



# St Francis Catholic Primary School

## Collective Worship Policy

Head Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Written: Autumn 2020

This document will be reviewed as required and in line with legal requirements.

## School Mission Statement

### **'I am a sign of God's love'**

At St. Francis we love, learn and grow in the footsteps of Jesus and are active signs of God's love through praying, respecting and serving others.

## THE NATURE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We believe that Christian 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.'

Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

## 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".

Responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

## THE PLACE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN THE LIFE OF OUR SCHOOL

Worship in our school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. It is of prime importance, however, that sound educational and pastoral principles determine the ways in which these are extended in the school community. It is the task of the school... to promote and develop as appreciation of and a more active participation in prayer, worship and liturgy.

(Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School)

It is through the observance of and participation in acts of prayer, worship and celebration of the Liturgy that the child has the opportunity to express his/her faith and to develop a relationship with God.

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.

School, for many of our pupils is their first, sustained experience of the Catholic tradition. Thus, we provide a range of opportunities where their faith can be practised

- Formal prayer: morning, afternoon, at mealtimes
- Reflective prayer in the form of guided meditations
- Collective Prayer in the form of assemblies: whole school and Class-led
- Celebration of Mass: class led every Thursday morning, important feast days, the beginning and end of each school term.

## **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 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
- 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 our 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. In order to do this, celebrations will be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

## **ORGANISATION**

### **Collective Worship in our school is organised as follow**

- Monday a.m. – Whole School Prayer service and assembly
- Tuesday a.m. – Class Prayer Services
- Wednesday a.m. – EYFS & KS1 Prayer, p.m. KS2 Prayer Service and Hymn Practice
- Thursday a.m. – Mass in Church / Prayer services in classroom
- Friday p.m. – Celebration Assembly/ Worship

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN OUR SCHOOL**

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Feast days, significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Remembrance day etc. and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- involving consultation with appropriate parties and inviting Parishioners and parents to participate in some celebrations
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

### **MASSES**

The whole school celebrates Mass together with our parents and parish community at least once every half term. Children play an active part in each Mass, through reading, praying, singing, altar serving and taking part in offertory processions. Each class takes it in turn to lead and prepare the celebration based on the liturgical year, focusing on solemnities, feast days and memorials of saints important to the children.

Pupils and their families are also invited to participate in Sacramental Masses for First Holy Communion and Confirmation which supports their journey of faith as members of our wider Church Community.

Children who attend Mass at St. Francis Church are encouraged to become altar servers both for parish and school Masses.

### **ASSEMBLIES**

There are two weekly whole-school assemblies led by different members of staff, the first of which focuses upon the liturgical year with the relevant liturgy of the word which is led by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The second 'Celebration' assembly celebrates the achievements and success of our children's God-given talents and is supported by the help of our Assembly Preparation Team. There are also an EYFS & Key Stage One assembly and a Key Stage Two assembly once a week that are also used as a way of reflecting on important Church and RE curriculum themes.

### **FORMAL AND TRADITIONAL PRAYER**

Children are encouraged to develop their individual prayer life through daily participation in our formal prayers such as our morning prayer, grace before and after meals and evening prayer. It is important that we enable pupils to participate in community of the Church through learning our traditional Church prayers. Formal prayers, appropriate to the age and maturity of the year group are taught through the RE Strategy, each class teacher is given a copy of the prayers that

their class are expected to learn in each year. This are all in line with Diocesan recommendations.

### **FAITH BUDDIES**

Our two sacramental classes are paired together to help support and share their experience of sacramental preparation. The children are invited to share the preparations and the celebrations with their 'Faith Buddy'. The children write prayers for each other as well as joining together for joint Mass and prayer services throughout the academic year.

### **PRAYER THROUGH THE RE CURRICULUM**

Pupils also experience worship through their RE curriculum. Pupils learn about prayer and worship as a discreet topic within the RE strategy as well as using prayer as way of developing their about their faith. Focus Prayers are displayed in classrooms. Pupils have opportunities to take part in the Rosary during the months of May and October.

