

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School



Religious Education Handbook

2025/2026

Contents

	<u>Page Number</u>
1. School Mission Statement	2
2. The Aims of Religious Education	5
3. The Outcomes of Religious Education	6
4. Religious Education at the Heart of the Curriculum	6
5. The Religious Education Programme	7
Overview of content	
The curriculum structures	
6. The Approach Chosen	9
7. Planning	10
8. Expected Outcomes (Assessment)	15
9. Evaluation of Religious Education Handbook	18

1. School Mission Statement

Serving with Love, Striving for Excellence

Ubi Caritas et amor deus ibi est

Our Catholic School exists to create and sustain an environment which has Christ and His teachings at its very heart. It is based on the belief that everything of worth comes from God and by working in partnership with priests, parishioners and our families, we can establish a community of love, peace and harmony between all in a climate of mutual trust and openness.

We encourage our children to develop their academic potential and individual talents, giving all children confidence and self-esteem through praise, encouragement and acceptance of their worth.

Aim:

To be a Christian family, celebrating our Catholic identity as a lived reality from the inside out, sustained by gospel witness – the impact of which pervades our entire community.

Objectives:

Curriculum, ‘the real substance of education’ is the driver for every task, every action undertaken in our school.

Our key objective is to provide an outstanding Christian education, rich in content, accessible and motivating – an education that is intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person, fostering a love for wisdom and truth, integrating faith, culture and life.

We trust that we provide a firm grounding in the Catholic faith where gospel values of **love, hope, respect, courage, service, wisdom, fairness and fellowship** guide the children in their formative years through:

Love: believing each child is created in the image and likeness of God with a spiritual destiny to fulfil –

- promoting love and respect for themselves, others, God and His world
- instilling confidence and a sense of self-worth through praise, encouragement and the message about how unique and inspirational our children are
- being positive role models who treat each other equally and fairly to work together for the good of all
- forging a school community that demonstrates and models tolerant and moral behaviour and attitudes
- inspiring our youngsters to be ambassadors for their school, representing and promoting this at every opportunity

Hope: believing that this is larger than our imaginations, its purpose extending far beyond our comprehension –

- preparing our young people to open themselves more and more to reality and to become strong responsible citizens of the local and global community, reaching out into the world
- providing support for a 'growth mindset' towards all learning experiences – knowing that through effort, strategies, facing challenges and learning from mistakes they forge ahead towards unknowable potential
- committing to our teachers' use of cutting edge evidence and research-based practices – empowering them to make independent, informed decisions about what works and, alongside bespoke continual professional development, using it thoughtfully to improve our children's outcomes
- offering a wealth of exciting and magical experiences beyond the classroom that enhance and enrich our children's learning, well-being, curiosity and imagination

Wisdom: seeking understanding and truth, guided by faith and the light of the Gospel –

- fostering a love of learning that inspires children to question, explore and grow intellectually, spiritually and morally
- teaching our children to discern right from wrong, making good choices in line with Gospel teachings and their own developing conscience
- encouraging curiosity and creativity, recognising that wisdom comes not just from knowledge but from reflection, experience and prayer
- supporting our children to see connections between faith, culture and life, integrating what they learn into how they live and relate to others
- helping children to recognise that mistakes and challenges are opportunities for growth, building resilience and humility on their journey towards wisdom

Respect: recognising the God-given dignity of every person, and treating all creation with care and reverence –

- fostering an ethos where each child feels valued, listened to and safe – understanding that every individual is made in the image and likeness of God and deserving of kindness, patience and consideration
- nurturing attitudes of mutual respect in all relationships – between children, staff, parents and the wider community – building a culture of trust, inclusion and welcome
- encouraging appreciation of diversity, recognising and celebrating the differences in one another's lives, cultures, beliefs and experiences, and seeing these differences as strengths
- teaching our children to respect themselves as unique and precious, developing self-confidence, self-discipline and responsibility for their words and actions
- caring for God's creation, promoting respect for the world around us through thoughtful stewardship of the environment and an awareness of our shared responsibility for the future
- celebrating and promoting British values – developing our children's understanding of diversity in others' lives, cultures, faiths and beliefs – recognising, respecting and celebrating the differences in and between each other

Fairness: living out justice and equality by treating others as we would wish to be treated –

- instilling an understanding of fairness as a Gospel value, where everyone has the right to be heard, included and treated with dignity
- teaching empathy and compassion, helping our children to see the world through others' eyes and to stand up for those who are vulnerable or marginalised

