

St Mary's Primary School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy Collective Worship Policy – April 2020

Mission Statement

Journeying in the light of Christ, together we live and learn

The Nature of Collective Worship

Collective worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.'¹

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily act of worship offered for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups. Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. Responsibility for arranging Collective Worship lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship. However, given the importance of Collective Worship in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured, within Come and See RE curriculum.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of St Mary's School

Worship is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Collective worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church;
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church;
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none;
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Worship at St Mary's is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Collective Worship

Collective Worship in St Mary's School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles

All acts of worship in St Mary's School will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead worship;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.² Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

Planning, content and celebration

Collective Worship is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial Day. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship. We subscribe to TenTen to support collective worship assemblies and classroom prayers. Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations. A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion. Children have the opportunity for prayer at key points in the school day as well as regular prayer journaling opportunities. Staff gather for prayer weekly and all meetings begin with prayer. Teaching staff join together for Come and See for Yourself reflection.

The timetable of Collective Worship is as below.

Mon – Class collective worship – year group specific in classrooms

Tues – Current issues / emotional wellbeing linked to Catholic Social Teaching and significant dates – whole school

Wed – Gospel collective worship – whole school

Thurs – Class Collective worship – year group specific in classrooms

Fri – Celebration collective worship – whole school

Fri – Liturgical music - whole school

See annual and termly liturgy schedules

Leading collective worship

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead collective worship rooted in the Gospel. The Catholic Social Teaching collective worship is led by a senior leader and the celebration collective worship is led by the deputy head teacher. Liturgical music is led by the music lead with support from the RE lead. The class teacher will lead class collective worship. Children are taught to plan and lead worship according to their age using a 4 part child led liturgy structure.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded on the termly and annual liturgy planners as well as more detailed examples in class catholic life files and in children's RE books and prayer journals.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Collective Worship is monitored using Collective Worship monitoring form, pupil collective worship monitoring and pupil voice. Pupil participation is monitored termly as part of subject leader monitoring. As required, collective worship is a focus for governor learning walks. Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform SEF 48.

Resources

Each location for collective worship (class or whole school) has a prayer focus area which matches the season of the liturgical year and always has a cross / crucifix and bible as well as other resources and prompts. Each class has resources accessible to children for their own delivery of collective worship. Resources are stored centrally and are accessible to staff and children (with supervision)

The learning environment

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment'³

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Retreats

Mini Vinnies have the opportunity to come together with other faith groups as part of SCSP Big Praise Big Picnic. With the demise of the InReality team, we are exploring retreat options for other groups of children. As part of the SCSP, staff have the opportunity to attend spiritual wellbeing days and retreats.

Other opportunities

Children attend Parish Mass around 6 times a year and the Parish Priest is a familiar visitor to school. One of the Servite Sisters in the Parish is also St Mary's CAFOD education leader and delivers regular CAFOD based assemblies in school. Children have the opportunity to participate in child led rosary, Advent and Lent prayer sessions. Each year each child is involved in presenting the Nativity, Palm Sunday and Stations of the Cross. We hold a celebration called Easter Rocks! Families participate in worship through the travelling Advent and Lent bags. We celebrate May as the month of Mary and hold a celebration on the feast day of Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. Children can make prayer requests through the prayer box – these are shared in collective worship and on the newsletter.

Sacramental Preparation

Preparing children to receive a sacrament is the role of the parish in accompanying families in their journey of faith. The parish community must continue to be the pre-eminent place for catechesis. The school supports sacramental preparation by attending services and masses, sharing receiving of the sacraments in collective worship, hosting a first communion celebration, praying for those receiving sacraments and creating a prayer focal point for these children.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for children to participate will be maximised. Each KS2 class leads Mass on a rota. Eucharistic celebrations are planned together with the Parish Priest.

Parental Involvement

Parents are involved in many aspects of catholic life and collective worship at St Mary's. They are invited to Eucharistic celebrations, collective worship during Lent and Advent, collective worship for Easter and Mary and other themed collective worship such as remembrance liturgies. Parents are invited to share in carols, RE presentations and Stations of the Cross. Families are involved in prayer through the Advent and Lent bags. They are encouraged to make prayer requests for the newsletter. Parents receive newsletters on collective worship and RE teaching. The weekly newsletter includes a gospel reflection and is accompanied by a liturgy prayer sheet for families.

The coordinator for Collective Worship

Lysie Tuplin, as RE lead teacher, also has responsibility for collective worship in conjunction with the head teacher – see appendix 1.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship coordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Coordinator for Collective Worship

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that Collective Worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship including withdrawal from collective worship
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Collective Worship and providing feedback
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Collective Worship
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Collective Worship
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Collective Worship including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently