



**NEWMAN
CATHOLIC TRUST**

HEART SPEAKS TO HEART

RE Policy

St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School

2026-27

Review

Review Cycle	Date of Policy	Reviewed by	Review Date
Every two years	May 2026	May 2027	

Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of LGC	Colleen Collett		12.05.26
Principal	Rachael James		12.05.26

Commitment to Equality:

The Trust and its schools are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

"Rooted in faith, we ignite a love of learning, foster inclusive education and empower every individual to achieve their utmost potential."

At the Newman Catholic Trust, we stand united in our unwavering mission to nurture a transformative educational experience, where every child is seen, valued, and cherished as a unique gift from God. Rooted in faith, we ignite a love for learning that awakens curiosity, sparks imagination, and fuels a lifelong journey of discovery.

Guided by the teachings of Christ and inspired by the profound wisdom of our namesake, Saint John Henry Newman, we strive to foster a community where inclusion is lived, diversity is embraced, and every individual is empowered to fulfil their highest potential. As Newman said, *"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."* We believe that education is a sacred journey of continual transformation—intellectually, spiritually, and personally. We believe that true education is not just about knowledge, but about shaping hearts and minds, cultivating resilience, and nurturing the whole person.

Our vision is simple yet profound: To be a beacon of **Hope** and **Excellence**, where pupils are not only academically accomplished but spiritually enriched and personally inspired to make a difference in the world.

In all that we do, we seek to embody our Trust's **HEART Values**, which define who we are and guide how we serve:

- **Hope** – Believing in the boundless potential of every child, and striving to build a future filled with possibility, courage and faith.
- **Excellence** – Pursuing the highest standards in learning, leadership and love, so that every action reflects our calling to greatness.
- **Authenticity** – Living truthfully and faithfully, ensuring our words, actions and decisions are grounded in integrity and the Gospel.
- **Responsibility** – Caring for one another and for creation with compassion, stewardship and a deep sense of duty to the common good.
- **Truth** – Seeking wisdom and understanding through Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Together, **Heart to Heart and Hand in Hand**, we build communities of faith and learning where every child flourishes — intellectually, spiritually and morally — for the greater glory of God.

Trust Policy Template Disclaimer

This document is a standard policy template produced by the Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust. All schools must personalise the sections highlighted for local context, including roles, responsibilities, procedures and operational details specific to their site. The Local Governing Committee is responsible for reviewing, adapting and formally adopting the final school version to ensure it reflects local practice while remaining aligned with Trust requirements and statutory guidance.

Religious Education Policy

Rationale

Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Clifton is required to teach, develop and resource Religious Education with the same commitment as any other core subject; *'Catholic religious education must ensure that Catholic pupils are 'initiated into the knowledge of the mystery of salvation'* (Ibid., CCE, 2022, §13) and become ever more aware of the faith into which they have been baptised.

At the same time, fidelity to its mission requires a Catholic school, and the religious education it provides, to form its pupils in the virtues that will foster their life in Christ and assist them to serve the Church and society; and, to lead *'its pupils to promote efficaciously the good of the earthly city and also prepare them for service in the spread of the Kingdom of God, so that by leading an exemplary apostolic life they become, as it were, a saving leaven in the human community'* (Gravissimum Educationis, Declaration on Christian Education, Second Vatican Council, 1965, §8 2023 Bishops' Conference of England and Wales)

Aims for Religious Education

At St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School, we aim:

1. **To present the fullness of the Catholic faith:** engaging pupils in a systematic study of the mystery of God; the life and teaching of Jesus Christ; the Church's teachings and central beliefs; and the relationship between faith and life.
2. **To deepen understanding and communication:** enabling pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and to communicate it effectively.
3. **To form moral conscience and critique culture:** presenting an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching so that pupils have a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society.
4. **To foster respect for other faiths and worldviews:** giving 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 beliefs differ from their own.
5. **To connect faith with life and culture:** developing pupils' critical faculties to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture, so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life and the modern world.
6. **To inspire personal meaning and spiritual growth:** stimulating pupils' imagination and provoking a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith, nurturing their spiritual development.
7. **To link RE with the wider curriculum:** enabling pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum, fostering a holistic education. (*General Norms, To Know You More Clearly, 2024*)

