ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

2026–2027

Love, Learn, Share and Respect
In The Light Of Jesus

Policy owner	Headteacher / RE Leader / Prayer & Liturgy Coordinator
Applies to	EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
Review cycle	Annual, or sooner where diocesan/CES guidance changes
Approved by	Governing Body
Related policies	Prayer & Liturgy; RSHE; SEND; Curriculum; Assessment

Aligned with the Catholic Education Service Religious Education Directory,
To Know You More Clearly, and Prayer & Liturgy Directory,
To Love You More Dearly

1. Introduction and rationale

Religious Education is central to the mission of St Alban's Catholic Primary School. It is the "core of the core curriculum" and enables pupils to grow in religious literacy, theological understanding and the ability to relate faith to life. The school seeks to educate the whole person in partnership with parents/carers, the parish and the wider Catholic community.

The school's RE curriculum is governed by the Religious Education Directory, To Know You More Clearly (RED). The CES confirms that this is the current Religious Education Directory for Catholic schools and that it is to be used from 2025. The Diocese of Shrewsbury continues to provide Vine and Branches resources and training for schools; at St Alban's these resources are used as the diocesan-approved implementation of the RED, subject to the current diocesan programme and mapping.

Prayer and Liturgy is integral to the Catholic life of the school. It is governed by the Prayer & Liturgy Directory, To Love You More Dearly. Prayer and liturgy complement Religious Education but are distinct from curriculum RE. Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time and are not included within the school's RE allocation.

2. Aims of Religious Education

- To present an engaging and systematic curriculum that develops knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and communicate this effectively.
- To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching and enable pupils to relate faith to contemporary life.
- To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religions and worldviews and their capacity for respectful dialogue.
- To develop critical faculties so pupils can explore relationships between faith, life and culture.
- To stimulate imagination and a desire for meaning in the light of the Catholic faith.
- To develop religious literacy so that pupils can think ethically and theologically and participate thoughtfully in the life of the Church and wider society.
- To support the religious formation of pupils through partnership between school, home and parish.

3. Curriculum time and status

Religious Education is a core subject in the Catholic school and is taught for at least 10% of curriculum time. This allocation is separate from time devoted to Prayer and Liturgy. The CES states that RE is to be taught for at least 10% of curriculum time up to age 16 in Catholic schools and academies.

Prayer and Liturgy takes place throughout the school day and school year and is not counted as part of the 10% RE allocation.

4. The Religious Education Directory

Our curriculum follows the structure of To Know You More Clearly. The RED provides a programme of study and model curriculum from EYFS to Year 9 and is the current CES framework for Catholic school RE.

4.1 The six knowledge lenses

- HEAR – encountering God's revelation through Scripture and the living tradition of the Church.
- BELIEVE – developing knowledge and understanding of what Catholics believe.
- CELEBRATE – exploring how the Catholic faith is celebrated in liturgy, sacrament and prayer.
- LIVE – considering how faith shapes Christian life, moral choices and discipleship.
- DIALOGUE – learning to engage respectfully with different religious and non-religious worldviews.
- ENCOUNTER – encountering the lived reality of people and communities with different religious and worldview perspectives.

4.2 The three Ways of Knowing

- UNDERSTAND – acquiring and communicating religious and theological knowledge.
- DISCERN – reflecting, interpreting, questioning and considering meaning in the light of the knowledge encountered.
- RESPOND – applying learning to life, making connections and considering appropriate responses.

Planning, teaching and assessment will make appropriate use of all three Ways of Knowing. The school will not treat Understand and Discern as the only assessable dimensions of RE.

4.3 The six curriculum branches

Branch	Typical placement
Creation and Covenant	Autumn 1
Prophecy and Promise	Autumn 2
Galilee to Jerusalem	Spring 1
Desert to Garden	Spring 2
To the Ends of the Earth	Summer 1
Dialogue and Encounter	Summer 2 and/or appropriate points throughout the year

The first five branches follow the sequence of the academic year and the liturgical calendar. Dialogue and Encounter may be taught at appropriate points across the year, including a discrete period, while also being integrated where relevant with the school's curriculum and current events. This reflects the structure already established in the school's existing policy.

5. Curriculum implementation at St Alban's

St Alban's uses the Diocese of Shrewsbury's Vine and Branches programme as its implementation resource for the RED, where the current diocesan programme is applicable. The school will ensure that planning and teaching remain aligned with the current RED, diocesan guidance, age-phase expected outcomes, knowledge lenses, Ways of Knowing and curriculum branches. The Diocese of Shrewsbury continues to provide Vine and Branches training and resources.

