

Collective Worship Policy

St Francis' Catholic Primary School



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Approved by Committee:

Next review due by: June 2024

Collective Worship Policy

The aim of this policy is to clearly communicate to staff, parents and pupils the manner in which Collective worship is delivered.

At St Francis' School, we aim to provide a warm, welcoming, happy and caring environment in which individuals can explore, express and develop their own personal relationship with God within the context of a worshipping community. Our faith is at the heart of all we do and the broad and balanced curriculum we aim to provide is within this context. The school encourages and values the role played by teachers, governors, parents and the wider community in supporting the spiritual, physical and educational growth of all our children. We place great importance upon the daily Act of Worship and truly hope to be seen as a Gospel inspired community.

Aims

Collective Worship at St Francis School aims to: -

- Create a caring, Catholic Community within which all feel welcome, valued and respected and in which the faith life of each individual will be nurtured and developed according to the values and teachings of the Christian Gospels.
- Give opportunities to experience a sense of belonging.
- Provide experiences of a loving and worshipping community.
- Provide the opportunity for pupils and staff to come together to worship God.
- Think about the needs of others.
- Give opportunities for pupils and staff to consider and reflect on spiritual and moral issues.
- Respond to and celebrate life and God's environment
- Give pupils opportunities to explore and share beliefs.
- Encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening and joining in the worship offered.
- Promote a common ethos and shared value.
- Reinforce positive attitudes.
- Enrich religious experience.
- Contemplate something of the mystery of God.
- Help pupils to grow in liturgical understanding and development.
- Reinforce prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition.

The legal requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily Act of Worship for all pupils. The Act must occur in school time, but not necessarily with the whole school gathered in one place or at the beginning of the school day. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said by either the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil the legal requirement of 'a daily act of worship'. 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.

The Headteacher, in consultation with the Governing Body, is responsible for ensuring that Collective Worship is provided for all pupils every day.

Safeguarding Statement

We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure environment. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at St Francis'. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

The Place of Collective Worship in the life of the 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.

We endorse the belief that Collective Worship should take 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 educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Features of Collective Worship

Collective Worship seeks to develop

- A sense of reverence and devotion
- A sense of awe, wonder and mystery
- A sense of identity, uniqueness and self-worth
- An awareness that life involves choices, right or wrong, good or evil etc
- A sense of pattern, sequence and change.

It will be

- short and appropriately paced
- simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a range of settings.

Worship may take a variety of forms:

- Whole school Masses
- Whole school good work assemblies
- Class liturgies
- Reconciliation services
- An experience on residential visits or day trips
- In the school prayer garden or school grounds, school hall or classroom, Church or other suitable venue.

In all of our liturgies we try to make use of artefacts and visual aids which enhance the spiritual awareness of the children.

The Programme of Collective Worship at St Francis

Collective worship takes place in the following activities

- Daily class worship and prayers
- School and Key Stage and Class assemblies
- School Masses and Celebrations of the Sacraments
- Worship times with families supported by our school eg 'Prayer bags', 'Prayer Bear', Prayers on the playground (Advent/Lent)

The timing and organisation of daily Collective Worship is flexible and although it may not be held at the start of the school day, each class teacher has allocated time each day for Collective Worship (see class timetables)

There may be a single Act of Worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils in different classes or year groups.

Collective Worship may take place in the classroom, the hall, the church or the outdoors; in fact it may take place wherever a group is gathered and have the urge to praise God.

Guest visitors and clergy members are sometimes used to deliver assemblies/acts of worship on a variety of topics including supporting various kinds of charity work.

The Character of worship in St Francis School and some practical guidelines

Collective Worship in St Francis', while respecting diversity of belief and commitment, is Catholic in character. It reflects the tradition of the Church and has Christ at its heart.

