

Renewing the

Vision, Values and Mission

of a Catholic School or
Multi Academy Trust



**A TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOL
AND CMAT LEADERS**



The Holy Year of Jubilee is about re-setting our relationship with God, each other, and creation itself. In other words, it's about spiritual and civic renewal, inspired by the Old Testament practice of Jubilee every fifty years, when debts were cancelled, slaves were set free and the land itself was allowed to rest. In this way, the social and economic order could be re-set and brought back into conformity with the will of God for human beings, which is that they flourish and live together as brothers and sisters.

The Jubilee renewal is an opportunity for individuals and communities in the Church to hit their own 're-set' button and deepen their commitment to love of God, neighbour and creation. The Catholic school or multi academy trust, as part of the mission of the Church, also has an opportunity to re-set, to review and renew its sense of purpose, its vision, values and mission.

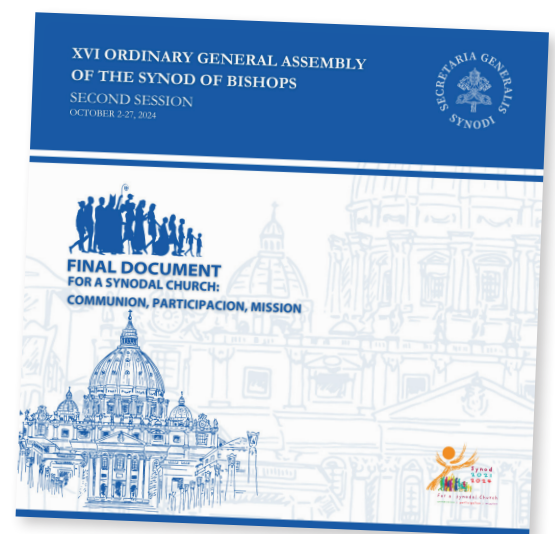
As part of Jubilee 2025, three agencies of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales - the Catholic Education Service, CAFOD and Caritas Social Action Network - are leading on **Jubilee for Schools**. As part of that work, we have developed this toolkit to help the leaders of Catholic schools Multi Academy Trusts (CMATs) to review their vision, values and mission.

“Catholic schools and universities play an important role in the dialogue between faith and culture and in providing moral education on values, offering a formation oriented towards Christ, the icon of life in its fullness. Thus, they become capable of promoting an alternative to the dominant models that are often driven by individualism and competition, thereby also playing a prophetic role. In some contexts, they are the only settings where children and young people come into contact with the Church.”

Synod on Synodality, *Final Document*, 146

“The ultimate meaning of synodality is the witness that the Church is called to give to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the harmony of love that pours Himself out, to give Himself to the world.”

Synod on Synodality, *Final Document*, 154



In Catholic education, the terms Vision and Mission are sometimes used interchangeably. There is also some confusion about the relationship between values, virtues and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. In the toolkit, we offer some suggestions to clarify the relationships between these key ideas.



We'd love to hear from those schools and CMATs that are reviewing or re-visiting their vision and mission and convene a community of practice to support each other.

To let us know what you're doing, please contact: raymond.friel@csan.org.uk



For more information on Jubilee for Schools, please visit:

www.Jubilee-schools.org.uk

SUGGESTIONS FOR A FRAMEWORK

We propose a framework which is **Trinitarian** in character. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis refers to the challenge of “trying to read reality in a Trinitarian key” (LS, 239). The most recent teaching of the Church, the *Final Document* from the XVIth General Synod on synodality, also emphasises the centrality of the Trinity when it says,

“The whole of Christian experience has its source and horizon in the mystery of the Trinity, which brings forth in us the dynamism of faith, hope and love” (#15).

This approach will also help us to align with the narrative framing in the model curriculum in the Religious Education Directory, which aims to

“draw pupils into an encounter with a story, the story of God’s relationship with humanity” (RED, p.61).

That story begins with the love of God the Father expressed in creation, then following the fall and our turning away from God, our liberation in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the love of God made flesh; continued today in the animating work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world.