- RE is planned progressively from EYFS through to Year 6, building on prior knowledge and vocabulary.
- Teachers use the current diocesan planning and resource materials.
- Planning identifies the relevant Knowledge Lenses, Ways of Knowing and expected outcomes.
- Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to understand, discern and respond.
- Dialogue and Encounter provides explicit opportunities to learn about and encounter other religions and worldviews.
- RE is adapted so that pupils with SEND, EAL and other individual needs can access the curriculum and demonstrate learning.

6. Teaching and learning

Good RE teaching enables pupils to build on experience, encounter Scripture and the living tradition of the Church, acquire secure knowledge, ask questions, make connections, reflect on meaning and respond thoughtfully. Teaching will be intellectually rigorous, age-appropriate and faithful to Catholic teaching.

- RE lessons
- Scripture and theological enquiry
- Discussion and questioning
- Art, music, drama and creative response
- Reflection and prayer where appropriate
- Cross-curricular connections
- Learning from religious artefacts, texts and lived experience
- Dialogue with people and communities where appropriate
- Catholic Social Teaching and service learning

7. Religions and worldviews: Dialogue and Encounter

The school prepares pupils for life in a diverse society by developing accurate knowledge, respect and the ability to engage in thoughtful dialogue. Pupils encounter religious and non-religious worldviews through the RED's Dialogue and Encounter branch and Knowledge Lenses. Teaching will avoid stereotyping and will recognise diversity within religious traditions.

Pupils are encouraged to learn both about and from religious and worldview perspectives, while retaining a clear understanding of the distinctive claims of the Catholic faith. The CES states that Catholic schools are required to teach about other religions as part of RE and identifies respectful understanding and dialogue as important purposes.

8. Assessment

Assessment is used to improve teaching and learning and to establish what pupils know, understand and can do. The CES provides a RED Assessment Toolkit and notes that the toolkit is reviewed and updated on a rolling basis.

- Teachers assess learning against the relevant expected outcomes for the age phase and unit. Topic endpoints are used to inform children's progress and attainment on Arbor (the school management system).
- Assessment draws on all three Ways of Knowing: Understand, Discern and Respond.
- Teachers use questioning, discussion, observation, written work, practical response and other appropriate evidence.
- Assessment is proportionate and informs subsequent planning rather than creating unnecessary workload.
- The RE Leader monitors samples of work and assessment information to identify strengths, gaps and priorities.
- School-wide assessment terminology may be used where required, but the RED expected outcomes and Ways of Knowing remain the principal RE framework.

The existing school practice of three formal assessment opportunities per year may continue where it remains consistent with current diocesan guidance and workload expectations. Assessment arrangements will be reviewed against the latest Diocese of Shrewsbury and CES guidance if changes occur.

9. Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy is central to the Catholic identity and mission of St Alban's. The school follows To Love You More Dearly, the CES Prayer & Liturgy Directory. The Directory replaces the term "collective worship" with "prayer and liturgy" as the more appropriate description for Catholic schools and emphasises daily prayer and liturgy, pupil participation and the responsibilities of governors and leaders.

The school will normally use the term "Prayer and Liturgy" in policy and formal documentation. "Assembly" may continue to describe a wider gathering; where an assembly contains a genuine act of prayer and liturgy, this will be identified appropriately.

9.1 Annual Plan of Provision

The Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator, working with the Headteacher, parish priest and relevant staff, will maintain an Annual Plan of Provision. This will identify the liturgical seasons, key celebrations, Masses and other planned prayer and liturgy across the school year. The Directory specifically identifies an Annual Plan of Provision as a responsibility of those leading prayer and liturgy.

9.2 Daily prayer and liturgy

- Prayer and liturgy will take place daily in ways appropriate to the age and context of pupils.
- Opportunities include classroom prayer, whole-school celebrations, Celebration of the Word, Mass, sacramental celebrations, prayer services and devotional prayer.
- Prayer and liturgy will draw upon Scripture, symbol, silence, music, gesture, sacred space and the liturgical seasons.
- The school will develop a progressive repertoire of traditional Catholic prayers, liturgical responses, hymns and sacred music.
- Prayer and liturgy will not be used as a substitute for RE curriculum time.

9.3 Celebration of the Word

Celebrations of the Word will normally be prepared around Gather, Word, Response and Mission, adapted to the age and context of the pupils. Pupils will be progressively supported to participate in preparation and leadership according to their age, experience and capacity.

9.4 Pupil participation

Pupils are encouraged to participate actively in prayer and liturgy. Participation may include preparing the space, choosing Scripture or music, proclaiming the Word, leading intercessions, offering reflections, singing, serving and other appropriate ministries. The expectation is progressive participation rather than a requirement that every pupil leads every term.

