



CATHOLIC LIFE AND MISSION POLICY

Approved by: LAS Board

Date Approved: November 2024

Point of Contact (Reviewer): Head of Preparatory School

Catholic Life and Mission

'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 all 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 distinctively Christian is threefold (*Gravissimum Educationis* 2). 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 the prayer and 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.'¹

This threefold mission is reflected in the three perspectives of the Catholic School Inspection process. 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 and mission complements the Religious Education policy, the Prayer and Liturgy policy and the Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy.

The aim of this policy is to show how faithfully Loughborough Amherst School responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Mission Statement

Legis Plenitudo Caritas
Love is the fulfilment of the law

Vision

We are a Catholic School, universal and welcoming of all, founded in Christ to nurture every pupil to achieve their greatest potential so that they may shine a light and make the world a better place.

Aims

- To educate the whole person, rooted in Rosmini's belief that 'a pupil must be allowed to grow and develop as an integrated human person'
- To sustain our Minerva learning culture and set high expectations for all in pursuit of academic excellence
- To build character and confidence through personal development and co-curricular opportunity

¹ CSI Inspection Handbook

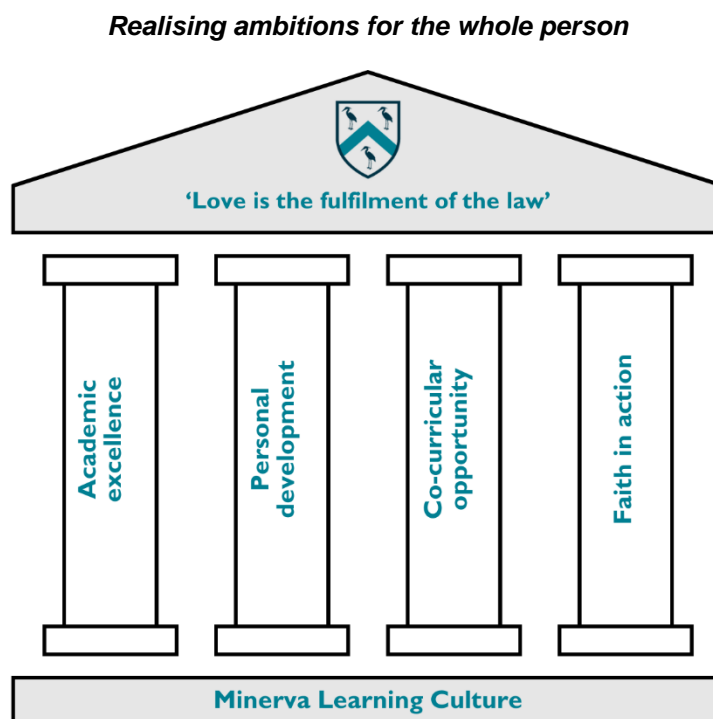
- To foster a culture of love for one another in pursuit of faith in action, embracing our school virtues

Virtues

We focus on core virtues linked to our strategic aims:

- **Love** and respect for the dignity of the human person
- **Courage** to grow in confidence and be resourceful
- **Wisdom** to discern knowledge and truth

Our Strategic Pillars



The mission statement of Loughborough Amherst School is visible throughout the school environment. It clearly reflects the school’s role in the educational mission of the Church, promoting Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Our mission statement is a touch stone of school life so that:

- Pupils have a clear understanding of its meaning and can articulate this at an age-appropriate level
- All staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities e.g. class prayers, whole school liturgical prayers, displays, retreat days
- It is shared with parents and the wider community through school signage, our newsletters, school policy documents, website and parents’ meetings

School Environment

Visitors to Loughborough Amherst School are aware of the distinctive Catholic nature of the school through the physical environment, the presence of images and symbols and the recognition of a learning environment that respects the human dignity of all persons as made in God’s image and likeness.

At Loughborough Amherst School every effort is made to provide a spiritually uplifting, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment. (See appendix 1 for further details)

Catholic Curriculum

'The Catholic vision of education is distinctive and the beliefs it holds, the values and aspirations it has must inspire the whole of the curriculum.'²

Our school is a community of learning with a distinctive educational philosophy which is based on the Gospels. Whilst Religious Education is at the heart of the core curriculum, this philosophy permeates all our curriculum and activities as we recognise the needs of each individual member of the community.

At an age-appropriate level children are introduced to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. In this way we are building their moral compass and enabling them to respond to social, moral and ethical issues in the world.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is taught in a Catholic context recognising we are all made in God's image and likeness.