The Vision, Values and Mission of a Catholic school or CMAT can be seen as analogous to the Trinity as follows:



OUR VISION

Our vision in Catholic education is derived from the vision of **God the Father**, “the ultimate source of everything, the loving and self-communicating foundation of all that exists” (*Laudato Si*, 238).

In *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican II), this vision is expressed as follows:

“God has a parent’s care for every individual and has willed that all should constitute a single family treating each other as brothers and sisters” (G&S, 24; see also: G&S, 94).

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* also refers to the plan of God,

“who intends that there be justice in the world and freedom and peace between individuals, groups and peoples” (#118).

This provides the basis for the vision statement of Caritas Internationalis (2023):

“A just world, transformed to reflect God’s kingdom, where all people in our common home experience the love, compassion and fullness of life.” God’s vision is for human flourishing.

This suggests that for a school or CMAT, the vision statement should align with the vision of the Father for a just and peaceful world. This is the ‘big picture’ statement, the bold prophetic statement of a Christian vision of reality, a “civilization of love.” This is what the school or CMAT is committed to bringing about.

The vision is not ours, it is God’s vision for humanity, for creation and we are inspired by that vision and want to play our part in bringing it about.

The Vision Statement, then, is the the dream God has for his creation. There are of course choices to be made about the key words to use, the length of the statement, appropriate to the community served by the school or CMAT, but the key message, in effect, is ‘given’.

As Catholic educational establishments, we’re not starting from scratch.

So who writes the Vision Statement?

We’d suggest that this is done by the leadership, perhaps a small group of senior leaders and governors, leaving the consultation for the Mission Statement

OUR VALUES

Our values in Catholic education are the Gospel values revealed to us by Jesus Christ, “the eternal Word who enlightens all humankind” (*Dei Verbum* 4), who lived among us to tell us about the inner life of God.

The values of the Gospel are perhaps best summed up in the Beatitudes, which Pope Francis described as, “like a Christian’s identity card” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 63). These values give us points of reference for how to behave in the Kingdom of God, beginning with the fundamental values of **love and justice**.

To these we can also add: humility, kindness, forgiveness, integrity, peace and courage. The 1977 document from the Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, takes up this theme when it states:

“Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps people to direct their thoughts, action and will according to the Gospel, making the beatitudes their norm of life. The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision, makes the school “Catholic”; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal” (#34).

These Gospel principles, or values, the values of God revealed by Jesus, should be at the heart of the purpose of the Catholic school as an inspiration for how human beings should behave and as a framework for all our policies and decisions, great and small.

The 1988 document from the Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, states this clearly:

“...a Catholic school needs to have a set of educational goals which are “distinctive” in the sense that the school has a specific objective in mind, and all of the goals are related to this objective. Concretely, the educational goals provide a frame of reference which defines the school’s identity: in particular, the Gospel values which are its inspiration must be explicitly mentioned” (#100).

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

How do these values relate to the permanent principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST): the dignity of the human person (the foundation of all other principles), the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity (*Compendium*, 160)?



The new **Catholic Inspection Framework** has introduced these principles as a focus for Catholic schools, but has also perhaps created a new strategic challenge.

How do these principles fit with Gospel values and indeed virtues, which for some schools have become the primary focus? In addition to the four permanent principles, which were published in the *Compendium* in 2004, it seems likely that any updating of the principles would highlight **care for our common home** as a fifth permanent principle.

The principles of CST are like Gospel values. They are objective, or ‘top down’ if you like, given to us by scripture and tradition. They are a kind of sub-set of Gospel values, specifically relating to human society and our relationships, our institutions, our systems. CST applies Gospel values to human life in society.

In a CMAT Gospel values and the principles of CST can be seen in the same category and should be embedded in the leadership & governance, the curriculum, and the social outreach.



If you have more than four CST principles in your school or CMAT, it should not be a cause for concern. There is no need to change, if you have seven, eight or nine CST principles write large around the school.

The four principles outlined in the *Compendium* can be opened up to include other principles. For example, the common good implies a preferential option for the poor, and subsidiarity implies participation.

