



Thomond Primary School

School Plan

for

Religious Education

'As a school with a Catholic ethos, we promote the dignity, self-esteem, and holistic development of each individual. We welcome and respect people of all beliefs'

Mission Statement:

Rooted in our Christian tradition, Thomond Primary School strives to work in partnership with parents and community to provide a holistic and high-quality education in a safe, caring and nurturing environment; where everybody is respected, valued and cherished in order that each child may have the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential.

Vision and Aims

Vision

In the Irish context the educational vision of the Church is pastoral in nature. It acknowledges the complementary, connected, and distinct roles of the home, school, and parish community in the faith education of children. According to this vision, parents are the primary and first educators of their children in faith, with home being the first school of faith. The parish is where children learn to worship, where they meet Jesus Christ in sacramental celebrations and where they experience and share in the mission of the Church.

Religious education in the Catholic primary school encompasses two distinct yet complementary dimensions: the educational dimension and the faith formation dimension.

- **The educational dimension** is based on the formal curriculum, emphasizing the values and teachings of the Catholic Church. It focuses on teaching children the skills of spiritual, moral, and religious literacy. The Religious Education outcomes at each level in the curriculum reflect this dimension.
- **The faith formation dimension** focuses on shaping children's character through the virtues and values of Jesus, supporting their faith development, and helping them understand what it means to be a member of the Church. The faith formation goals in the curriculum (pp. 134-143) reflect and support this aspect.

A key part of this vision is how we respond to religious and cultural change in our society. Catholic schools are places where everyone is respected and valued. This includes recognizing the diverse levels of faith among our teachers and students, as well as those students who belong to other faiths or hold different views on life.

Aims

The aim of Religious Education is to help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with, exploration and celebration of their Catholic faith (Veritas, 2015).

The purpose of this Religious Education policy is to:

- Ensure that we understand and promote Religious Education in a Catholic primary school, not merely as one subject among many, but as the foundation of the entire educational experience (Veritas, 2015).
- Provide formal teaching on beliefs, values, and practices that equip children to freely and intelligently express their personal faith within their family, the Church, and wider society (based on *Share the Good News*).
- Foster an appreciation for the richness of all religious traditions, especially those present in our school community, and create a framework to engage with these traditions.
- Offer appropriate Religious Education for the diverse levels of faith commitment present in our classrooms.

- Provide greater clarity regarding the aims, procedures, and roles related to Religious Education in the school.
- Support all staff members in teaching Religion effectively.
- Develop strategies that address the needs of children from different faiths and life stances in relation to Religious Education. Thomond Primary School welcomes and respects students of all beliefs.

About our Catholic School

Our school is a Catholic school under the patronage of the bishop of the Limerick Diocese, Bishop Brendan Leahy.

Our School Parish: Kileely, Limerick

Our Local Church: St. Lelia's Church, Kileely Road, Kileely, Limerick, V94 X8W6

Priests of the Parish: Canon Dónal McNamara & Fr. Pat Seavers

Chaplain: Canon Dónal McNamara

Religious Coordinator, TPS: Kate O'Brien

School Environment

Visitors, parents, and children are aware that we are a Catholic school through the following:

- Our school's Mission Statement is shared with parents and staff as part of the welcome information and is regularly reviewed.
- Religious symbols and visible signs of our Catholic faith are present in public areas throughout the school.
- Each classroom includes a Prayer Space that reflects the liturgical seasons.
- We celebrate our Catholic Ethos through monthly assemblies with prayer, school masses, and Catholic Schools Week.
- The *Grow in Love* programme is taught across all class levels.
- We maintain ongoing communication with the local priest, who serves as the school's chaplain. Regular meetings and visits are scheduled throughout the year with the Principal, sacrament class teachers, and Religious Education Coordinator.
- Missionary awareness is fostered through our school's annual support and engagement with charities such as Trócaire.
- Social justice awareness is promoted through our school's involvement with organisations like Focus Ireland and other charitable agencies.

