

Catholic Social Teaching: Intent, Implementation and Impact at St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

Intent

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) at St Mark's Catholic Primary School is rooted in Scripture and the mission of the Church. As stated in the CST Policy, *"Catholic social teaching (CST) is rooted in Scripture, formed by the wisdom of Church leaders, and influenced by grassroots movements."* Our intent is to form children who understand their dignity as children of God, recognise the dignity of others, and actively live out the Gospel message in their daily lives.

Our curriculum intent is shaped by Jesus' command to *"love your neighbour as yourself"* (Mark 12:31). We aim to empower pupils to become compassionate, responsible, and active citizens who challenge injustice, uphold human dignity, and contribute to a more peaceful, just, and sustainable world. We teach children that they are called to put love into action, following Pope Francis' reminder that *"Young people are not meant to become discouraged; they are meant to dream great things..."* (Christus Vivit 15).

CST is woven through our curriculum, collective worship, school values, and daily interactions. The seven principles of CST—Human Dignity, Family and Community, Participation and the Dignity of Work, Rights and Responsibilities, Stewardship, Solidarity, and Option for the Poor—provide a moral and theological framework for forming pupils who understand their responsibilities to themselves, their community, and the wider world.

Our long-term plan ensures that CST is progressive and age-appropriate. Each term focuses on a CST theme linked to a school value, ensuring coherence and continuity from EYFS to Year 6. For example, Term 1 focuses on **The Dignity of the Human Person** and the value of **Respect**, while Term 6 focuses on **Stewardship** and the value of **Reflection**.

Ultimately, our intent is that every child at St Mark's grows in faith, wisdom, and compassion, becoming a young person who can articulate the connection between Jesus' teaching and their own actions in the world.

Implementation

CST is implemented through a structured, whole-school approach that combines weekly teaching, termly projects, pupil leadership, and community engagement.

Weekly Discreet Teaching

CST is taught through **discreet weekly lessons** using the **Caritas in Action** scheme. This ensures consistency, progression, and theological accuracy. The CST Policy states that *"Catholic Social Teaching is both incorporated into our curriculum and taught within focussed lessons."* Weekly sessions allow pupils to explore Scripture, Church teaching, and real-world application in an age-appropriate way.

Use of the Caritas in Action Scheme

Caritas in Action provides a clear, spiral curriculum that revisits and deepens understanding of the seven CST themes. It supports teachers with structured content, Scripture links, and practical activities that help children put faith into action. The scheme ensures that CST is not an add-on but a core part of curriculum design.

Implementation of the Seven CST Themes

Across the year, pupils study all seven CST principles:

- **Human Dignity**
- **Family and Community**
- **The Dignity of Work**
- **Rights and Responsibilities**
- **Stewardship**
- **Solidarity**
- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

The long-term plan maps these themes across the school year, linking each one to a school value and ensuring progression from KS1 to KS2. For example, Term 1 focuses on **The Dignity of the Human Person**, while Term 6 focuses on **Stewardship**.

Termly CST Projects

Each year group completes a **termly CST project** linked to the theme for that term. These projects ensure that CST is lived, not just learned. Examples include:

- **Community outreach** such as visiting local care homes, writing letters, or creating artwork for residents.
- **Charity partnerships** including fundraising, awareness campaigns, and practical acts of service.
- **Parish involvement** such as participating in Mass, supporting parish initiatives, or collaborating with parish groups.
- **Environmental stewardship** through gardening, Forest School, and work with Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

These projects help pupils understand that they are part of a wider community and that their actions can make a meaningful difference.

Daily School Life

The CST Policy states that “*Catholic Social Teaching underpins the essence of our daily school life.*” This is reflected in behaviour expectations, classroom culture, and relationships. Pupils are encouraged to act with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Collective Worship

Collective worship reinforces CST themes, helping pupils connect Scripture with real-world issues. Worship is planned to be relevant, reflective, and rooted in Gospel values.

Pupil Leadership

Leadership roles such as Chaplaincy, School Council, Eco Club, Safeguarding Champions, and Play Leaders give pupils opportunities to practise stewardship, justice, responsibility, and service. These roles *“provide meaningful opportunities for children to exercise responsibility, demonstrate stewardship, promote justice, and contribute to the wellbeing of others.”*

Monitoring

Monitoring takes place annually and includes pupils, staff, clergy, governors, and parents. The policy states that *“areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.”*

Impact

The impact of CST at St Mark’s is seen in the character, actions, and attitudes of our pupils. They grow into thoughtful, compassionate individuals who understand their responsibilities to others and the world.

Children demonstrate:

- A strong sense of human dignity and respect for all.
- Understanding of fairness, justice, and the common good.
- Willingness to take action for those in need.
- Deepening awareness of global issues and their role in addressing them.
- Confidence in articulating how Scripture guides their choices.

Pupils increasingly show empathy, resilience, and moral reasoning. They recognise injustice and respond with compassion, generosity, and advocacy.

Leadership roles strengthen responsibility and service. Community projects deepen pupils’ understanding of solidarity and the common good. Environmental work fosters stewardship and care for creation.

Through CST, pupils grow spiritually, morally, socially, and emotionally, becoming young people who live out the Gospel message and contribute positively to society.