- encouraging honesty, integrity and a sense of responsibility in every member of our school family
- promoting equality of opportunity so that every child can thrive, regardless of background, ability or need
- supporting children to challenge injustice and make choices that contribute to a more just, peaceful and equitable world

Courage: forming strong and responsible individuals, capable of making free and correct choices, taking chances, being brave and adventurous – ‘we are all heroes-in-waiting’

- through our ‘Golden Rules’ and KiVa school status, we strive to create a calm, stable, accepting learning climate
- laying the groundwork for our children’s adult responsibilities and fostering not only the cause and effect relationship of actions but, alongside the vision of KiVa, supporting the children in finding their inner strength in honesty, daring, compassion, humility and integrity

Fellowship: building a strong, united community where we journey together in faith and friendship –

- creating a welcoming and supportive school family, where everyone feels they belong and are valued
- encouraging teamwork, collaboration and a sense of shared purpose among children and staff
- celebrating together through prayer, worship, liturgy and the rhythms of the Church’s year, strengthening our bonds as a faith community
- developing friendships rooted in kindness, respect and forgiveness, recognising Christ in one another
- fostering links with families, parish and the wider community, building partnerships that enrich the lives of all involved and reflect the love of God

Service: the commitment to using whatever gifts we have received to serve others – understanding that everything in life is about being a part of something bigger than yourself –

- never tiring of doing the little things as no act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted
- encouraging our children to be the best that they can be, using their untold gifts and talents to carve a space and find their own unique place in their world to come
- ensuring parents are in the strongest position to help with their child’s learning – building communication step by step, stage by stage, year by year – engaging families in the learning process from the very beginning
- working closely with our governors as they continue to seek the very best outcomes for all our pupils through strategic planning, targeted questioning and insightful guidance
- in acknowledging that the global dimension is also on our doorstep, establishing mutually beneficial links with other schools, school families and alliances and continuing to forge ever-stronger partnerships within our exciting, new, parish family in becoming the ‘mission hub’ of our local and wider community.

‘Serving with Love, Striving for Excellence’

2. The Aims of Religious Education

The aims of Religious Education are:

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;
2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

3. The Outcomes of Religious Education

The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

4. Religious Education at the Heart of the Curriculum

1. Religious education is the core of the core curriculum and is to be the source and summit of the whole curriculum.
2. Religious education is an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and rigour as other disciplines.
3. Religious education is to be delivered within a broad and balanced curriculum, where it informs every aspect of the curriculum. Every other subject is to be informed by religious education and have a strong relationship with it.
4. In each year of compulsory schooling, religious education is to be taught for at least 10% curriculum time within each repeating cycle of the regular school timetable.

5. The Religious Education Programme

To be fully compliant in fulfilling our aims and objectives we use the Scheme of Work recommended by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. All of the content and expected outcomes are as outlined in the programmes of study for the various age groups in the Religious Education Directory – ‘To Know You More Clearly’ model curriculum as mandated by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. At present, children in year groups Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 are following this new curriculum. Year 6 continue to follow the ‘Come and See’ scheme of work until their year group support is launched by the Christian Education Team at the Archdiocese.

Overview of Content

The Spiral Curriculum

The spiral structure of the curriculum enables a build-up, layering a critical dimension each year, deepening pupils’ understanding of the story of salvation, developing a common language, and exploring the ‘memory of the Church’ and her teachings and how these have formed part of the history of ideas in the development of humanity.

The structure invites teachers to expose pupils to the beauty of Catholic Christianity and its shaping influence on culture through art, music, literature, science, and architecture historically and to the present day, which equips young people to dialogue with the beliefs and vision of the Church beyond intellectual remits and exposing them to the transcendent, a powerful pedagogy.

The spiral pathway students follow from their first steps into Catholic education means that teachers can plan for progression, moving through basic questioning and notional understandings to ever deeper levels of engagement with Christianity’s divine and human drama and its significance for humankind

The Curriculum Structures

The model curriculum has six components that will be known as branches.

Each one has a core theme and invites pupils to learn about an aspect of Revelation, Scripture, life in Christ, and life in the Church, and to discern what their learning means academically and experientially enabling them to see, judge, and act through a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith.

