

St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School

*'Together we strive for excellence, inspired by the joy of the Gospel'*





## **Collective Worship Policy**

### **Vision Statement**

***'Together we strive for excellence inspired by the joy of the Gospel'***

### **Mission Statement**

'It is our aim here at St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas to foster a caring and loving environment by the encouragement of all members of the school community. We ensure a welcoming, friendly approach where parents and visitors feel comfortable and are positively encouraged to participate in the life of the school. For each child entrusted to our care, we seek to provide a haven of security and safety that will enable and encourage confidence and happiness to flourish in a community founded on love and respect.'

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

### **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 & St. Thomas Aquinas Primary 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.

### **The Aims of Collective Worship**

Collective Worship in St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas 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 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. 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.

Parish and parents are invited to participate in many of our celebrations.

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

The timetable of Collective Worship is attached to policy.

### **Leading collective worship**

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher and SLT will plan and lead collective worship. 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 in class Collective Worship Planning Files.



## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Collective Worship is monitored using Collective Worship monitoring form, (Appendix 1) on a regular basis throughout each term within the academic school year.

Governors are also encouraged to attend/monitor acts of worship which are scheduled every Friday afternoon 2.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

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

## **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>2</sup>

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**

Each year usually during the spring/summer term, the children from Year 5 attend a 2 day retreat at Allensford Youth Village.

The Year 6 class each year spend a weeks residential on Holy Island of which 1-2 days are spent on pilgrimage on the island with MorethanDance – 'The Way of the Cross'.

## **The coordinator for Collective Worship**

The co-ordinator for Collective Worship is James Craig.

## **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.



## 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