Religious Education Curriculum

Religious Education is a core subject which is central to the Catholic life of the school, based on the expectations and aims outlined in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory: *To know You more Clearly: The Religious Education Directory: To Know You More Clearly* (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2023, implemented from 2025)

In line with the expectations of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, **10% of curriculum time** in each class is dedicated to the explicit teaching of Religious Education. (This time allocation is separate from daily collective worship, prayer and liturgical celebrations.) In line with the requirements of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, a minimum of 10%

of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education in every class, and this entitlement is protected and monitored.

Structure

This is delivered through a process recognised in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The programme of study for Religious Education in Catholic schools, as presented in this directory, is built upon a framework with four structural elements: **knowledge lenses**, **ways of knowing**, **expected outcomes**, and **curriculum branches**

Knowledge lenses define 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* because they focus attention on particular areas of learning. These lenses divide the programme of study into four systematic subsections for the study of Catholicism, and two additional lenses for the study of other religions and worldviews. Together, they form the six knowledge lenses:

- *Hear – learning what God has revealed through Scripture and Tradition (God’s word and self-revelation).*
- *Believe – understanding the core doctrines and beliefs of the Catholic faith.*
- *Celebrate – studying how we worship (sacraments, liturgy, prayer, celebration of life in Christ).*
- *Live – exploring how Catholics live out their faith in daily life through virtues, moral choices, and service.*
- *Dialogue – learning about interreligious dialogue and what the Church teaches regarding people of other faiths.*
- *Encounter – gaining knowledge of other religions and worldviews through encountering their beliefs and practices.*

Ways of knowing describe the skills pupils are expected to develop as they progress through the curriculum. We come to know something in multiple ways: we remember it, critically reflect on it, and put it into practice. These dimensions of knowing shape the pupils’ engagement with the content.

The three *ways of knowing* are:

- *Understand* (represented by a **head** icon): *Intellectual understanding*: pupils remember, comprehend, and recall facts and teachings
- *Discern* (represented by a **heart** icon): *Spiritual and moral insight*: pupils reflect, interpret, and judge in light of faith
- *Respond* (represented by **hands**): *Applied living*: pupils apply what they have learned and put faith into action in their lives

These icons are used throughout the programme of study to help pupils engage with the content in a holistic and meaningful way.

Teachers ensure that RE activities and questions prompt pupils to **understand** the content, **discern** its meaning, and **respond** in terms of personal growth or action. These ways of knowing encourage holistic, meaningful engagement with the faith.

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.

The curriculum presents the expected outcomes through six **curriculum branches**, each corresponding to one of the six half-terms in the school year. It is rooted in the narrative of salvation history and guides pupils on a yearly journey that provides a coherent sequence to their learning. As pupils revisit each branch throughout their school years, they develop a deeper understanding of its significance for Catholic belief and practice. This process enables them to make meaningful connections between the four knowledge lenses, all within the overarching context of salvation history.

The six curriculum branches are:

1. **Creation and Covenant** – exploring themes of creation, God’s promises and the Old Testament foundations.
2. **Prophecy and Promise** – learning about the prophets and God’s promise of a Messiah.
3. **Galilee to Jerusalem** – following Jesus’s ministry and teachings, leading towards Holy Week.
4. **Desert to Garden** – reflecting on Jesus’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection (Lent to Easter).
5. **To the Ends of the Earth** – the mission of the Apostles, growth of the early Church, and our call to evangelise (Pentecost and beyond).
6. **Dialogue and Encounter** – dedicated time to learn about other faiths and world religions, fostering interfaith understanding and respect.

