and visitors where these deepen curriculum learning;
- opportunities for quiet reflection where appropriate.

Religious Education is taught with the same academic rigour and high expectations as other core subjects. Pupils are expected to know more, remember more and increasingly make meaningful connections within their learning.

8. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in Religious Education. Teachers use a range of formative and summative approaches to establish what pupils know, understand and can do, identify misconceptions and plan appropriate next steps.

Assessment is aligned with the expectations of the Religious Education Directory and relevant Archdiocesan guidance. Evidence may include pupils' written and creative work, discussion, questioning, observation and other appropriate demonstrations of understanding.

The RE Lead and senior leaders monitor assessment and support moderation so that judgements are consistent and useful. Progress and achievement in Religious Education are communicated to parents and carers through the school's established reporting arrangements, including the annual written report.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality and impact of Religious Education are monitored regularly. Monitoring may include lesson visits, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work, curriculum and planning reviews, assessment information, pupil voice, staff discussion and moderation.

Monitoring will consider the quality of curriculum implementation, pupils' knowledge and understanding, progression, inclusion, the impact of leadership and the contribution of Religious Education to the Catholic mission of the school. Findings inform the school's improvement planning and professional development.

Where appropriate, the views of pupils, parents, staff, clergy and governors contribute to evaluation.

10. Staff Formation and Professional Development

St Robert Bellarmine is committed to the continuing professional and spiritual formation of staff. Staff are supported to deepen their understanding of Catholic education, Scripture, theology and the Religious Education Directory.

- Relevant Archdiocesan training is prioritised.
- Staff meeting and INSET time is used to develop subject knowledge, pedagogy, assessment and moderation.
- Staff are encouraged and supported, where appropriate, to undertake the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).
- Teachers engage with the RED 'Before You Begin' material and other agreed formation resources before teaching new curriculum content.
- Professional development needs are identified through monitoring, appraisal and school improvement priorities.

11. Staff Induction

New members of staff are introduced to the Catholic ethos and mission of St Robert Bellarmine and to the expectations for Religious Education, Catholic Life and Mission, and Prayer and Liturgy. Appropriate support, resources, planning opportunities and training are provided so that new staff can fulfil their responsibilities confidently and consistently.

12. Resources

Religious Education is given appropriate priority in the school budget. Resources are reviewed and updated to support the Religious Education Directory, Scripture study, Catholic teaching, Dialogue and Encounter and inclusive classroom practice.

Digital technology may be used where it enhances learning, but it does not replace pupils' direct engagement with Scripture, high-quality teaching, discussion, reflection and appropriate written or creative responses.

13. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Religious Education at St Robert Bellarmine is inclusive. Every pupil is recognised as a unique gift from God and is entitled to meaningful access to the curriculum.

Teachers make appropriate adaptations for pupils with SEND while maintaining ambitious expectations. Adaptation may include carefully selected vocabulary, visual and concrete resources, structured discussion, scaffolding, alternative ways of recording and additional adult support. The focus is on enabling pupils to demonstrate genuine religious knowledge and understanding rather than reducing the richness of the curriculum.

14. Equal Opportunities

All pupils are treated with equal dignity and respect and are given equitable access to Religious Education. Teaching takes account of pupils' different backgrounds, experiences, abilities and needs.

Pupils learn to listen respectfully to others, recognise that people may hold different beliefs and viewpoints, and engage with religious diversity in a thoughtful and informed way. Learning about other religions and worldviews is undertaken accurately and respectfully within the requirements of the Religious Education Directory.

15. Dialogue and Encounter

Dialogue and Encounter is an integral part of the RED curriculum. Through this branch and through appropriate opportunities across the curriculum, pupils encounter the beliefs, practices and lived experience of other religious traditions and worldviews.

This learning is designed to deepen pupils' understanding of their own Catholic faith while fostering respect, curiosity, dialogue and the ability to live well alongside people of different beliefs in contemporary Britain and the wider world.

16. Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy are central to the Catholic life of St Robert Bellarmine but are distinct from the taught Religious Education curriculum. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to pray, encounter Scripture, reflect, celebrate the liturgical year and participate in the worshipping life of the Church.

The school's detailed expectations and arrangements for Prayer and Liturgy are set out in its Prayer and Liturgy policy and are informed by the guidance of the Catholic Church and the Archdiocese.

17. Home, School and Parish Partnership

The school recognises that parents and carers are the first educators of their children and seeks to involve them in the religious life and learning of the school. Families are kept informed about significant Religious Education learning and are welcomed to appropriate celebrations, liturgies and Masses.

St Robert Bellarmine values its relationship with the parish and clergy. The school supports pupils and families in participating in parish life and works collaboratively with the parish in areas including liturgical celebrations and sacramental preparation, according to parish and Archdiocesan arrangements.

18. Sacramental Preparation

Sacramental preparation is undertaken in partnership with families and the parish, in accordance with Archdiocesan and parish arrangements. The school supports children and families in their journey of faith and complements, rather than replaces, the catechetical role of the family and parish.

19. Archdiocesan and Wider Church Links

The school maintains close links with the Archdiocese and the wider Catholic Church. Leaders and staff engage with relevant meetings, formation and training and respond to appropriate diocesan guidance.

Pupils are encouraged to understand their responsibilities towards the local and global community through prayer, charitable action, Catholic social teaching and care for creation. Opportunities may include support for CAFOD, Mission Together and other appropriate Catholic and local charitable initiatives.

20. The Local and Wider Community

St Robert Bellarmine seeks to be an active witness within its local community. The school values constructive relationships with neighbouring schools, other Catholic schools, local organisations and charities and encourages pupils to recognise how faith calls them to service, solidarity and responsibility for others.

21. Withdrawal

As a Catholic school, Religious Education and Prayer and Liturgy form an important part of the school's Catholic character and educational provision. Any request relating to withdrawal

should be made in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will meet with the parent or carer to discuss the request, explain the nature and purpose of the school's provision and clarify the applicable legal and diocesan requirements before arrangements are agreed.

22. Policy Review

This policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher, Religious Education Lead, senior leaders and Governing Body, with regard to Archdiocesan guidance. It will be reviewed annually, or earlier where changes to Church, diocesan or statutory guidance require this.