Prayer in our school

- Communal prayer times and liturgical celebrations are scheduled throughout the school year, such as the opening and closing Mass or Prayer Service, Advent and Lent celebrations, Catholic Schools Week events, and participation in Masses celebrated by our Bishop, Bishop Brendan Leahy.
- Important Feast Days are celebrated throughout the Church year, including St. Brigid's Day and St. Patrick's Day.
- Each school assembly begins with prayer.
- Every classroom includes dedicated prayer time at the start of the day and before students leave for home.
- Students are familiar with their formal prayers and Mass responses, as outlined in the curriculum and the school's prayer list.
- Students have opportunities to experience different forms of prayer, including meditation, spontaneous prayer, and silent prayer during candle lighting on Grow in Love.

Timetabling and Teaching Staff

Our school believes that Religious Education is a core subject in a Catholic primary school and forms the foundation of the entire educational process. As such:

- Religious Education is allocated 2 hours per week in each classroom from Stage 2 to Stage 4 (1st to 6th class), and 1 hour and 40 minutes per week in Stage 1 classrooms (Junior and Senior Infants).
- The Religious Education topics from the *Grow in Love* programme are included in all teachers' Fortnightly Notes and *Cúntas Míosuil*.
- All teachers have access to the '*Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*'.
- Teachers are provided with the necessary *Grow in Love* materials to teach Religious Education in their classrooms.
- The Religious Education Coordinator is responsible for distributing all resources and relevant communications from the Diocesan Advisor's office.
- Teachers are regularly offered opportunities for ongoing professional development in Religious Education.

Classroom Environment

- Each classroom includes a dedicated Prayer Space that reflects the changing liturgical seasons. These spaces often feature students' work and religious symbols.
- Every Prayer Space contains a Bible (specifically, the Catholic Children's Bible).
- Classrooms also include various symbols of the Catholic faith, such as a holy water font, religious icons or images, cross or crucifix.

Classroom Teaching

In delivering the approved Religious Education programme *Grow in Love*, published by Veritas for use in the diocese, teachers support children in developing the skills of moral, spiritual, and religious literacy. This enables a deeper understanding of their Christian faith and helps them to respond in a mature and informed way to God's invitation to relationship. According to the curriculum (pages 35–37), religious literacy includes the skills of understanding, communicating, and participating. These are complemented by spiritual literacy and inter-religious literacy.

The following measures support the successful implementation of this programme:

- All teachers hold a recognised qualification in Religious Education.
- The school uses the officially approved textbooks and workbooks from the *Grow in Love* programme.
- Additional resources include:
 - Twinkl worksheets, displays, posters, prayer cards
 - YouTube stories, prayers, educational videos, music
 - Religious-themed books from the local library and school libraries
- To strengthen the link between home and school, each class uses the 'At Home' page from the *Grow in Love* textbooks on a weekly basis, helping parents stay informed about their child's learning in Religious Education.
- Children gain a deep understanding of their Christian faith by exploring key elements such as:
 - The mystery of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Church/Kingdom
 - Creation, Mary, Eternal Life, and other religious traditions

These topics are explored in line with the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*:

- Level 1: pages 52–54
- Level 2: pages 66–67

- Level 3: pages 84–88
- Level 4: pages 106–113
- Children are familiar with key Bible stories.
- They also develop knowledge of the liturgical life of the Church, including:
 - The structure of the Mass
 - Seasons of the liturgical year
 - Meeting Jesus in liturgy, sacraments, and prayer
 - The seven sacraments

As indicated in the curriculum:

- Level 1: pages 58–80
- Level 2: pages 73–77
- Level 3: pages 93–99
- Level 4: pages 119–125
- Children learn about human dignity, Catholic social teaching, RSE in a Christian context, the two-fold commandment and the Ten Commandments. They understand that following Jesus involves living according to Gospel values and that Christian moral life is an expression and consequence of relationship with God.

As detailed in the curriculum:

- Level 1: page 42
- Level 2: pages 78–80
- Level 3: pages 100–102
- Level 4: pages 126–130
- The faith formation element of Religious Education is recognised as central, nurturing virtues and values rooted in the teachings of Jesus, supporting children's spiritual development and their sense of belonging to the Church.
- Religious Education is meaningfully integrated across the wider primary curriculum.
- Children are given regular opportunities to memorise traditional prayers, Mass responses, and hymns as set out in the *Grow in Love* programme.
- Provision is made for children with Special Educational Needs, in line with the Special Education Curriculum Guidelines, within the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (pages 146–154).