Branch 1 Creation and covenant: ‘The heavens are telling the glory of God’ (Ps 19:1)

- In this branch, pupils will encounter the God who creates and calls a people.
- They will explore revelation of the Christian belief that all that is comes from God, the Creation accounts in Genesis, and scientific explanations of the process of Creation.
- They will explore the call of God and his covenantal relationship with his people first through Abraham and Moses, then through the narrative of the Old Testament.

Branch 2 Prophecy and promise: ‘In many and various ways, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets’ (Heb 1:1)

- In this branch, pupils will learn that the prophets speak of God reaching to his people, calling them back into a relationship with him.
- In this branch, pupils will explore the Christian understanding of the teaching of the prophets as they point to the fulfilment of God’s promise in a messiah, Jesus Christ.
- They will explore the expectant waiting for the Messiah through the Advent season and how this speaks to Christians today as they wait for Christ.
- Pupils will encounter the story of the nativity of Jesus and the mystery of the incarnation.

Branch 3 Galilee to Jerusalem: ‘God’s only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known’ (Jn 1:18)

- In this branch, pupils will experience the ministry of Jesus, the Word of God.
- They will learn about the life of Jesus and his revelation of the Kingdom of God through parables, encounters, miracles, and teachings.
- They will learn about the call of the disciples and the nature of being a follower of Jesus.

Branch 4 Desert to garden: ‘Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day’ (1 Cor 15:3)

- In this branch, pupils will study the season of Lent and its culmination in the events of Holy Week.
- They will learn about the Paschal Triduum at the heart of the Catholic Church’s Liturgy and life.
- The title of this branch points both to the liturgical journey from the desert of Lent to the garden of Resurrection, but also to the Paschal journey from darkness to light, barrenness to fruitfulness, death to life.

Branch 5 To the ends of the Earth: ‘Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 28:19)

- In this branch, pupils will study the events that flowed from the Resurrection and Ascension in the coming of the Holy Spirit and the work of the apostles and early Church.
- They will also learn about the Catholic Church today as the apostolic Church and how its liturgy and structures flow from the early Church.

Branch 6 Dialogue and encounter: ‘For “In him we live and move and have our being”’ (Acts 17:28)

- In this branch, pupils will learn how Christians work together with people of different religious convictions and all people of goodwill towards the common good, respecting the dignity of all humanity.
- They will also encounter other pathways of belief drawing on the teaching of the Church about intercultural dialogue.

6. The Approach Chosen

Knowledge Lenses – these set out the object of study for pupils, they indicate what should be known by the end of each age phase:

The study of the Catholic Religion

- Hear
- Believe
- Celebrate
- Live

The study of other Religions and Worldviews

- Dialogue
- Encounter

The Sacraments – these are taught within and across branches. Pupils encounter scripture and what the Church teaches about scripture and what this means for a life lived in Christ as part of the Catholic faith.

The approach taken should encompass a variety of teaching and learning styles, which enable the needs of individual pupils to be met through a broad and balanced, cross-curricular, creative lessons.

Ways of Knowing – set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey. The **three** ways of knowing are: 'Understand', 'Discern', and 'Respond'.

7. Planning

At St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School, with being a one-form entry school, we try to plan together wherever we can in order to work collaboratively, to ensure the best outcome for the children in our care.




This takes the form of coaching sessions, especially with the new RED Curriculum 'To Know You More Clearly', as the short term planning for this new curriculum had to be created by ourselves. The RE Lead ensures that at the start of each branch, coaching sessions are scheduled in order for all teachers who are teaching from the new RED, to come together, to plan the branch ahead. This enables powerful and productive conversations to happen and certainly allows for consistency in approach. The RE Lead facilitates this process and is there to offer help and guidance where and when needed.

A set planning format is used. One for Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, and a slightly different one for EYFS, due to the curriculum approach taken. Please see the blank templates below:

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School
RED Planning






RE Planning Branch 4 – Desert to Garden Year: _____




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

Prior Learning:	The prior knowledge below will develop as the children progress throughout the RED in different year groups.
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Branch Focus:	
Hear	
Believe	
Celebrate	
Live	

Vocabulary:	
Skills:	

Week 1:				
Scripture:				
Ways of Knowing				
 Understand – See		 Discern – Judge		 Respond – Act
Teaching Sequence				
Lesson 1	Hear	Believe/Celebrate/Live (Teach)	Task	Plenary
Lesson 2	Hear	Believe/Celebrate/Live (Teach)	Task	Plenary
Lesson 3	Hear	Believe/Celebrate/Live (Teach)	Task	Plenary

Week 2:				
Scripture:				
Ways of Knowing				
 Understand – See		 Discern – Judge		 Respond – Act
Teaching Sequence				
Lesson 1	Hear/Believe/Celebrate/Live	Teach	Task	Plenary
Lesson 2	Hear/Believe/Celebrate/Live	Teach	Task	Plenary
Lesson 3	Hear	Believe/Celebrate/Live (Teach)	Task	Plenary

This runs for as many weeks as there are in the half term for the branch in question – could be anything from 5 to 8 weeks long.