Time Allocation and Scheduling:

As noted, every class devotes at least 10% of their weekly timetable to Religious Education lessons. For example, in a 25-hour school week, this equates to approximately 2.5 hours of RE. RE lessons may be delivered in various formats (e.g., three to four lessons per week, or some longer dedicated sessions), as long as the overall time is met or exceeded. In addition, collective worship (prayers, liturgies, Masses and assemblies) occurs daily or weekly as appropriate, in addition to the taught RE curriculum. Collective worship is covered by our school and Trust’s Prayer & Liturgy Policy and complements the RE curriculum by nurturing pupils’ faith life; however, it does not replace curriculum RE. We ensure RE lessons are spread throughout the week to give regular encounters with the subject, and that they are protected from erosion by other activities. Fixed timetables (reviewed termly) ensure that the 10% minimum RE time is maintained for each class.

Curriculum Leadership and Review:

The RE Subject Lead (see RE Lead Role below) is responsible for overseeing the RE curriculum provision. They ensure that long-term and medium-term plans cover all required topics and that teachers have the resources and support to deliver lessons effectively. The curriculum is reviewed regularly (in light of any diocesan updates or new guidance) to ensure continued alignment with the Religious Education Directory and the Catholic Schools Inspectorate standards for curriculum. Adjustments are made as necessary to address any gaps or improve the sequence of learning. Changes to the RE curriculum are made in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and in reference to diocesan advisors, to maintain fidelity to Church teachings and the Trust’s high expectations.

The curriculum is also reviewed in light of the current Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) framework, ensuring that provision, leadership and outcomes in Religious Education meet inspection expectations.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage is tailored to the developmental needs of our youngest learners. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a specialism, needing careful planning and adaptations to ensure that every opportunity shared is a chance to learn and explore. The curriculum is holistic and teaching and learning weave into each area of learning.

Religious Education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the Religious Education aspects of the children’s work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. RE is included in ‘Understanding the World’ and ‘Personal, Social and Emotional Development’ areas of learning.

Curriculum & Approach in EYFS:

RE in EYFS often takes the form of circle time discussions, Bible stories, role play, songs, simple prayers, and hands-on activities (e.g., handling religious artefacts or visiting the prayer corner). The content follows the same *Curriculum Branches* as the rest of the school, but activities are age-appropriate and rooted in wonder and sensory experience. Teachers use simpler language and concrete examples to convey concepts. We employ a “See – Judge – Act” model with little ones: children see or experience something (a story, object or act of kindness), judge or reflect on what it means (with adult guidance), and act by responding (maybe through a simple prayer, a drawing, or copying the good example). This is an Early Years adaptation of the Ways of Knowing process, encouraging children even at 4-5 years old to begin understanding, reflecting, and responding in faith.

What will I see and hear to help me understand?
 How will I discover more?
 What can I do now?

Ways of Knowing		
Understand	Discern	Respond
See	Judge	Act
What will I see and hear to help me understand?	How will I discover more?	What can I do now?

Baseline and Ongoing Assessment in EYFS: At the start of Reception (or Nursery entry), teachers conduct an informal baseline observation of each child’s religious literacy – for example, noting whether a child recognizes simple religious words, signs, or objects (like the sign of the cross, a church, a Bible, etc.). This helps us understand their starting point in religious knowledge and experience. Through the year, teachers gather evidence of each child’s learning in RE (comments during play, artwork, role-play, etc.) as part of their learning journey profiles. At the end of Reception, we assess each child’s progress in RE-related Early Learning Goals. We do **not** formally level children in RE at this age, but we ensure they have made progress in their ability to talk about God, Jesus, themselves and others with respect and curiosity. The baseline and end-of-EYFS observations are compared to show growth, particularly in the child’s familiarity with religious stories, language, and simple concepts. This gentle assessment feeds into planning for transition to Year 1, so the next teacher knows each child’s readiness for the more structured RE curriculum in Key Stage 1.

Planning

The Planning of Religious Education at St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School follows recommendations from Clifton Diocese.

The ‘**Day by Day**’ resources, created by the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and CES approved, is used as the core programme, supplemented by resources developed by the

Schools and Colleges Departments in the Dioceses of Clifton and Plymouth. Planning is tailored to meet the specific needs of pupils, ensuring that learning is accessible and engaging.