Sacramental Preparation

- Children are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation in partnership with parents and parish.
- Teachers involved in Confirmation preparation are familiar with the Diocesan Guidelines and together with school and parish leadership ensure that these guidelines are followed
- It is acknowledged that children's understanding of the sacraments deepens over time, both during their primary years and beyond.
- The school supports the ongoing conversation at parish and diocesan level about how best to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation
- In partnership with parents and the parish, the school strives to ensure that all sacramental celebrations are authentic, sacred encounters with Jesus Christ.

Partnership in Religious Education

Home

The school actively encourages parental involvement in their children's Religious Education by:

- Establishing a weekly connection between home and school through Religious Education activities.

- Informing parents about the prayers their children are learning and encouraging them to pray together at home.
- Inviting parents to participate in prayer services, assemblies, Mass, and other religious events, including celebrations like Catholic Schools Week and Grandparents Day.
- Helping parents better understand what their children are learning in Religious Education by using the 'At Home' page in the *Grow in Love* textbooks as a consistent weekly link between school and home.

Parish

- Strong relationships between school and parish leadership are actively fostered and encouraged.
- Meetings are held between the Religion Coordinator and parish leadership to plan classroom visits, ceremony preparations, church visits, the celebration of feast days, key liturgical events in the school calendar, and sacramental preparation and celebrations.
- The school supports the parish in delivering parish-led sacramental preparation, including enrolment ceremonies for First Holy Communion and other key milestones.

Inclusion of pupils of different faiths

Thomond Primary School warmly welcomes and respects pupils of all faiths and beliefs. We are committed to being a hospitable, open, and inclusive school community. We continually strive to reflect best practices in promoting the inclusion of all pupils.

- Our Admissions Policy and Mission Statement clearly state that we are a Catholic school under the patronage of the local Catholic bishop.
- Parents enrolling their children are made aware that the Catholic ethos of our school is embedded throughout the entire school day, not limited to the formal Religious Education (RE) class.
- Our Admissions Policy affirms our commitment to diversity and inclusion, and we believe that the presence of children from different backgrounds enriches our school community.
- For parents who wish for their children to opt out of formal Religious Education, the school offers one or more of the following alternatives:
 - If alternative supervision is not available, pupils of other faiths remain in the classroom and take part in an educationally appropriate activity during the RE lesson.
 - When the class visits the church or engages in sacramental preparation, pupils of other faiths may stay in another classroom and participate in an educationally appropriate activity.

Some useful texts

Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (Veritas: Irish Episcopal Conference, 2015)

Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland (Veritas: Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010)

The Irish Catholic Catechism for Adults (Veritas: Irish Episcopal Conference, 2014)

Catholic Schools in a Changing Ireland: Sharing Good Practice on Inclusion of All Pupils (Catholic Schools Partnership: 2015)

Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2023-2026

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

This plan will be supported, developed, and implemented by all staff members. The Principal and the relevant post holder will coordinate its progress, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report to staff on findings. The plan will be ratified by the Board of Management and will be monitored and evaluated regularly or as required.

Timeframe

This plan is currently being implemented

Review

Roles and Responsibilities

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Religious Education curriculum in the school. The Principal and relevant post holder are responsible for co-ordinating this review.


Timeframe

This plan will be reviewed regularly or as required.

Ratification and Communication

This plan was formally approved by the Board of Management of Thomond Primary School on 17th June 2025.

The plan will be made available to all members of the school community upon request and will also be published on the school website.

