

PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School Chiswick *“Living
and learning, inspired by our faith”*



May 2024

OTR Sank
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Chair of Governors

REC Lead– Miss L Scannell

Head of Faith Life – Miss E Keane and Miss L Scannell

Governor with responsibility for Religious Education – Canon M Dunne

School Chaplain – Fr Daniel Daley

Next Review Date: May 2026

Introduction:

The key reason why Catholic schools were established is to be part of the Church's mission in education, to place Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church at the centre of people's lives. (Christ at the Centre, 2012)

As a Catholic school, the foundation of all that we do is based upon Christ and His Gospel values of love, peace and justice. All members of our community share the responsibility of supporting the Catholic identity of the school. We will strive to ensure that we place Christ and the teachings of the Church at the heart of what we do.

It is recognised that '...the first educators in the faith are parents. By their example in the home and the participation in the Mass and other sacraments, the foundations of life-long faith and discipleship in their children are laid down.' (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2000)

As a Catholic school, we support parents in their role as the first educators. Our Mission at St. Mary's is to follow the teaching of the Catholic Church in its daily life through the celebration of the liturgy and through following the values taught in the Gospel of Jesus.

Through collective worship in school, we offer opportunities for children to develop and grow in their faith. We seek to ensure that the message and spirit of the Gospel permeates all aspects of school life. It is to this end that we have agreed the following Mission Statement - '**Living and learning, inspired by our faith**'.

It is our mission to nurture and develop the full educational potential of each child based on the example and inspiration of Jesus Christ. We achieve this by providing a very high-quality education in a caring atmosphere of happiness and security, where all are valued and encouraged to reach their goals. The life of our school is firmly founded on gospel values, preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. We celebrate and value the uniqueness of the individual and believe each child is, "created in the image and likeness of God". (Gen 1:27)

The requirement to provide Collective Worship

Pupils in VA (Voluntary Aided) schools in England and Wales are required by law to take part in an act of collective worship on each school day which must be in accordance with the provisions of the school's trust deed and instrument of government. In Catholic schools this is therefore "in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church".

Collective Worship is more than just a legal requirement and is central to what we offer at St. Mary's.

Collective Worship Aims

At St Mary's, it is our belief that worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child: spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually, is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

Through collective worship, our aims will support the following:

- School Mission Statement
Our acts of collective worship will reflect and support the development of the school ethos and Mission Statement. Gospel values and prayer will provide the foundation for our worship enabling children to grow in the knowledge and love of Christ.

- **Community**
Through collective worship, we will support our children to recognise and understand their role as a part of the school, Parish and wider Church communities as followers of Christ. Through shared links between home, Parish and school, personal achievements and significant events will be celebrated as a part of the community. Children will develop a sense of shared ethos and values.
- **Relationships**
Through collective worship, children will be offered opportunities to reflect and grow in their personal relationship with God. Through prayer and reflection, we will enhance the spiritual and personal growth of each child. Children will be able to contemplate, 'wonder at', come to terms and give worth to the mystery of God.
- **Church**
Our acts of collective worship will be guided by the traditions and liturgical year of the Church. The children will be supported to learn prayers and traditions of the Church and experience the seasons within the Church's year. Scripture, particularly from the Lectionary, will be used to support acts of collective worship.
Collective worship at St. Mary's aims to give honour and praise to God. Therefore, acts of collective worship must be of high quality and always respectful to the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. Worship of God has both a personal dimension and a communal dimension: personal, private worship is encouraged to complement communal worship (*Christ at the Centre, 2012*).

Collective Worship and Prayer at St. Mary's

Liturgy shapes prayer and worship to enable all pupils to have a conscious, active, meaningful and fruitful participation. (*Christ at the Centre, 2012*)

Acts of collective worship at St. Mary's take place in a variety of forms. These are supported by the learning environments around the school, which reflect the school's Catholic identity and mission.

- **Daily Prayers**
The daily routine of school involves time for prayers
 - morning reflection and prayer
 - Grace before meals
 - end of day prayer
 Prayers are also said during other acts of collective worship. Spontaneous prayer is encouraged, responding to the needs of the children (when individual prayer is needed) and the wider community.
- **Mass**
As Catholics, we believe the centre of our faith is the Eucharist. Through this Sacrament we are joined in communion with Christ. Working with our Parish Priests, we will celebrate Mass in school on Holy Days of Obligation and during significant times during the school year. Mass is celebrated as a whole school, within phases and as year groups in the local Parish regularly, with parents invited.
- **Child Led Worship**
Central to supporting children in growing in their love and knowledge of Christ is the opportunity to plan and lead acts of worship. Children from across the school are supported to plan and lead their class in a time of worship. This can be in the form of readings, reflections, prayer or singing, dependent on the age of the class. This takes place weekly.
- **Key Stage Teacher Led Worship**
Each week, the school gathers in key stages to come together for collective worship. Teachers take turns to lead this time of worship, and involve children in the planning and delivery.

