Religious Education
Autumn 2026

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company registration number: 07696069 and registered address: St. Alban's Catholic Academy, First Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2NP.

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Religious Education Policy

Trust Vision: Through God's Love we can learn together, grow together and achieve together so that we become a community of disciples inspired by the love of Our Lady and the teaching of the Gospel.

Religious education forms the cornerstone of the life and work within Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust (OLFCMAT) and permeates through the whole curriculum. Its purpose is to nurture the Catholic Faith, and its teachings, in our children. By helping them to live this faith we hope to encourage our children to develop a better relationship with God and others around them.

The schools' Mission Statements outline each school's aims and ideals for the spiritual and intellectual education of our pupils. Religious Education is not confined to the RE lessons and is implicit in the curriculum (Caritas Curriculum), the organisation and a conduct of the working of our school.

Religious education is religious because its central subject matter is 'the comprehensive and systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of his Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life'.(Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000)

Rationale of Religious Education

The outcome of Religious Education is to develop religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. (Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012)

At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in religious education, which recognises the human person as one 'created in "the image and likeness" of God… unfaithful to God in original sin, but redeemed by Christ… [and] destined to eternal life'. Religious education is religious because it is the bond of the whole curriculum. It is in faithful and engaging religious education that a student can gradually appreciate other subjects as separate disciplines but find their rationale and unity within a Catholic religious vision of reality. 'Therefore, religious education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process.

RED, 2023

Within OLOFCMAT Religious education as the heart of the curriculum

1. Religious education is the core of the Caritas curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
2. Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.
3. Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the Caritas curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.
4. In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

Compliance with the Religious Education Directory RED, 2023

1. The Religious Education Directory includes the programmes of study approved by the Bishops' Conference for the various age groups. The competence for approving these programmes of study is currently exercised by the Department of Education and Formation, but the Bishops' Conference can delegate this function to another department, commission, or committee of the Conference.
2. Catholic schools are required to comply with the Religious Education Directory (full compliance is expected in primary schools from September 2026).

Implications of the primacy of Religious Education in the curriculum RED, 2023

1. Religious education is to be properly organised, coordinated, taught, and resourced.
2. In primary schools there is to be a Coordinator of Religious Education who is to have at least parity in status and remuneration with those of any other curriculum area.

The importance of the Religious Educator, (in OLOF all who come into contact with children are teachers) RED, 2023

Holding all these threads together, is the religious educator. The vocation of teacher is a high calling in the Church: 'God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers' (1 Cor 12:28).

The teacher's role in a Catholic school is both a privilege and a profound responsibility. As places of human formation, Catholic schools depend on teachers who shape young people during their most formative years. The Church consistently emphasises the irreplaceable role of the teacher, recognising that education is most effective when teachers are authentic witnesses to the values and beliefs they teach. As Evangelii Nuntiandi reminds us, students are more likely to listen to teachers when they see them as credible witnesses in their own lives.

In Religious Education, authentic witness requires both personal integrity and strong theological understanding. While it remains desirable that RE teachers are practising Catholics, all who teach the subject should be supported to develop theological literacy and a deep understanding of the school's mission, reflected through our Caritas curriculum. RE

teachers must also be skilled facilitators of dialogue, creating classrooms where different beliefs can be explored respectfully and safely. They are called to be knowledgeable educators, thoughtful mediators, and compassionate guides who accompany students in their intellectual and spiritual development.

Aims of Religious Education as stated in the RED 2023

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;
2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is:
The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. RED 2023

> "The task of handing on the faith to future generations is both the privilege and responsibility of the local Church. Its primary purpose is to bring young people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."
> Cardinal Basil Hume

The teaching of R.E.:
We use Magister to teach R.E. In accordance with the Religious Education Directory (RED) 2023, this curriculum is structured around six knowledge-rich **branches**: Creation and Covenant, Prophecy and Promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, Desert to Garden, To the Ends of the Earth, and Dialogue and Encounter. Through these branches, pupils encounter Scripture, Catholic belief and practice, prayer and liturgy, Catholic Social Teaching, and the study of other faith traditions. The curriculum follows the unfolding story of salvation, enabling pupils to deepen their religious literacy, grow in faith and understanding, and recognise their vocation to contribute positively to both the Church and the wider world.