Adaptive Teaching: Teachers plan RE lessons with differentiation in mind. This means tasks are adapted or scaffolded so that those with learning difficulties can succeed and those who are more able are stretched. Examples of differentiation in RE include:

- Using visual aids, videos, and storytelling for pupils who struggle with text, so they can access scripture and concepts through multiple modalities.
- Providing key vocabulary with symbols or pictures for children who have speech, language or communication needs.
- Allowing alternative ways of responding: for instance, a child with writing difficulties might draw a response to a Bible story or give an oral answer recorded by the teacher, rather than writing a paragraph.
- Breaking tasks into smaller steps and using concrete examples to explain abstract concepts (particularly helpful for children with cognitive delays or younger developmental age).
- Grouping pupils strategically (mixed-ability grouping so peers can support one another, or small guided groups with adult help for those who need extra support during an activity).

Support for SEND Pupils: Pupils on the SEND register have their needs detailed in support plans or EHC plans, and teachers use this information to inform their RE teaching. For example, if a pupil has autism and benefits from routine, the teacher will ensure RE lessons follow a predictable structure each time. If a pupil has an emotional or behavioral difficulty, topics are introduced sensitively (and, if needed, parents are consulted, e.g., when discussing loss or death in a Saints or All Souls lesson). Teaching Assistants (TAs) play a valuable role in RE lessons by facilitating participation – they might scribe for a child, use prompting questions to keep them engaged, or manage resources to reduce anxiety for certain pupils. We also use multi-sensory approaches (like Godly Play techniques, or tangible objects such as holding a stone when talking about building on rock/sand, etc.) which often help pupils with SEND to connect with the content.

Gifted and Talented in RE: Inclusion also means challenging our more able or high-achieving pupils in RE. These students are given opportunities for deeper inquiry – for instance, researching a topic in greater depth, reading additional scripture passages, or tackling “big questions” that require higher-order thinking. We encourage them to take leadership in discussions or perhaps to mentor peers (e.g., directing a short dramatisation of a parable). This ensures that they too are fully engaged and not held back by a one-size-fits-all lesson.

Teaching of Other Faiths and Worldviews

In accordance with the Catholic Bishops’ directives and our mission to foster respect and understanding, St Nicholas Catholic Primary School includes the **study of other religions and worldviews** as a mandatory and important part of our Religious Education curriculum. The Catholic Church calls us not only to deepen our own faith but also to “raise pupils’ awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them” catholiceducation.org.uk. Pope Francis and our bishops remind us that genuine faith is never dismissive of others; rather, we are called to love our neighbors of all religions and to promote harmony in a diverse society.

Depth and Respect: When teaching other faiths, our approach is factual, respectful, and age-appropriate. We use approved resources (often provided by the diocese or trusted publishers) to ensure accuracy and sensitivity. We might invite **guest speakers** or parents of those faiths to share their experiences, or take pupils on visits to places of worship (e.g., a

synagogue or mosque) if feasible. These encounters are done in a spirit of mutual respect and learning. Students are encouraged to ask questions and appreciate both similarities and differences with Catholic Christianity. For instance, in learning about Judaism, children discover that Jesus was Jewish, that we share much of the same scripture (Old Testament), and they learn about Shabbat or Passover with respect and interest. In learning about Islam, they might explore the Five Pillars, hear a passage from the Quran, and discuss the importance of prayer – noting common values like charity and fasting that also appear in our faith.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity: Our inclusive approach extends to ensuring that RE lessons respect and reflect the diversity of our school community. While we teach from the Catholic tradition, we acknowledge that not all pupils may be Catholic or Christian. We handle this by focusing on the educational aspect of RE – inviting all to learn about Catholicism, participate in discussions, and reflect on values, **without coercion**. Alternative viewpoints or questions are handled respectfully. For instance, if a child from a different faith shares how their practice is similar or different, we validate their contribution and compare it to Catholic practice in a respectful way. **No child is ever assessed on personal belief**, only on knowledge and skills (a non-Catholic child can achieve just as well in RE by demonstrating understanding of Catholic teaching and contributing thoughtful reflections). We ensure that classroom displays, resources, and examples sometimes include a range of cultures and ethnicities (e.g., images of Jesus and Mary from different cultural representations) so that all feel seen.

