



The Identity and Ethos of a Catholic School

Much is written and spoken about the distinctive ethos of Catholic Schools. If they are to have a characteristic identity and mission, Catholic Schools need to reflect upon and to articulate that ethos. And then they need to ensure that, day by day and year by year, that ethos is made a reality in the lives of the pupils, teachers and families of the school community.

Catholic Schools share many features with other schools. They share the central mission of passing on the cultural and scientific heritage to the next generation, and of encouraging the personal growth of each pupil through good teaching, outstanding pastoral care and the creation of an effective school community. But Catholic schools also draw distinctive features from their Christian heritage and the way in which they combine their educational and religious missions.

This page aims to set out some of the key characteristics of a Catholic School. It is drawn from various documents, from best practice and from reflection. This outline is used by the Jesuit Institute in its work helping Catholic Schools reflect on their identity and mission.



The person of Jesus Christ is
at the centre of the Catholic School

The person of Jesus Christ is presented to pupils and to staff.
The values and attitudes of Christ are modelled by the adults of the school
community.

Pupils are encouraged to make the values and attitudes of Jesus Christ
their own.

The school recognises the Spirit of the Risen Christ, present, alive and
active in the school community.

From this vision of the Catholic School centred on the person of Jesus Christ, come values and actions which are articulated in the four main areas of
school life:

Studies, Pastoral Care, Religious Life and Personal Formation.

Studies

Catholic schools give their pupils rich and varied **ways of exploring the world God has created** and peopled.

Pupils learn that **God has given us this planet** and its resources for our good and that **we are to use it responsibly**.

Catholic schools propose that **God is be found in all things** and therefore all things are worthy of our interest and study.

The Catholic school is a place where **a spirit of enquiry and the intellectual life flourish**.

Catholic schools propose that **belief in God is compatible with rationality**.

Catholic schools draw upon and pass on to their pupils the long and

Pastoral Care

Catholic schools promote the **emotional and spiritual growth** of their pupils.

Teachers in Catholic schools build **strong and appropriate relationships with pupils** that go beyond teaching: they take an interest in their development, they listen to their cares and concerns about the meaning of life, they share their their hopes and fears, their successes and failures, and **accompany them through their childhood** and teenage years.

Catholic schools ensure **well-judged intervention in children's lives** to provide appropriate professional support and challenge.

Forgiveness is a hallmark of the way Catholic schools deal with pupils.

Religious Life

Catholic schools are **schools of prayer**.

Catholic schools **encourage religious devotion** in simple and regular practices.

Catholic schools **celebrate the liturgy of the Church** following the seasons and feast days of the Church's year.

Catholic schools **teach about justice**, act justly and seek to **promote the common good**.

Catholic schools **reach out to suffering and marginalised individuals and communities**, locally and globally.

Catholic schools are **open and welcoming** to people of other faiths and of no faith.

Personal Formation

Catholic schools seek to **develop the God-given gifts and talents** of each pupil.

Catholic schools seek to **form attitudes and values** in their pupils which are **based on the gospel teaching** and actions of Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools lay **foundations for life-long learning**.

Catholic schools seek to foster in their pupils an **attitude of altruism and generosity**.

Catholic schools provide **a range of extra-curricular activities** which promote the physical, creative, spiritual, and intellectual development of pupils.

Catholic schools encourage pupils to adopt **a way of looking at the**

rich **tradition of Christian learning and creativity.**

Catholic schools provide a **stable and welcoming community** to which children can belong.

Catholic schools recognise and **celebrate the varied successes and achievements of pupils.**

In the Catholic school, **the practice of the Christian faith is not separate from the rest of daily life.**

Catholic schools have **chaplancies** which promote the Christian life and Catholic identity of the school.

world which is positive and engaged, and which seeks to change the world for the better.

Over time, pupils in Catholic schools **encounter the person of Jesus Christ**, manifest in the many ways described above, such that they **develop a personal relationship of faith** with him, that is then **proclaimed in the way they live their lives**, now and in the future.