Other faiths are taught as part of the RE curriculum in line with what is prescribed. 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's neighbour. It prepares our children for life in modern Britain, giving them an understanding of the beliefs of others. The school seeks to wish those who celebrate other faiths well wishes on key dates and use these as opportunities to develop understanding and tolerance towards each other.

Charitable outreach

We aim to foster and develop an awareness of the needs of others: locally, nationally and globally, and promote a spirit of generosity and compassion as taught by Jesus Christ.

There are various fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year which is reviewed annually by the Spiritual Life Forum. (See appendix 1 for further details)

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 also 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. Switch off fortnight
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness
- Writing to the local MP regarding climate change issues

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 at Loughborough Amherst School plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of the Prep Chaplaincy Team, the Caritas Prefect and the Spiritual Life Forum as well as both Prep and Senior RE Leads and the SLT. Their role is to support each member of the

² NBRIA The Distinctive Curriculum of the Catholic School

school community to grow in their faith and to be part of the pastoral care system in school. (See appendix 1 for further details)

School Community

Loughborough Amherst School 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.

Loughborough Amherst School recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works increasingly collaboratively with the diocese. Through our work in RE children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family.

At Loughborough Amherst School all are encouraged to live life to the full and reach their full potential. Members of staff have opportunities to take part in the diocesan continuing professional development and formation programme. New teachers are enrolled on the Diocesan Early Careers Programme as part of their induction to teaching in a Catholic school.

Parents

Parents are the first teachers of their children, and we work in partnership with them. They are encouraged to support Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year, which include: House Feast Days, curriculum meetings, community Masses, morning prayer opportunities in Advent and Lent, PA run events, Carols by Candlelight.

In the Prep, they are encouraged to participate with their children during Advent when the 'Advent Hampers' are sent home, encouraging a time of sharing and reflection and also during Lent when the 'Lent Boxes' are sent home.

Parents are encouraged to join the Parents Association to help organise and host a range of events for our school community. All funds raised support and enhance the provision we offer for our pupils and families.

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at meet the teacher meetings and parents' evenings. Loughborough Amherst School operates an open-door policy.

Parish and Diocesan Links

Links with the local parish and Diocese are a vital part of Catholic life in school. The parish which serves our school is Saint Mary's and the school has a close working relationship with the Diocese of Nottingham's Education Service.

Children visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church with pupils in the Prep School attending weekday Mass there at least twice per year. Father David and Sister Celine also support the teaching of curriculum RE in school by visiting to talk about various topics such as baptism, reconciliation and vocation. Links with the priest are strengthened as he celebrates various services in the school with the children and staff, including Mass and sitting as an affiliate member of the school's board. We support the work of the parish by promoting their campaigns and act as a collection point for donations where appropriate.

Appendix 1

Examples of environmental expectations

- All rooms have a crucifix
- All tutor rooms have a cared for, attractive prayer area or board
- In the Prep School each class has a prayer box with coloured cloths and good quality religious artefacts. The Senior school can borrow items from the sacristy and all have a class candle.
- The seasonality is increasingly reflected throughout the school especially in the cloisters where items on display subtly reflect the liturgical year
- Focal points for collective worship reflect the theme and season
- Across the school, there is evidence of the Prep School Council, and numerous pupil voice opportunities as well as our work with the local community and charity work
- RE displays within each Prep classroom reflect the 'Come and See' topic being taught, the liturgical season, work produced by the pupils, key prayers and scripture
- There are child-friendly quotes from scripture around the corridors

Charitable Outreach Endeavours

- There are several non-uniform days across the year which support a range of charities that uphold the values of the Catholic Church
- Autumn - In a spirit of harvest, pupils are encouraged to bring in food for local foodbanks and, with the support of the local parish, provide warm coats for those in need.
- At Remembrance, we sell poppies and related merchandise to raise funds for the Royal British Legion.
- The school holds a Christmas event, run by the Sixth Form, for elderly parishioners
- During Lent, we aim to link the element of fasting with our call to give through encouraging pupils to take up something or refrain from something and raise money
- During the Summer Term, pupils have agency to nominate and vote for a charity and then to undertake a fundraising activity.

Role of Pupil Chaplaincy

- Maintaining and developing class prayer areas
- Maintaining and developing communal prayer areas
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school Celebrations of the word
- Organising retreat days
- Undertaking large projects such as developing a prayer garden
- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence and joy where applicable
- Accompanying members of the school community, especially in times of need

The Spiritual Life Forum is open to all with recruitment taking place in the Spring Term for the team to run Easter – Easter. The Forum is always open to all to attend should they wish, in the spirit of 'accompaniment' and it is here that we particularly seek pupil voice to ensure that our work is giving pupils a meaningful encounter with God.