Assessment

Assessment in Religious Education is related to the concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed through learning about and learning from religion. Assessment establishes what children know, understand, can do and how to get there. It offers support and motivation to the learner. It does not assess spirituality or the practice of faith.

Teachers use the RED expected end of age-phase outcomes to inform them of pupil progress. Each curriculum branch contains a range of activities that focus on different attainment targets. These are recognised in medium- and short-term planning formats. At the end of each topic, teachers make informal assessments on their planning sheet to highlight those children who have exceeded expectations and those who are working towards expectations. Assessments are informed through the ways of knowing and driver words. Moderation of RE assessments is carried out throughout the year within school and across Trust schools. The Religious Education lead is informed of pupil progress through learning walks, book looks, and pupil voice. Monitoring outcomes are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the Religious Education link governor.

Pupil progress meetings are held throughout the year for each class with the Principal. Following these meetings, children may be identified for targeted support to ensure they make at least expected progress from their starting points in Religious Education.

Recording and Tracking Progress: At the end of each term, teachers make an **informal summative assessment** of each pupil's achievement. We do not use national curriculum "levels" in RE; instead, we indicate whether each pupil is **working towards, at,** or **exceeding** the expected outcomes for that unit/age. Teachers often highlight or annotate their medium-term planning or class tracking sheets to show which pupils did not yet meet the expectation and which exceeded it. These assessments are informed by evidence gathered (written work, contributions, etc.) and guided by the "driver words" from the Ways of Knowing (e.g., *name, describe, give reasons, make links, reflect, etc.*). For pupils not yet meeting

expectations, teachers plan how to address gaps or misconceptions in subsequent lessons. For pupils exceeding, teachers note opportunities to provide greater challenge.

Formal testing is not common in primary RE, but at the end of key stages (End of KS1, End of KS2), the RE Lead may facilitate a more comprehensive review (such as a moderated portfolio of work or a pupil interview) to assess cumulative knowledge and understanding. We also pay attention to pupils' religious literacy (their ability to use religious vocabulary and explain concepts) as a sign of progress.

Moderation: To ensure consistency and accuracy of assessment in RE, **moderation** is carried out both **within the school** and **across the Trust**. Internally, RE book scrutinies are conducted termly where teachers, alongside the RE Lead, review samples of work from each class, comparing them to the expected standards. They discuss whether a piece of work meets, exceeds, or falls short of the expectation and agree on what evidence demonstrates each level. Across the Newman Catholic Trust, RE Leads and teachers meet (or share work samples) to moderate assessments collaboratively. This might occur in joint training days or cluster meetings. The moderation process helps to standardize our understanding of the standards in the RE Directory and ensures that a "working at expected" in one school is equivalent in another. It also provides valuable professional development as teachers share insights and effective assessment approaches.

Reporting: Results of RE assessments are reported to parents as part of annual reports and at parent consultations. We describe pupils' achievement in RE, often in qualitative terms (for example: "*[Child] has an excellent knowledge of Bible stories and can thoughtfully reflect on their meaning. She is working at the expected level for RE, and particularly excels in making links between Jesus' teachings and how we should treat others.*"). Any concerns about a pupil's progress in RE are communicated to parents, just as we would for English or Maths, and support strategies are discussed.

Use of Assessment to Improve Learning: Most importantly, assessment in RE is used to inform teaching. Teachers use questioning and mini-plenaries within lessons to address misconceptions immediately. After a unit, they review which parts pupils found challenging and adjust future plans or provide re-teaching opportunities. The RE Lead looks at whole-class and whole-school assessment information to identify trends or areas for development (e.g., if across classes, pupils are less confident in the *Celebrate* lens, we might do more work on understanding liturgy and sacraments). These insights feed into the **RE action plan** and staff training focus for the year.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education ensure that the subject maintains a high profile and that teaching and learning are continuously improved. At St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School, RE monitoring is a shared responsibility involving the RE Subject Lead, the Senior Leadership Team, the **RE Link Governor**, and the Trust's leadership, in alignment with the expectations of the **Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI)** framework which emphasizes effective self-evaluation of Catholic life and RE.