9.5 Mass and Reconciliation

- School Masses will be celebrated at appropriate points in the liturgical year and at least once each term where this remains the school's established provision.
- Masses will be planned with the parish priest and prepared with staff and pupils.
- Parents/carers and parishioners will be welcomed to school Masses and appropriate celebrations.
- Opportunities for Reconciliation will be included in the Annual Plan of Provision.
- First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion preparation will be undertaken through close partnership between home, school and parish, in accordance with diocesan and parish arrangements.

10. Prayer spaces and resources

Each class will maintain an appropriate prayer focus that reflects the liturgical season. Prayer spaces may include Scripture, a cross or other appropriate sacred symbol, a candle where safe and suitable, liturgical colours and pupil contributions. Resources will be reviewed regularly and will support authentic Catholic prayer and liturgy.

The school will maintain suitable resources for RE and Prayer and Liturgy, including Bibles, Scripture resources, religious artefacts, books, music and materials reflecting the liturgical year.

11. Roles and responsibilities

Governors have responsibility for ensuring that prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school, that a named Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator is in place, that the policy is reviewed and shared and that appropriate resources and budget are available.

The Headteacher provides spiritual leadership, works with the RE and Prayer & Liturgy leaders, ensures appropriate formation and training and ensures suitable resources.

The RE Leader is responsible for curriculum planning, progression, monitoring, assessment and staff development in Religious Education.

The Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator is responsible for the Annual Plan of Provision, coordination and development of prayer and liturgy, monitoring and evaluation and liaison with the Headteacher, RE Leader, parish priest and governors.

All staff contribute to the Catholic life of the school and participate appropriately in formation, prayer and liturgy.

12. Staff formation

Staff will receive appropriate formation and professional development in Religious Education, Catholic theology, the RED, prayer and liturgy and the school's current diocesan programmes. The school will make use of Diocese of Shrewsbury training, including RE Coordinator and Prayer & Liturgy opportunities. Current diocesan provision includes RE Coordinator meetings, Vine and Branches training and Prayer & Liturgy formation. In addition, further support and training is provided by our Trust, Our Lady Help Of Christians.

13. Inclusion and SEND

RE and Prayer and Liturgy will be accessible to all pupils. Teaching, resources, language, participation and assessment will be adapted where necessary. The CES provides specific RED guidance for SEND, which the school will use alongside its SEND policy.

- Pupils with SEND will be supported to encounter the same rich Catholic curriculum through appropriate adaptations.
- Alternative ways of demonstrating understanding, discernment and response will be provided where necessary.
- Pupils will be enabled to participate meaningfully in prayer and liturgy without unnecessary barriers.

14. Partnership with parents, parish and community

The school recognises parents/carers as the first educators of their children in faith and works closely with the parish priest and parish community. Parents/carers are informed about the RE curriculum, sacramental preparation and significant liturgical celebrations. The school welcomes opportunities for parish involvement and for pupils to participate in the wider life of the Church.

The school will continue established links with charitable organisations and Catholic agencies, including CAFOD and other appropriate partners, ensuring that charitable action is connected to Catholic Social Teaching and formation.

15. Sacramental preparation

Sacramental preparation is undertaken in partnership with home, school and parish. RE provides systematic formation and theological understanding, while sacramental preparation is undertaken in accordance with diocesan and parish arrangements. Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion will involve pupils, parents/carers, school staff, parish clergy and catechists as appropriate.

The school will maintain clear communication with families and the parish regarding preparation, celebrations and any additional provision required for pupils who join the programme at a different stage.

16. Monitoring and evaluation

The RE Leader monitors curriculum coverage, progression, teaching, learning, assessment and pupil work through learning walks, book scrutiny, pupil voice and discussion with staff. Findings inform the RE action plan and professional development.

Prayer and Liturgy is monitored and evaluated by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator and Headteacher, with appropriate governor involvement. Evaluation will consider the Annual Plan of Provision, pupil participation, staff reflection, the quality and variety of prayer and liturgy and feedback from the school community. Monitoring will inform future planning and formation.

The policy and associated plans will be reviewed annually and sooner if the CES, Catholic Schools Inspectorate, Diocese of Shrewsbury or other competent authority issues revised guidance.

17. Right of withdrawal

Parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their child from prayer and liturgy in accordance with current legislation. Requests should be made to the Headteacher. The Prayer & Liturgy Directory confirms that parents may withdraw children up to age 16.

Any questions concerning withdrawal from Religious Education will be handled in accordance with current diocesan and legal guidance.

18. Review and approval

This policy will be reviewed annually. It will be read alongside the school's separate Prayer & Liturgy Policy and other relevant curriculum and pastoral policies.

Date approved	
Approved by	Governing Body
Next review	September 2027
Policy owner	Headteacher / RE Leader / Prayer & Liturgy Coordinator