



'To know You more clearly'

The Religious Education Directory for Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales.

'The importance of 'good Catholic schools' has not diminished over time. Whilst their educational and structural forms have had to adapt to political and social changes, the mission of Catholic schools remains unchanged. At the heart of that mission is good religious education. Similarly, while changes in culture and society have presented new challenges for Catholic school leaders and teachers, their role as religious educators remains as vital today as ever to the mission of Catholic schools.' (To know You more clearly Page V)

In a Catholic school, all pupils are invited to encounter Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as the living person at the heart of their study in a way that respects their individual religious identity. As well as seeking to assist parents with the education and religious formation of their children, Catholic schools strive also to be of service to society. Religious education plays its part in this endeavour by enabling all pupils *'to be confident and secure in their religious faith and knowledgeable and respectful of other religions,'* and so play *'a crucial role in building a cohesive society'* (Christ at the Centre, 2012, p.9).

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Part 1

The first section of part 1, with assistance from the latest Instruction from the Congregation for Catholic Education, outlines the current context of Catholic schools, alongside their nature and purpose and that of the religious education which is delivered as part of the curriculum. The second section of part 1 sets out the norms that follow from this outline, fulfilling the canonical duty the Bishops' Conference has for setting out the general norms for religious education in Catholic schools.¹ These build upon existing practice in dioceses and the norms already established by the Bishops' Conference in 1996, 2000, and 2012

Part 2

Part 2 presents a programme of study, including a model curriculum that seeks to present the teaching of religious education in a sequential and progressive form. The Catholic school, if it is thought of as a family with Church as 'mother', can naturally extend her embrace to include others than her 'own' children. (RED p3)

The Religious Education Directory is intended to ensure that the subject of religious faith is studied in the context of the faith community and reflects its missionary character. (RED p4)

In this way, the Catholic school becomes 'an educating community in which the human person can express themselves and grow in his or her humanity, in a process of relational dialogue, interacting in a constructive way, exercising tolerance, understanding different points of view and creating trust in an atmosphere of authentic harmony. Such a school is truly an educating community, a place of differences living together in harmony.' (RED p4)

The aims of religious education are:

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.

Outcome of religious education

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.

Religious education as the heart of the curriculum

1. Religious education is the core of the core 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 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.
5. In each year of sixth form schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 5% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

Compliance with the Religious Education Directory

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.

Implications of the primacy of religious education in the curriculum

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.
3. The religious education department in secondary schools is to have at least parity of status and resourcing with any other subject department. The department is to be given the highest possible status. This is to be reflected in the status and remuneration of the person leading that department.

Interpretation

'School' means a Catholic school as understood in canon 803, and includes all Catholic maintained schools, independent schools (including academies), non-maintained special schools, and sixth form colleges.

Transitional provisions

1. This Religious Education Directory replaces all previous norms from 1 September 2025.
2. Until 1 September 2025, in any aspect within the scope of this Directory, schools may choose to comply with this Directory or the Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012.
3. These transitional provisions do not derogate from any requirements which do not derive from this Religious Education Directory or the Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012. (RED p7)

'At the heart of every Catholic school is the person of Jesus Christ' p9

The structural elements of the programme of study

The programme of study for religious education in Catholic schools, presented in part 2 of the 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 of hear, believe, celebrate, and live (the study of the Catholic religion), dialogue, and encounter (the study of other religions and worldviews)*.

Ways of knowing set out the skills 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: creation and covenant, prophecy and promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, desert to garden, to the ends of the Earth, and dialogue and encounter.**

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Further information, including the model curriculum, can be found in the RE directory.

[Click here](#)

Model Curriculum

EYFS – Reception p63

Year 1 p78

Year 2 p96 – p114