The structural elements of the programme of study as stated in the RED 2023

The programme of study for religious education in Catholic schools presented in this directory has a framework with four structural elements: knowledge lenses, ways of knowing, expected outcomes, curriculum branches.

Knowledge lenses set out the object of study for pupils; they indicate what should be known by the end of each age-phase. They are referred to as **lenses**, since they are the things we are looking at and they divide the content of the programme of study into four systematic subsections for the study of Catholicism and two additional lenses for the study of religions and worldviews, which together comprise the six knowledge lenses:

1. hear
2. believe
3. celebrate
4. live

(the study of the Catholic religion)

5. dialogue
6. encounter

(the study of other religions and worldviews)

Teaching other religions

The first four lenses systematically set out what a study of the Catholic religion comprises. The fifth and sixth lenses called '**dialogue'** and **'encounter'** set out the requirements in relation to the teaching of other religions and worldviews.

The first of these two lenses (the fifth lens) '**Dialogue'** and is an exemplification of the Church's teaching on the relationship between Catholicism and other Christian traditions, between Catholicism and Judaism, between Catholicism and other religions, and between Catholicism and non-religious or atheistic worldviews. It is called '**dialogue'** because it focuses on the importance of dialogue as the only authentic way of living faithfully in a pluralistic world.

The second of these two lenses (the sixth lens) **Encounter**. In addition to understanding what the Church teaches about its relationship to other faiths, religions, and worldviews, pupils are also expected to engage in a discrete study of other faiths, religions, and worldviews, modelled on the concentric circles of Ecclesiam Suam ("His Church" is Pope Paul VI's first encyclical, published in 1964.) outlined above. This is partly because of the Church's own commitment to dialogue, partly also because to love our neighbour is also to respect and esteem his or her culture, and finally because to enter into dialogue is a means of learning how to live peaceably with difference. Therefore, as they progress through school, pupils will study:

- Other Christian denominations
- Judaism
- Islam
- Dharmic religions and pathways
- Other religions and worldviews, including non-religious worldviews.

It is important for the avoidance of a comparative approach, and all the risks of relativism this brings, that the study of other religions is a study of how those who profess that religion or worldview understand it on their own terms.

Ways of knowing set out the <u>skills</u> that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey. Whenever we know something, we always know it in

more than one way: we remember it, we critically assimilate it, and we put it into practice. All three are ways of coming to know the things that are the object of our study. The ways of knowing are an evolution of the Age-related Standards in Religious Education, which were themselves an evolution of the Levels of Attainment in Religious Education. The three ways of knowing are: understand, discern, and respond. They are represented in the programme of study by icons: head (understand), heart (discern), and hands (respond).

Expected outcomes are a synthesis of the content outlined in the knowledge lenses and the skills described in the ways of knowing. Each age-phase will have a prescribed set of outcomes that will indicate what pupils are expected to know, remember, and be able to do, using the language of the ways of knowing and applying it to the discrete knowledge within each lens.

Curriculum branches are the way this programme of study presents its model curriculum. The model curriculum presents the expected outcomes in six curriculum branches that correspond to the six half-terms of a school year. The model curriculum is rooted in the narrative of salvation history and leads pupils on a journey in each year of schooling that gives a sequence to the learning. As they revisit each branch in each year of school they come to a deeper understanding of its significance for Catholic belief and practice, which allows them to make links between the four knowledge lenses within the context of the narrative of salvation history.
The six curriculum branches are:

Term	Branches	Main Focus
Autumn 1	Creation and Covenant	Creation, human dignity, relationship with God
Autumn 2	Prophecy and Promise	Covenants, prophets, preparation for Christ
Spring 1	Galilee to Jerusalem	Jesus' ministry, discipleship and teaching
Spring 2	Desert to Garden	Lent, Holy Week, Passion and Resurrection
Summer 1	To the Ends of the Earth	Pentecost, mission of the Church, evangelisation
Summer 2	Dialogue and Encounter	Other religions, dialogue, respect and human flourishing

These branches are revisited throughout a pupil's journey through the school, enabling knowledge, understanding and religious literacy to develop progressively through a carefully sequenced curriculum rooted in Scripture, Catholic tradition, prayer, liturgy and Catholic Social Teaching.