### **HYMN PRACTICE**

The children participate in weekly hymn practices, where they learn Mass responses and sing both traditional and modern hymns. Music is a central part of worship in our school and hymns are used in all areas of worship from supporting themes within Masses and assemblies to providing atmosphere through chants and reflective music. The children enjoy singing; a number of them sing in the school choir, which has a very important part to play in Mass and liturgical celebrations.

## **LEADING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

As faith leaders of the school, the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will plan and lead collective worship at least once a week. Members of the Senior Leadership Team and other teaching staff will also lead whole school collective worship at various times throughout the academic year. The class teacher will lead class collective worship. Children are taught to plan and lead worship according to their age.

## **RECORDING**

Collective Worship is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs etc.
- in the Catholic Life folder and RE Journals in each classroom.
- in the Liturgy planner folder in the library.

## **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.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform SEF 48.

## **RESOURCES**

There are many resources available in school for Collective Worship. These are kept in classrooms, the library and the DHT office. Staff also have access to up-to-date resources shared on the staff-drive by the DHT.

## **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' <sup>1</sup>

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference the 'Values and Virtues' for the half term. In this way, the focal points in the classrooms and the displays around school, are outward signs of the school's ethos.

## **RETREATS AND VISITS**

We have regular support in school from St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College who engage and lead liturgical ideas and allow the children to reflect and respond through music and prayer.

Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to visit Alton Castle as a residential retreat. Pupils throughout the school also have the opportunity to visit places of religious and spiritual significance such as St. Chad's Cathedral and Harvington Hall, these visits help pupils understand their faith history experience how others worship.

## **PARISH AND PARENT LINKS**

As part of the Church community the school is developing links with the parish. The Church newsletter is displayed in our school foyer to inform parents of Mass times etc.

Liturgies and celebrations and events related to the Catholic Life of our school are shared in school newsletters. Parents and families are regularly invited to join the school community in Masses and fundraising activities.

Parents of children in Sacramental year groups are also invited to Sacramental Meetings and Commitment Masses as part of the Sacramental Preparation Programme. Parents and families also support the school in being able to offer an extensive range of educational visits to various places of worship.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

Parents and catechists are involved in preparing the children in Year 3 for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and their First Holy Communion. There are three meetings throughout the year for the parents. All children in Year 3 are expected to attend the Sacramental Masses.

In preparation for Confirmation, parents and sponsors are actively involved. There are a series of meetings which the parents attend. Again, all children in Year 6 are expected to attend the Confirmation Masses.

---

There is also a Commitment Mass which involves the children preparing for Sacraments, their peers who are not receiving the Sacraments, parents, teachers and the parish, where the children commit themselves to the process of making their Sacraments, in due course.

The school supports this sacramental preparation and pupils share their experiences with the school community through prayer, assemblies and celebration and thanksgiving Masses.

## **DIFFERENTIATION**

Collective worship enables each child to participate and respond to liturgy and worship in an appropriate way to their age and maturity but also using a formal and reflective prayer in a variety to suit the needs of our children and allow them to worship in ways in which they feel comfortable. Collective worship is accessible to all children in our school.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The fair and equal treatment of all individuals irrelevant of race, creed, disability or gender, are integral to the Gospels' Revelations and the Church's message and is central to our school mission statement. All children are given equal access to the Religious Education curriculum, promoting their understanding to their full potential.

A variety of prayer and worship activities are used to try to meet all children's different needs e.g. whole School, whole class, group, pair and individual prayer, also different styles of prayer from formal liturgies to private reflective prayer.

## **GOVERNING BODY**

RE together with Collective worship is always a key part of the School Development Plan, and is reported upon termly as part of the Head Teacher's Report to Governors. Governors are also invited to join with other members of the whole school community in the celebration of Mass and other celebrations relating to the Catholic Life of the School.

## **POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The RE Coordinator will monitor the implementation of the policy. All staff will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy in helping to improve standards of collective worship within the school. This evaluation will inform the process for reviewing this policy. Pupils and Foundation Governors will be involved in reviewing and evaluating liturgy in school with the Coordinator and this will feed into any developments as we move forward.

## **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

*[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group, which might include, the coordinator, the headteacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the coordinator to lead this group.]*