Key monitoring activities include:

- **Lesson Observations:** The RE Lead and/or members of SLT periodically observe RE lessons across different classes. The purpose is to see the quality of teaching and pupil engagement in RE, and to ensure consistency with our agreed schemes and policies. Constructive feedback is given to teachers, highlighting good practice and any areas for development (just as would be done for observations in other subjects). RE lesson observations are typically scheduled at least once a year for each teacher, or more frequently if a teacher is new to teaching RE or if previous observations indicated a need for support.

- **Learning Walks:** Less formal than full observations, learning walks are short visits to classrooms (often by the RE Lead, Headteacher, or a Trust representative) to snapshot what RE learning looks like on a day-to-day basis. During a learning walk, monitors may check classroom RE displays, see the children's engagement, and talk briefly to pupils about what they are learning. These often take place during key times, such as early in a new topic or near a religious celebration, to gauge how well the curriculum is being implemented.
- **Book Scrutinies ("Book Looks"):** The RE Lead conducts book scrutinies each term, sampling RE books/folders from every class. They look for evidence of: adequate curriculum coverage (e.g., are all classes covering the designated topics?), quality and quantity of work (is RE work as well-presented and substantial as work in other subjects?), differentiation, and effective marking and feedback. The RE Lead will note strengths (like creative tasks, or strong pupil understanding shown in work) and areas to improve (perhaps an inconsistency in marking or a gap in curriculum content) and discuss these with staff in a supportive way. Book looks are sometimes done in conjunction with the Link Governor or alongside other schools in the Trust for moderation.
- **Pupil Voice:** We value what our pupils say about RE. The RE Lead or senior staff will periodically hold pupil voice interviews or groups (e.g., meeting with a small group of children from different year groups) to ask about their experience in RE. Sample questions might be: *"What have you enjoyed learning in RE recently?" "Can you tell me something interesting you've learned about Jesus or another faith?" "How does your teacher help you if you find something difficult in RE?"* and *"Do you think RE is important? Why?"* The pupils' feedback helps us judge how RE is perceived and whether it's engaging and relevant to them. We often get valuable insights – for example, children might say they loved a particular activity or that they wish to learn more about a certain topic, which can inform future planning.
- **Assessment Data Analysis:** Although RE assessment is largely qualitative, we do keep track of pupils working below or above expectations (as noted in **Assessment**). The RE Lead compiles an overview of each class's achievement in RE after each term or two. This might be in the form of a simple grid showing, for example, that in Year 4, five pupils are working towards expectations, 20 at expected, and 5 exceeding (or similar data). We compare these patterns to other core subjects and consider reasons for any discrepancies. If a significant number of pupils are not meeting expectations in a class (or across a key stage), we investigate why – it could indicate a need for teacher CPD, resource issues, or external factors. Conversely, a high number of exceeding pupils might indicate exemplary practice that can be shared.
- **Reporting to Governors and Trust:** The RE Link Governor (see below) meets at least termly with the RE Lead and/or Headteacher to discuss findings from monitoring. The RE Lead prepares a brief **RE report** for the Local Governing Body (LGB) and for the Newman Trust's Catholic Life committee if applicable. This report includes: curriculum developments, outcomes of monitoring (strengths and areas for improvement), pupil achievement, and notable events (like retreats, masses, etc.). Governors use this to ask questions and provide support or challenge. Additionally, as part of the **Catholic Schools Inspection** readiness, the school keeps documentation of its self-evaluation in RE (often in a SEF document outlining how we meet each aspect of the CSI framework, including the quality of RE curriculum, teaching, and outcomes).
- **Action Planning:** Following monitoring activities, action points are identified. For example, if book scrutiny shows a lack of depth in pupils' written responses at a certain year, the action might be to provide training on asking higher-order questions in RE. If pupil voice reveals that children want more opportunities for drama in RE, the action

could be to share strategies for role-play in RE at the next staff meeting. These actions are recorded in the RE subject action plan or the School Improvement Plan (SIP) under the Catholic Life/RE section, and the RE Lead oversees their implementation.