Teaching and Learning
Teaching and learning strategies from across the curriculum can be appropriately adapted appropriately to inspire the learning needs of pupils.

Parish, Family and Community Partnerships
As Catholic schools within the Trust, we work in close partnership with parents, carers, parishes and the wider community to support children in encountering Christ and growing

in faith. In line with the Religious Education Directory (RED) 2023, we recognise parents as the first educators of their children in faith and seek to support families in nurturing a living relationship with God. Through a rich Religious Education curriculum, prayer, liturgy and collective worship, pupils are invited to deepen their understanding of the Catholic tradition and respond to God's call in their daily lives.

Our relationship with local parishes plays a vital role in the faith formation of our pupils. Through participation in Mass, liturgies, sacramental preparation and visits to places of worship, children experience the life of the Church and develop a deeper understanding of the sacraments and Catholic worship. Parish clergy and other faith leaders regularly support the spiritual life of the school, helping pupils recognise their place within the wider Christian community.

Parents, carers and families are warmly welcomed as partners in the life of the school and are invited to participate in Masses, liturgies, assemblies and other celebrations throughout the year. We keep families informed about Religious Education through curriculum information, newsletters, parent consultations and annual reports, enabling them to support their child's faith development and learning journey.

We value collaboration with Catholic and other local schools, diocesan networks and deanery communities. These partnerships enrich pupils' experiences, strengthen their sense of belonging to the wider Church and support successful transitions between phases of education.

Inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, we encourage pupils to live out their faith through service, solidarity and care for others. Throughout the year, children are given opportunities to support local, national and international charities, including organisations such as CAFOD and the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society. Through acts of charity, social action and stewardship, pupils learn to recognise the dignity of every person and develop a commitment to the common good, justice and compassionate service of others.

By working together as school, family, parish and community, we seek to create a faith\-filled environment in which every child can flourish, grow in wisdom and understanding, and respond to their vocation as a disciple of Christ.

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Differentiation

Our Catholic faith teaches that every person is uniquely gifted and equally loved by God. We are committed to recognising and celebrating the diverse needs, talents and backgrounds of all children, ensuring that learning is appropriately matched to enable every pupil to flourish, achieve success and develop a positive sense of self-worth.

Through inclusive teaching, representative resources and a curriculum that reflects the multicultural society in which we live, we promote respect, understanding and dignity for all. Children with special educational needs, as well as those who are particularly able in Religious Education, are supported and challenged through differentiated provision, ensuring that every child can grow in knowledge, spirituality and faith.

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability,

educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

Assessing and Recording Achievement
As a Catholic school our main concern is with the development of:

- the whole child;
- the formation of the Christian character,
- the ability to take their place in society;
- the fulfilment of academic potential.

To this end the profiling of the pupil's whole person development is as important as the assessment of academic outcomes. We use assessment against the expected end of year outcomes as a guide to pupil attainment and use this in line with our Assessment for learning policy.

Reporting to parents is through written reports where RE is a discrete subject and through discussion of the reports with parents. There are also opportunities to share progress in RE through Parents' Consultation Evenings.

Information Technology
All classes have access to laptops and other ICT equipment, which will be used to enhance R.E. teaching and learning.

Right of withdrawal from RE
Religious Education is a core subject within our Catholic school and forms a central part of the curriculum and the school's mission. We encourage all pupils to participate fully in Religious Education lessons, collective worship and the wider religious life of the school. Parents have the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from Religious Education. Any such request should be made in writing to the Executive Headteacher, who will meet with parents to discuss the nature of the request, clarify the aims and content of the Religious Education curriculum, and consider alternative arrangements where appropriate.
Where a pupil is withdrawn, the school will provide suitable supervision but is not required to provide alternative curriculum content. The school will continue to work in partnership with families to ensure that all pupils are respected, included and supported within the life of the school.

R.E. INSET and Formation
Catholic Teachers Certificate (CCRS)
All Teachers are encouraged to secure this qualification in R.E. It is expected that the R.E. Co-ordinator and all aspiring to Senior Leadership in Catholic schools will obtain this. Catholicity of the school. Is an integral part of our in service training, and a day of will be allocated to staff formation. Formatio and EducareM are also utilised for formation and training.