Signed: 

Date: 17/06/2025

Michael Condon
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Appendix***Prayers & Songs from the Grow in Love Programme being taught in TPS***

Class	Prayers in the Programme	Prayers taught in our school	Hymn/Songs
Junior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Glory be to the Father • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Grace Before Meals • Grace After meals • Prayer to Guardian Angel 		
Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Glory be to the Father • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Grace Before Meals • Grace After meals • Prayer to Guardian Angel • Our Father • Hail Mary 		

First Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Glory be to the Father • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Grace Before Meals • Grace After meals • Prayer to Guardian Angel • Our Father • Hail Mary • Act of Sorrow • Prayer for Forgiveness • Prayer After Forgiveness • Prayer Before Communion • Prayer After Communion • Prayers of the Mass 		
Second Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Glory be to the Father • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Grace Before Meals • Grace After meals • Prayer to Guardian Angel • Act of Sorrow • Prayer for Forgiveness • Prayer After Forgiveness • Prayer Before Communion • Prayer After Communion • Prayers of the Mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Act of Sorrow • Prayer for Forgiveness • Prayer After Forgiveness • Prayer Before Communion • Prayer After Communion • Prayers of the Mass 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiet and Still 2. This Little Light of Mine 3. Jesus is my Best Friend! 4. Circle of Friends 5. The Apostles 6. Baptism Song 7. Away in a Manger 8.

Third Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Comhartha na Croise • Glory be to the Father • Glóir don Athair • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Grace Before Meals • Grace After meals • Prayer to Guardian Angel • Act of Sorrow • Prayer for Forgiveness • Prayer After Forgiveness • Prayer Before Communion • Prayer After Communion • Prayers of the Mass • Prayer to the Trinity • Prayers to the Holy Spirit • The Angelus • Care for the Earth • Prayer on opening the Bible • Prayer on Closing the Bible • The Apostles Creed • The Magnificat • The Memorare • Prayers for those who died • Prayer of Commendation • St Patrick's Breastplate • Mission Prayer 	1.	2.
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Fourth Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Comhartha na Croise • Glory be to the Father • Glóir don Athair • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Grace Before Meals • Grace After meals • Prayer to Guardian Angel • Act of Sorrow • Prayer for Forgiveness • Prayer After Forgiveness • Prayer Before Communion • Prayer After Communion • Prayers of the Mass • Prayer to the Trinity • Prayers to the Holy Spirit • The Angelus • Care for the Earth • Prayer on opening the Bible • Prayer on Closing the Bible • The Apostles Creed • The Magnificat • The Memorare • Prayers for those who died • Prayer of Commendation • St Patrick's Breastplate • Mission Prayer 	1.	2.
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Fifth Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Comhartha na Croise • Glory be to the Father • Glóir don Athair • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Grace Before Meals • Grace After meals • Prayer to Guardian Angel • Our Father & An Phaidir • Hail Mary • Act of Sorrow • Prayer for Forgiveness • Prayer After Forgiveness • Prayer Before Communion • Prayer After Communion • Prayers of the Mass • Prayer to the Trinity • Prayers to the Holy Spirit • The Angelus • Care for the Earth • Prayer on opening the Bible • Prayer on Closing the Bible • The Apostles Creed • Nicene Creed • Benedictus • Ár bPaidiir Misiúnta • The Magnificat • The Memorare • Prayers for those who died • Prayer of Commendation • St Patrick's Breastplate • Mission Prayer 		
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Sixth Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Comhartha na Croise • Glory be to the Father • Glóir don Athair • Morning Prayer • Night Prayer • Grace Before Meals • Grace After meals • Prayer to Guardian Angel • Our Father • An Phaidir • Hail Mary • Sé Do Bheatha a Mhuire • Hail Holy Queen • Act of Faith • Act of Hope • Act of Love • Mysteries of the Rosary • Prayer of St Francis • Act of Sorrow • Prayer for Forgiveness • Prayer After Forgiveness • Prayer Before Communion • Prayer After Communion • Prayers of the Mass • Prayer to the Trinity • Prayers to the Holy Spirit • The Angelus • Care for the Earth • Prayer on opening the Bible • Prayer on Closing the Bible 	•	•
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Apostles Creed • Nicene Creed • Benedictus • Ár bPaidiir Misiúnta • The Magnificat • The Memorare • Prayers for those who died • Prayer of Commendation • St Patrick's Breastplate • Mission Prayer 		
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