VIRTUES

Virtues can be seen as the personal exercise of the values and principles. A virtue, as the Catechism reminds us, is “a habitual and firm disposition to do good” (CCC, 1833).

The *Compendium* makes the connection for us, when it says,

“These values require, therefore, both the practice of the fundamental principles of social life and the personal exercise of virtue, hence of those moral attitudes that correspond to those very values” (*Compendium*, 197).

Take justice, for example. It is a core Gospel value, a reference point for how we should live well and give each person what is due to them to live a dignified life. Justice has a corresponding virtue which is the **value in action**, the habitual *doing* of what it takes to bring this about, by the grace of God.

You'll find a very clear, and of course authoritative, explanation of the virtues in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 1803-1829, covering the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance; and the theological virtues, infused by God into our souls, of faith, hope and love.

The cardinal, or human, virtues, are acquired by education and form character, so their development should play a key part in the curriculum of the Catholic school. Prudence, the lead cardinal virtue, has close links to Catholic Social Teaching, in that it is in essence the same thing as the method of **See-Judge-Act** which Pope John XXIII encouraged us to use to apply the principles of CST to concrete situation.

The Gospel values and CST principles should be at the heart of the school or CMAT's **code of conduct** and behaviour policies and serve as a reference point for relations between adults, between adults and children, and between children and children.

The CMAT should hold itself to account using these values and principles. The CMAT, in addition, should also be accountable to the **Nolan principles** of public life, which are not incompatible with Gospel values: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is part of God's mission entrusted to the Church, to proclaim the Gospel in an educational setting in a specific community at the present time.

Our mission in the world is inspired by the **Holy Spirit** which is “intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways” (LS, 238).

The mission statement of the CMAT should reflect its particular purpose as a family of Catholic schools in a particular place. How does the educational project of the schools in the CMAT contribute to the vision, inspired by the values?

In the narrative framing, the mission is the writing of a new chapter of God's story in the schools by the pupils every day, under the creative influence of the Holy Spirit; another line in the great poem of the Kingdom of God.

The Catholic Inspection Framework emphasises the importance of the **mission statement**, the key expression of mission, when it includes this statement in the Outstanding criteria for provision for Catholic Life and Mission (CLM 2.1):

“The mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church and of the school's particular charism. It is regularly revisited and is known, lived and witnessed to throughout the school. As a result, it has a significant impact on the life of the school which excels at being a community based on Catholic tradition and practice.”

We are encouraged to regularly re-visit the mission statement of the school, or CMAT. This could be a refresh as part of the first INSET day of the year, as well as regular reminders and examples of what it looks like in practice through the year. Or, it could be what we are suggesting in this toolkit, a full review, or in the case of a new CMAT, a new mission statement.



THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING THE MISSION STATEMENT.

So where do you start?

Well, it might not be a bad idea to start with the current mission statement, for those who have one (if not then clearly this step is missed out!). In groups, it might be useful to discuss what we like about the current mission statement.

- ▶ **Is it known by pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers?**
- ▶ **Is it lived in the school? Can you point to examples?**
- ▶ **Is it witnessed to throughout the school? In lessons? In policies? In co-curricular life?**

This kind of conversation requires careful handling, since it needs to be honest, as well as positive.

Then you could look at some **mission statements from the business world**. Here are a few examples to discuss in groups, to get into thinking about the purpose and impact of a mission statement. Many schools have a short, memorable version of their statement, and then a longer statement which goes into more detail.

Read these mission statements slowly and then consider the following questions:

- ▶ What's your first reaction? Which ones grab your attention, capture your imagination, move you, annoy you?
- ▶ Have a closer look. Which key words do you notice, why do you think they've been used in this way?
- ▶ Do you notice any dissonance, or tension, between any of the statements and what you know about the company and its products?
- ▶ Finally, what is your favourite and why? Does it teach you anything about a good mission statement?

MISSION STATEMENTS: SOME EXAMPLES

"Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world. If you have a body, you are an athlete."