Overall, through vigilant monitoring and evaluation, we ensure that Religious Education at St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School remains a **high-quality provision**. We strive to maintain high standards and to be ever ready for both internal review and external inspection (CSI). Monitoring outcomes are **shared with all staff** so that successes are celebrated (e.g., "Year 5's use of Bibles was exemplary – well done!") and so that all teachers learn from any identified best practices or issues (e.g., "Let's all ensure we date every RE lesson and have a learning objective visible, as a couple of classes missed that"). This collaborative approach to monitoring fosters a sense of collective responsibility for excellence in RE across our school.

Role of the Religious Education Lead

Each school in the Newman Catholic Trust designates a **Religious Education Lead** (also known as the RE Coordinator or RE Subject Leader) who has the crucial role of driving excellence in Religious Education and Catholic life. At St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School, the RE Lead is a member of the teaching staff with a passion for the faith and strong subject knowledge, entrusted with the following key responsibilities:

- **Curriculum Leadership:** The RE Lead oversees the planning and implementation of the RE curriculum across the school. They ensure that the long-term curriculum map aligns with the Religious Education Directory (2025) and diocesan guidelines. They support teachers in medium- and short-term planning, providing frameworks, model plans, or resources as needed. If teachers have questions about content or how to teach a particular doctrine or Bible story, the RE Lead offers guidance or sources the answer (sometimes consulting the diocesan RE Adviser or Trust's Director of Catholic Education). They also lead the introduction of any new RE initiatives or programmes in the school.
- **Resource Management:** The RE Lead oversees RE resources. They audit and order resources, manage the RE budget and make sure each class has what it needs for effective teaching.
- **Professional Development of Staff:** A key part of the RE Lead's role is to build staff confidence and expertise in teaching RE. They organise and/or deliver CPD (Continuing Professional Development) on RE and Catholic ethos. This could include leading a staff meeting on the new RE Directory content, arranging training on Godly Play, or sending teachers on diocesan courses (e.g., *CCRS – Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* courses or other relevant in-service training). New staff and non-Catholic staff are particularly supported with orientation sessions about how RE is taught and the expectations (for instance, explaining what effective RE feedback looks like, or how to lead a class prayer/organise a class mass etc.). The RE Lead might also facilitate peer observations (e.g., having a teacher observe another's excellent RE lesson to learn strategies).
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** As outlined in the **Monitoring** section, the RE Lead conducts lesson observations, book scrutinies and pupil interviews in RE. They keep records of these monitoring activities and report findings to the Principal (if not the RE Coordinator) and governors. If any areas for improvement are identified, the RE Lead creates an action plan and works with colleagues to implement changes. They also track pupil progress in RE and ensure assessment is carried out properly by all teachers. In preparation for Catholic School Inspections (CSI), the RE Lead often leads the compilation of evidence and the writing of the school's self-evaluation (CSED) for the RE aspects. Essentially, the RE Lead is the "go-to" person for knowing how well RE is being taught and learned at the school.

- **Catholic Life and Collective Worship:** While distinct from curriculum RE, the RE Lead often has a broader role in promoting the Catholic ethos. They might coordinate liturgies, Masses, charity events, and the sacramental preparation liaison with the parish. They ensure that the liturgical calendar is celebrated in school (organising assemblies for Ash Wednesday, Rosary in October, etc.) and that displays reflect the seasons. They may lead a Chaplaincy Team of pupils if one exists. All these contribute to a vibrant environment in which RE teaching is naturally supported by the lived faith of the school.
- **Liaison with Leadership and Governors:** The RE Lead meets regularly with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss RE matters. They ensure the Principal (if not already the RE Coordinator) is kept up-to-date with successes and any needs in RE. They also prepare reports for the Local Governing Committee (often via the Link Governor) and attend governor meetings when RE or Catholic Life is on the agenda or when appropriate/requested. For example, they might present an annual report on RE including pupil achievement, the impact of any new initiatives and upcoming plans. This ensures that the governors can fulfil their role in overseeing the Catholic character and academic standards of the school.
- **Trust and Diocesan Links:** Being part of a Catholic Trust and diocese, the RE Lead engages with networks beyond the school. They attend termly diocesan RE coordinators' meetings and any Trust-wide RE network meetings. Through these, they stay abreast of new developments (such as the introduction of the RE Directory 2025, changes in CSI inspection criteria or new recommended resources). They bring back ideas and share our school's practices with others, fostering a collaborative spirit. The RE Lead also may invite diocesan advisors to visit the school for support visits or validation of our RE quality; organising such visits is part of their role.
- **Role Modeling and Enthusiasm:** The RE Lead is expected to model good practice by teaching consistently high-quality RE in their own classroom and demonstrating enthusiasm for the faith. They lead by example in attending parish/school religious events, encouraging prayer, and treating all in a Christ-like manner. This witness inspires staff and pupils alike and keeps the importance of RE and faith formation at the forefront of school life.

