St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Achieving Ambitions

PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

We guide our pupils on to the path to achieving their ambitions.

On their journey, they Love one another, Learn to achieve excellence, Laugh through enriching experiences and Live life to the full.

Drafted by	Executive Head
Approved by Governors	Chair of Governors
Reviewed	Autumn 2024
Next Reviewed	Autumn 2026

Introduction

'Love on another as I have loved you'

John 15:12

The life of the school is underpinned by the school's Mission Statement:



We live out the mission by living out our Gospel Values and using these to support us to 'Achieve our Ambitions'

The Nature of Collective Worship

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic School 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 a relationship with him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the strength of the Holy Spirit.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily Act of Worship 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.) We fulfil this requirement through Mission Assemblies, Celebration Assembly, whole school masses, personal prayer, class collective worship, Adoration and Lectio Divina. We also encourage children to enter into spontaneous prayer, with many opportunities provided for this across the school.

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. Collective Worship falls outside of the 10% curriculum time allocated to RE as outlined by the Diocese.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It 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;
- Those with special educational and medical needs.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

The Aims of Collective Worship

We believe that Collective Worship in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To encounter Christ in our daily lives
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development

- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes and the virtues we aspire to
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to. To develop skills of:
- Reverence
- Contemplation
- Reflection
- Interpretation
- Empathy
- Meditation

The Principles of Collective Worship All

Acts of worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Be child led wherever possible, with support from an adult when necessary;
- 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.

The Organisation of Collective Worship

Acts of worship take many forms:

- Prayers in class at the start of each day, including spontaneous prayer intentions. Grace before and after meals, including spontaneous prayers of thanks. Prayers at the end of the day.
- Family prayer group before school
- Lunchtime prayer group
- Class liturgies (To love You more dearly from the Prayer & Liturgy Directory)
- Lectio Divina / Visio Divina / silent listening
- Reconciliation services
- Personal prayer
- Forest school collective worship (focusing on nature / Laudato Si')
- Whole school liturgies, masses, carol services, Stations of the Cross, Adoration and Benediction Dates for whole school acts of worship are planned a term at a time and parents, family members and the parish are informed of the dates and invited to attend.

Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- Following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- Involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims, school virtues and policies
- With flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community

- To develop pupil skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship, participating and contributing in a meaningful way
- To promote the ethos and mission of the school

Delivery

The format for Collective Worship for our school will be:

Gather: How we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candle, prayer focus, crucifix, Bible)

Word: Every liturgy will center on at least one text from the Bible. The Word of God will be proclaimed from a Bible or Lectionary.

Respond: The response hearing the Word of God may lead to symbolic action or communal prayer. The symbolic action may vary (dance, music, drama, art, poetry etc).

Mission: Giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded:

- On a liturgical planner to keep note of themes, pupil groupings and resources (see appendix)
- Through displays, collections of pupil's contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos.
- In class spiritual journals

Monitoring and Evaluation

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

Children self-evaluate class forms of worship and record feedback on their evaluation sheets (see appendix). Classes complete an evaluation form for whole school forms of worship, which are used to inform future planning. The chaplaincy team regularly meet to evaluate their liturgies, and invite classes to provide feedback to help improve future liturgies.

Monitoring of parent's views is collected through the use of comment slips and parent questionnaires.

The designated Governor for Religious Education and Collective Worship is to monitor the policy and practice of Collective Worship within the school, and to liaise with the Head Teacher, RE Subject Leader and School Chaplain.

Resources

Resources are stored in a central place to ensure access for all. There are a variety of books, posters, artefacts, prayers and suitable music available. Each class has their own Liturgy Box which can be used to create a prayer focus, displays and prayer table within the class. Each class also have their own prayer bags and Rosary's.

Voluntary Worship & Retreats

During the months of October and May the children are invited to pray the Rosary at lunchtime in the Chillax/Prayer Area

The School Chaplains provide prayer cards in our main reception area, so that any visitors to our school can take time to pray, if they wish to.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations for our school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. 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. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to the 'Directory for Masses with Children' as a basis for our practice. This will be led by our Parish Priest, along with pupils from different year groups. Adoration is held throughout the school year, in line with the Church's calendar.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Executive Head, Head of School, RE Lead, School Chaplain and designated governor and is evaluated and reviewed by the staff and Governors every two years.

Policy reviewed: September 2024

Date of next review: September 2026

Appendix

1. **Legal Requirements**

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship 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.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that 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.

As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, “on a special occasion”.

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests 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 that those which are specifically structured.

2. **Culture of Prayer**

3. **Collective Worship Progression Document**

4. **Planning Guidance**

5. **Planning Sheet**

6. **Evaluation Sheet**