Nike

"To collect, preserve, study, exhibit, and stimulate appreciation for and advance knowledge of works of art that collectively represent the broadest spectrum of human achievement at the highest level of quality, all in the service of the public and in accordance with the highest professional standards."

MoMA (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

"Greenpeace is an independent campaigning organisation, which uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future."

Greenpeace

"To inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time."

Starbucks

"Our deepest purpose as an organization is helping support the health, well-being, and healing of both people — customers, Team Members, and business organizations in general — and the planet."

Whole Foods Market

"To refresh the world...To inspire moments of optimism and happiness...To create value and make a difference."

Coco-Cola

"To enrich people's lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain."

BBC

CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND CMAT MISSION STATEMENTS

You could now repeat the exercise, but this time by looking at the mission statements of some Catholic schools or CMATs.

The mission statement for Plymouth CAST, a CMAT of 36 schools, was drawn up after wide consultation in 2018:

“Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the Gospel.”

A list similar to the Ten Characteristics below was circulated and the consultation asked which characteristics on the list needed to be emphasised at this point in the story of the CMAT. The feedback was then collated by a small steering group which produced the final version.

Our Mission Statement at St. Antony's Catholic School:

- ▶ We celebrate our special talents as children of God:
- ▶ We try to be like Jesus and always keep him in our hearts
- ▶ We work together in our homes, school and parish to share our gifts and learn together
- ▶ We understand that we are all different but we respect each other
- ▶ We look after our world so that we may share it together in peace

St Antony's Catholic Primary School, Forest Gate, London

We are a joyous and inclusive Catholic school, inspired by the love of God and the teachings of Jesus, specifically faith, hope, forgiveness and peace.

Our community is committed to a rounded education that develops knowledgeable, morally informed and compassionate young leaders.

Notre Dame Catholic High School, Norwich



It might be helpful to search for some Mission Statements from other Catholic schools in your diocese and apply the same questions we used above.

It's also important to keep in mind any pastoral plan or vision document from your Bishop and make sure that any priorities he has identified are included in your public statements.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL, OR CMAT

The mission of the Catholic school has a number of **key characteristics** outlined in the documents of the Vatican Council, the Congregation for Catholic Education, and the documents of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

This is not an 'official' list but our attempt to list the main points which run through the Church's documents on education.

When writing your own Mission Statement, it might help to share with the stakeholder groups who are being consulted a version of the key characteristics of Catholic education outlined below and ask the groups which ones speak most strongly to them in the present context of the school or CMAT.

Ten key characteristics of Catholic school, or CMAT:

Inspired by a **Catholic vision of reality**, the Catholic imagination: creation as a gift from God, full of His presence, human beings made in His image, in love and for love.

The school as part of the **saving mission of the Church**, inspired by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel, with Christ at the centre, building up His Kingdom of love, justice, and peace.

A place of **encounter with the living God** - in liturgy, prayer, scripture and in a commitment to those who are made poor - encounters that are given time and the environment to develop the attention required,

Formation of the human person as alive in relationship with God, neighbour, creation; finding their **mission** in life for building of a world that is more human.

The Catholic school as a **peaceful, safe, joyful, liturgical community**, a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love, where young people can **flourish**.

Consistent focus on the **preferential option for those who are poor**, deprived of the affection of a family (come to school be loved), strangers to the gift of Faith.

Knowledge is regarded not as a means of success, but academic excellence as a call to serve, **curriculum** marinated in Gospel values and principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Critical thinking is encouraged, the critique of the myths of modernity: individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, unregulated market; tough minds, tender hearts.

Formation in virtues inspired by Gospel values: prudence, with the aim of justice, with courage and self-control to be **agents of change**; judge rightly, develop moral compass.

Leadership, called to holiness, embodies Gospel values and principles of CST in decision-making, policy and behaviour.

Another aspect of the mission of the Catholic school or CMAT has emerged recently in the *Final Document* of the synod, which refers to the “prophetic role” of the Catholic school (see quotation above).