In summary, the RE Lead's role is multi-faceted and vital. They act as **champion** and **guardian** of the RE curriculum, ensuring it remains true to Church teaching and effective in its delivery. They provide both **strategic direction** and **day-to-day support**, so that every teacher can confidently teach RE and every pupil can flourish in their religious understanding and spiritual growth. The leadership and dedication of the RE Lead help ensure that St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School not only meets its statutory and diocesan obligations in RE, but truly excels in providing a rich faith-based education.

Right of withdrawal from Religious Education

St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School is a Catholic school; as such, Religious Education and Collective Worship are central to our ethos and daily life. We warmly encourage **all** students on roll to participate fully in these aspects of school life. It is our experience that pupils of all faiths or none can benefit from and contribute to the religious education we provide, which includes learning about a range of traditions and developing personal moral and spiritual understanding.

However, we acknowledge that parents (or guardians) have a legal right to withdraw their child from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship, either wholly or in part, should they wish. This right is enshrined in Section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and is applicable to all schools in England, including Voluntary Aided Catholic schools and

academies. According to guidance from the Catholic Education Service, *"Parents of pupils in voluntary aided schools and academies are permitted, by law, to request that their child be withdrawn from receiving all or part of Religious Education and/or Collective Worship provided at the school"*

Procedure for Withdrawal: If a parent/carer is considering withdrawal, we ask that they first contact the Principal to discuss any concerns or clarify the nature of our RE curriculum. Often, once parents understand what we teach and how (especially that we cover other faiths respectfully and that we do not force personal practice), they are reassured. We aim to resolve worries through dialogue – for instance, a non-Catholic parent might worry their child will be confused or made to pray in a way they're not accustomed; we can explain our inclusive approach and how children's own backgrounds are respected. If after discussion the parent still wishes to withdraw, we will ask for a **written request** to withdraw, specifying whether it's from RE lessons, collective worship or both, and whether it's a full or partial withdrawal (e.g., some parents might accept their child learning about Christianity as history/literature but not want them to participate in prayer – we need clarity on the scope). This written record helps the school plan accordingly and remains on file.

Arrangements for Withdrawn Pupils: The school has a duty to supervise any pupils withdrawn from RE or worship but is not required to provide alternative RE teaching. In practice, if a child is withdrawn from RE lessons, they will be given independent work to do (which might be reading or work from another subject, to avoid them missing out academically). They may sit in another class or another part of the school, under supervision, during the RE lesson.

For Collective Worship (like assemblies or class prayer), a withdrawn child might remain with the class but not be required to actively participate (some parents prefer this passive presence), or the child might be asked to sit in the school office or with a support staff member elsewhere. We base this on the parent's preference and the child's comfort – some families rather their child not be singled out, so they allow attendance but not involvement (we might have the child stand respectfully but not sing or say prayers). We are flexible as long as safety is maintained.

Impact of Withdrawal: We gently remind parents that removing a child from RE means they will not receive instruction in the school's most foundational subject, which could leave gaps in their understanding of history, culture and the ethos shared by their peers. However, we respect their right. We also make it clear that if a child is withdrawn, the responsibility for providing them religious education (of their own faith or other preference) becomes the parents'. The school will not provide an alternative religious syllabus.