- **Hymn Practice**
This time of worship is led by a member of staff, in key-stages. Children learn a variety of songs and hymns, both contemporary and traditional and reflect on the Scripture message for the week. The liturgical year guides the choice of music used for worship.
- **Whole School Collective Worship / Gospel Assembly**
Each Monday, the whole school comes together for Gospel Assembly, which is led by the head teacher or deputy head teacher with the support of our school chaplaincy team, known as The GIFT Team. As a school, this gives us a time to come together, spend time in the presence of God, reflect upon the previous week and the week ahead. Each Friday, we come together as a school community for a Celebration Assembly, where a form of collective worship commences the achievements of the week.
- **Other Liturgies**
Throughout the year, we celebrate different liturgies linked to the life of the Church such as the Carol Service, Easter Liturgy, and Stations of the Cross, Feast of Annunciation, Year 6 Leavers, etc. Children from different year groups are involved in the planning and preparation of these.
- **Staff Prayer**
Catholic schools are committed to communal prayer, and as such, staff at St Mary's meet on Wednesday afternoons for staff prayers followed by a briefing of the week. Staff meetings always begin with a time of prayer and whole Staff Inset days begin with a liturgy. Governors also pray together at the beginning of their meetings.

St. Mary's school worship and Liturgy Timetable is

Monday	Whole school Gospel Assembly linked to Sunday's Gospel, led by our Headteacher and GIFT Team
Tuesday	Key-stage Worship linked to our Gospel Value for the week led by a class teacher
Wednesday	Whole School Assembly – Class Assemblies, GIFT Team Assemblies, House Saints Assemblies (Led by House Captains and GIFT Team) and Virtues Assemblies
Thursday	Hymn Practice - including an act of worship
Friday	Celebration Assembly - including an act of worship

Individual Prayers

Worship of God has both a personal dimension and communal dimension. Therefore, private worship is also encouraged to complement communal worship (Christ at the Centre, 2012). Students learn that prayer can be an informal 'talking to God' and are encouraged to say or write their own prayer. Teachers model how to say a prayer in response to a request regarding a specific intention.

- **Prayer Tables**
Prayer tables are there to support collective worship and the Catholic Life of the school. Each classroom has a prayer table and crucifix. Around the school, prayer tables and focal points are provided to enhance worship and allow children to explore their faith even more.
- **Reconciliation**
Reconciliation services planned during the seasons of Advent and Lent are led by the Parish Priests and provide the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- **Individual Reflections**
Children are given time for prayer and silent reflection. Opportunities for reflection are provided before and after worship as children enter and leave the hall to appropriate instrumental music.

Links to Home and Parents

Links with home to support collective worship are important. Parents are invited to join certain acts of worship in school and in the Parish. Prayer resources and knowledge for what the children are studying is shared with families each term. RE newsletters, Knowledge Organisers and GIFT Team newsletters are sent out to parents via the school website to allow parents to assist with learning.

Monitoring of Collective Worship

The RE Subject Leader will monitor the delivery of collective worship at St. Mary's. Collective worship is planned using the suggested format from the Diocese of Westminster: Planning sheets, photographs and evidence of children's prayers and reflections are collated in the classroom collective worship book.

Acts of worship and prayer areas may be monitored by the RE subject Leader and members of the SLT to ensure high quality collective worship is provided, and that worship is in line with the traditions of the Catholic Church.

Monitoring also allows opportunities for good practise to be identified, shared and celebrated.

Roles and Responsibilities

Shared Role of Headteacher and RE Leader:

- provide a strategic lead and direction for Prayer and Liturgy;
- support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to Prayer and Liturgy;
- provide efficient resource management for Prayer and Liturgy;
- ensure that there is a daily act of Prayer and Liturgy, either whole school or in class;
- ensure the Prayer and Liturgy policy is reviewed and updated in line with the school's cycle of policy review;
- review the CSED sections relating to Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education and Collective Worship of the school at least annually.

School Chaplaincy – The GIFT Team

Our school chaplaincy team, known as *The GIFT Team*, actively encourage pupils to join in and lead prayer and liturgy with confidence. They are our school's spiritual leaders. Their role in school includes leading the children in spiritual faith, encouraging children to apply what they have learnt from the Bible's teachings into everyday practice and developing good relationships within both the school and wider community.

The roles of The GIFT Team include:

- Setting up for Liturgy, Prayer and Worship;
- Leading and modelling Child Led Worship;
- Leading prayers in class;
- Leading whole school Assemblies (once a half term);
- Facilitating the daily use of the Prayer Garden where possible.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.