The school is prophetic when it tells God’s story and offers an alternative to the story of the world.

The document also acknowledges that the Catholic school or university in many places will be the only places where young people have any contact with the Church or the Gospel.

The mission statement of a school or CMAT is unlikely to feature all of these all of the time. It will depend on the context. What needs to be foregrounded at this time, what are the key messages for the pupils and families in the schools we serve?

When the Mission Statement has been approved by the governors and any other authority required in your context, such as the CMAT board, Bishop or the superior of the religious order, it is the beginning not the end of the journey.

It should be prominent on the school or CMAT website and clearly named, Mission Statement.

To be “known, lived and witnessed to throughout the school” requires creative and collaborative leadership. Here are just some examples to help make the Mission Statement **lived, not just laminated**.

- ▶ **The Mission Statement is highly visible around the school and on all its communications, even in abridged form.**
- ▶ **It should be referred to frequently in assemblies and celebrations of the word, perhaps put to music, or represented in art or in symbols.**
- ▶ **In some form, the statement can be taken back by the pupils to their classroom from assemblies, to enhance its importance.**
- ▶ **It could feature in some way in the staff appraisal system, perhaps as a ‘soft’ objective: how will you support the Mission Statement this year?**
- ▶ **It should be a central feature of the school or CMAT’s monitoring and evaluation processes, a key statement of purpose to which the community holds itself accountable.**
- ▶ **It could feature in the Curriculum Intent so that it becomes, along with Gospel values and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, a regular reference point in lessons**
- ▶ **When the Mission Statement is witnessed to, by pupils, staff or governors, this should be a moment for public recognition and celebration.**



Can you think of other ways to make sure that the Mission Statement is known, lived and witnessed to throughout the school?



Once the vision, values and mission are in place, the school or CMAT can consider its strategic priorities.

What in particular needs to be done in which areas to bring about the vision and mission? What **Theory of Change** will be adopted to help clarify the process of identifying priorities?

The role of effective **self-evaluation and feedback** is key to identifying the strategic priorities that will make the biggest difference to how effective/fruitful the CMAT wants to be.

A separate piece of work to this will be a framework for evaluating the effectiveness/fruitfulness of a CMAT, but in the meantime the expectations outlined in the priorities of the diocesan bishop, the new Catholic Inspection Framework, the Ofsted Inspection Framework and the DFE's Quality Descriptors for Trusts, provide ample reference points for self-evaluation.

Should the **success criteria** for a CMAT be any different to a MAT with no religious foundation?

A CMAT will want to ensure that the educational provision is "at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area" (Canon 806.2). So what is distinctive about the success criteria of a CMAT?

On the one hand, the motivation for excellent academic outcomes should be distinctive, in other words we want our pupils to achieve the best results and flourish in adult life, and leave us as people "capable of building a society based on justice and solidarity" as it says in the most recent document from Rome, The Identity of the Catholic School (2022), 19.

On the other hand, we should be developing **distinctive success criteria** which are qualitative as well as quantitative, with feedback on the values gained by the pupils, their sense of well-being and purpose in life.

Beneath the vision, values, mission and strategic priorities could come the other **design principles** which will define the ethos and educational culture of the CMAT, for example the learning principles and the leadership principles, although these should flow from the inspiration of the vision and values and be consistent with the mission.

Enjoy the journey of renewing your vision, values and mission in the Holy Year of Jubilee.

Please keep in touch and let us know how you're getting on.

We'd also love to hear your feedback on this toolkit which we want to keep developing and improving to be as much help as possible to our wonderful Catholic schools and multi academy trusts.

For more information on Jubilee for Schools, please visit:

www.Jubilee-schools.org.uk

With thanks to the Catholic leaders who helped us in the production of the toolkit:

Andy Moor, Chief Executive Officer, Holy Family Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Helen Parkes, Chief Executive Officer, St John Bosco Multi Academy Company, Dudley

Tom Pinnington, Headteacher, Notre Dame High School, Norwich

Sinead Smith, Senior Executive Principal, Holy Family Catholic Multi Academy, Nuneaton