The EYFS planning template looks like this:

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School
EYFS RE 'To Know You More Clearly' Planning - Branch






Prior Learning:	
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Branch Focus:	
Dialogue	
Encounter	

Vocabulary:	Week 1 Core - Enriching -	Week 2 Core - Enriching -	Week 3 Core - Enriching -	Week 4 Core - Enriching -
Skills:				


St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School
EYFS RE 'To Know You More Clearly' Planning - Branch




Week 1 –			
Scripture			
Areas of Learning			
 Understand - See	 Discern - Judge	 Respond - Act	
Teaching Sequence			
Prior Learning	Hear	Believe / Celebrate / Live (Teach)	Continuous Provision
		Believe - Celebrate Live Prayer time/reflection	


This also then runs for as many weeks as there are in the half term for the branch in question – could be anything from 5 to 8 weeks long.

Teachers in Year 6 continue to use the old planning template for 'Come and See'. They are well used to using this but the RE Lead still remains as the one who gives help and guidance where needed. This is their planning template:



Year: _____
 Topic: _____





<u>Come and See Standard Indicator Summary</u>	
Explore (AT2 Engagement and Respond)	Date: _____ Pre-topic assessment
	Date: _____
Reveal (AT1 Knowledge and Understanding)	Date: _____ <u>Learning Focus 1:</u> _____
	Date: _____ <u>Learning Focus 2:</u> _____
	Date: _____ <u>Learning Focus 3:</u> _____
	Date: _____ <u>Learning Focus 4:</u> _____
	Date: _____ <u>Learning Focus 5:</u> _____
	Date: _____ <u>Learning Focus 6:</u> _____



Year: _____
Topic: _____

Respond (AT2 Engagement and Response)	<u>Date:</u> <u>Remember:</u> Discuss and question <u>Ask the children if there is anything they wonder and ask questions about:</u>	
	<u>Date:</u> <u>Rejoice:</u> <u>Date:</u> <u>Renew:</u> Post-topic assessment. <u>Add to your learning journal</u>	
Assessment		









8. Expected Outcomes (Assessment)




In our school, we use the Ways of Knowing as assessment indicators. The Ways of Knowing describe the skills that pupils develop as they progress through the religious education curriculum. They have evolved from the previous Age-related Standards and the Levels of Attainment in Religious Education. This is because progress in Religious Education is not only something that concerns performance and summative assessment, which the previous assessment approaches implied.

They are called Ways of Knowing since they describe the holistic ways that human beings experience education: as a growth in understanding, as a creative and critical assimilation, and as a recognition of the application of learning to one's own life. The three Ways of Knowing are 'understand', 'discern' and 'respond'.

The Ways of Knowing table below, describes the aim of each way of knowing, the skills that are required to develop them, the driver words that indicate progress through them, and generic progression indicators in the ways of knowing for each age-phase:

	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
Aim	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils to be able to understand deeply the meaning of sacred texts, religious beliefs, sacred rites, and the lives of individuals and communities who are shaped by these texts, beliefs, and rites.	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils to be able to judge wisely in response to different interpretations of the meaning, significance, and implications of texts, beliefs, rites, and ways of life so that they can arrive at justified conclusions about what is true, what is good, and what is beautiful.	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils reflect personally and with integrity on what they have learned and consider the implications for action these may have for their own lives and the world in which they live.
Skills	In this way of knowing, pupils will deepen their understanding by developing the skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember and apply the meanings of key texts, beliefs, and concepts. Provide explanations by making links between religious texts, beliefs, and practices. Interpret and analyse the meaning of texts, practices, and rituals and their historical and cultural connections. 	In this way of knowing, pupils will increase in wisdom, through dialogue with others, by developing the skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think creatively and critically, testing ideas by imagining other possibilities. Compare different interpretations of religious expression, different ways of celebrating rites, and different ways of life, explaining differences within and between religions and worldviews. Critically evaluate differences to arrive at wise judgements about what is true, what is good, and what is beautiful. 	In this way of knowing, you will invite pupils to respond personally and with integrity by developing the skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives. Dialogue with others to understand themselves and others better. Imagine how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned.