Role and Responsibility of Governors
Canon Law establishes that the Bishop of the Diocese of Brentwood is responsible for all Church-led education within his Diocese. It is the special responsibility of the Foundation

Governors and Trustees to ensure that the Religious Education reflects the Brentwood Diocesan Policy.

Extract from: The Instruments of Government of a Catholic School
"The provision of Religious Education for pupils at the school which is required to be included in the school's basic curriculum shall ... be under the control of the Governing Body and shall be in accordance with any provision of the Trust Deed relating to the school and the Rites, Practices and Doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church."

The organisation and implementation of the R.E. curriculum is entrusted to the Executive Headteacher and Head of School
Please see additional documents for guidance:

- Effective Feedback and Marking Policy (Currently under review)
- RSHE Policy
- Prayer & Liturgy Policy
- Pastoral Calendar
- Prayer Room Timetable
- R.E. Action Plan 2026-2027
- Remote Learning Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Primary R.E. Lead Job Description

'God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers' (1 Cor 12:28)

The role of the RE Leader along with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School, has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to Religious Education. Key areas of responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- To be responsible to the Executive Headteacher and Head of School and colleagues for the monitoring of teaching, assessment and planning of Religious Education based on the development of the children at each stage. Monitoring occurs in order to support staff and should include classroom observation, book scrutiny, planning, discussion with pupils and feeding back findings to staff and actioning next steps.
- To manage resources and facilities for Religious Education.
- To liaise with the Brentwood Diocesan Education Service particularly through attendance at the Leader meetings, and inform the Executive Headteacher and Head of School and colleagues of current standards and developments within Religious Education.
- Ensure that Religious Education is given statutory % of curriculum time.
- Encourage and support colleagues to obtain the CCRS certificate.
- Ensure new initiatives from The Vatican, Diocese and Parish are fully embraced and implemented within school life.
- Work collaboratively with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School to ensure that Prayer and Liturgy, remains central to the school's mission, including appropriate Feast days and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Ensure that Religious education contributes positively to the broad and balanced curriculum of the school through co-operation and dialogue with other subject leaders.
- To advise individual colleagues and induct new members of staff as required on the Religious Education process and teaching methods.
- To plan alongside the Executive Headteacher and Head of School the implementation plans for the RED and PLD to ensure compliancy by the target dates of September 2026 for RED and September 2025 for PLD.
- To facilitate in-house moderation of pupils' books every term.
- To track data and use this, in consultation with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School, to set realistic targets in RE.
- In consultation with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School to communicate with parents, governors and the parish community regarding issues associated with Religious Education.
- To maintain a Subject Leader's file containing:
    - The Religious Education Policy and Guidelines
    - Medium term plans which represent schemes of work in school.
    - Assessment and monitoring procedures for teaching and learning and evidence of that monitoring.
    - Action plan which details the roll out programme for implementation of the RED and PLD

- - A record of Staff Professional Development in RE - Data and current targets in RE.
- Working with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School and colleagues, to undertake a regular audit/review of Religious Education in line with the school development plan.
- To be familiar with the current (CSI) inspection framework and to consult with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School to complete the school's CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).
- To keep up to date with developments regarding the Religious Education Directory, Prayer and Liturgy Directory, Catholic Life and Mission Directory and attend relevant training.
- Review the RE policy and update when necessary.
- Liaise with appropriate outside Agencies both within the Diocese, Deanery, Parish and wider community to ensure the promotion of Religious Education within the school.
- The Post Holder is also required to:
    - Promote and support the Catholic ethos and mission statement of the school.
    - Undertake duties set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.
    - Undertake such particular duties which the Executive Headteacher and Head of School or in his/her absence the Senior Leadership Team may reasonably direct.

In any school, the engagement of the teacher with the young at their critical formative period should evoke a sense of privilege and awe. If Catholic schools are places of human formation, the task of the teacher cannot be underestimated since it takes the human to form the human. Time and again, the Church proclaims the irreplaceability of the teacher at the heart of education. They are essential to a school's success. RED 2023