	 Understand	 Discern	 Respond
<p>The following list gives an indication of the ways in which these skills develop through the use of 'driver words and phrases' that are applied progressively as pupils move through the different age-phases of the curriculum content:</p>			
Driver words and phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise... texts, beliefs, rites, ways of life. • Name... • Remember... • Recall... • Retell... • Describe... • Make links... • Explain... • Show understanding... • Interpret within a historical context... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions. • Say what they wonder about. • Recognise similarities and differences. • Point out what is the same and what is different. • Express a point of view or a preference. • Listen to different viewpoints. • Support a preference with reasons. • Explain differences. • Construct arguments. • Weigh strengths and weaknesses. • Arrive at justified conclusions. • Recognise complexity with reference to different interpretations and historical context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about their own feelings and experiences. • Respond personally to questions that are difficult to answer. • Make links between their own feelings and beliefs and their behaviour or way of life. • Compare their own and other peoples' responses. • Explain differences of belief and ways of life with reference to religious commitments. • Critically reflect on their own beliefs and ways of life in response to dialogue with others. • Respond with integrity to personal conclusions about questions of value and meaning.
	Ages 5-7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retell, in any form, a narrative that corresponds to the scripture source used, beginning to recognise the different literary forms in scripture. • Correctly use religious words and phrases to recognise features of religious life and practice. • Recognise links and simple connections between sources, beliefs, worship and life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions, saying what they wonder about and suggesting answers, imagining how they and others are feeling. • Identify and name their personal responses to a variety of creative and artistic expression (for example, texts, stories, paintings, music...) and say why they respond in that way. • Express a point of view with a relevant reason. • Express a preference with a relevant reason. • Listen to the stories and experiences of others from different communities and ask questions about the stories and experiences of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives. Talk about their own experiences, feelings, and the things that matter to them, and listen to others. • Consider how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned. • Act to bring about transformation in their own lives and in the communities to which they belong, as a consequence of their learning.

	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
Ages 7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a narrative that is accurate in its sequence and details, identifying literary form and beginning to understand the original author's intention, drawing out the moral sense of scripture for today. Correctly use developing specialist vocabulary to describe a range of religious beliefs, symbols, and actions, correctly identifying their meanings. Make links between sources, beliefs, worship, and life, giving reasons for the links. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions, suggesting answers and imagining consequences and implications for themselves and others. Suggest meanings considering the maker's intention, in response to a variety of creative and artistic expression (for example, texts, stories, paintings, music...) Express a point of view with reasons that relate to sources/experiences. Express a judgement with relevant reasons, having considered different preferences. Explore people's different worldviews and the reasons for their responses to life and to questions of meaning and purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives. Dialogue with others about their experiences and feelings and the things that matter to them, recognising the ways in which this could influence the way they live. Consider how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned. Act to bring about transformation in their own lives and in the communities to which they belong, as a consequence of their learning.
Ages 9-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show understanding of scripture passages, identifying literary forms and authorial intention and beginning to recognise the historical context of the intended audience and the ways in which the interpretation of scripture may change over time. Use specialist (theological, religious, and philosophical) vocabulary to describe and explain the meaning of different religious and secular beliefs, rituals, symbols, and actions. Show understanding of sources, beliefs, worship, and life, by making relevant links between them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play with possibilities, asking 'what if?' questions, building logical theories, and imagining different people's responses. Explore how they and others interpret their own and the maker's meaning, in response to a variety of creative and artistic expression (for example, texts, stories, paintings, music etc) Appreciate differing points of view are not all equally valid. Articulate the reasons which might lead to judgements different to their own, recognising that some questions are difficult to answer. Consider people's different worldviews, using evidence to express insight into differences in their responses and offer reasoned arguments why they disagree with some features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives. Compare their own and others' experiences and feelings, the things that matter to them, and the ways in which this may lead to different ways of life. Consider how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned. Act to bring about transformation in their own lives and in the communities to which they belong, as a consequence of their learning.

9. Evaluation of Religious Education Handbook

Our Religious Education Handbook is reviewed annually and/or if any changes are made in between these times. The handbook reflects everything that is done to ensure that Religious Education is the core subject within our Catholic school and that it underpins everything that we do here at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School.