Collective Worship follows the liturgical year and takes a variety of forms which include:

Sacramental celebration

Other celebrations eg Holy Week, Harvest, Welcome Liturgy

Reflection, including Retreats

Silent Prayer

Hymns and Scriptural readings

Cross Curricular activities eg art and drama

Whole School and Class groupings

Gospel Value Assemblies

Age-related groupings take place regularly to allow the content of Collective Worship to be targeted more closely to the pupils' needs. Liturgies may take the form of celebrations for each RE topic or may focus on seasonal events.

Daily prayers are said in each class, usually in the morning, before lunch and at home time. These will involve formal and informal prayers with time also given for private prayer.

Acts of worship led by the Head teacher and class teachers should be examples of good practice, which enable pupils to develop skills so they can prepare, organise and lead Worship.

The broad and rich diversity of Worship Practice might include:

- Introductory music to create the mood and focus attention
- The singing of hymns and songs
- The reading of a short passage of scripture
- Appreciation of a painting/work of art
- Appreciation of a piece of music
- Having a talk/story
- Taking part in a closing prayer
- The opportunity for children to share their own thoughts and prayers.
- The use of artefacts.
- The use of ICT and multimedia (DVD, power-points etc)
- Drama and role-play
- The questioning of pupils and the opportunities for quiet reflection.
- There should be a sense of peace, thankfulness and stillness in the midst of a busy experience.

Collective Worship is well resourced, both in regard to content and the continued professional development of those planning and leading. This includes training pupils to plan and lead.

Resources include a variety of Bibles, stories with a biblical theme, Prayer books, posters, artefacts, ideas for services and assemblies, the God Matters RE Curriculum scheme, liturgical cloths. The RE subject lead is always willing to help teachers select suitable resources.

In each classroom there should be

- A focus area for prayer/worship displaying a relevant theme or liturgical season. The cloth used for the display area changes to suit the liturgical season.
- A copy of the Bible, open at a relevant piece of scripture
- A crucifix, statues or other appropriate artefacts
- An interactive activity for the children to participate in

Pupil Involvement

Taking part in Collective Worship implies more than simply passive attendance. It follows that an Act of Collective Worship should be capable of eliciting a response from pupils, even though on a particular occasion some of the pupils may not feel actively able to identify with the act of worship.

At St Francis' the children are encouraged to aid the planning process for Collective Worship and contribute ideas and suggestions eg theme music, prayers and activities. They should have a sense of belonging and help to create a calm, peaceful and positive atmosphere. All the children are encouraged to participate in the singing of hymns, the prayers and the time for reflection and thanksgiving. The prayers may be formal or informal and be developmental and age-appropriate. Pupils should find the Acts of Collective Worship enjoyable and relevant to their everyday lives and experiences. Children are helped to develop skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

Celebration of Mass

Whole school Eucharist celebrations in school highlight special occasions and are celebrated with children, staff, parents and parishioners. Children also have the opportunity to participate in class and parish Masses either in school or in the parish church. Children take an active part in preparing the Mass and take key roles including welcomer, reader and altar server. Hymns are chosen which express the mood or theme of the Mass.

Feedback and Evaluation

Collective worship is recorded through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos, Powerpoint presentations and the school website.

Individual teachers keep records of class liturgies including notes about themes, resources, leaders, pupil groupings and evaluations (what went well / even better if).

Feedback from Collective Worship is largely verbal between staff and children. It is also evident in the way children respond and behave towards each other and in the general atmosphere and level of expectations within our school.

Including Everyone in the religious life of our school

We ensure children of all faith backgrounds are given the same opportunities within Religious Education. Similarly, all children will be given the same opportunity to take part in the prayer life of the school. Although our Religious and prayer life are predominantly Catholic, we celebrate and value the contribution that children of other faiths make to everyone's spiritual development. We welcome opportunities to explore differences and similarities between different faiths; we recognise that such exploration provides everyone involved with the opportunity to strengthen their faith.

Right of Withdrawal

If the parent of a pupil in attendance at our school requests that he/she be wholly or partly excluded from attendance at religious worship in school, the pupil will be excused accordingly until the request is withdrawn.

Other Faiths

We encourage others of different faiths to share their faith experiences through class assemblies and workshops to encourage knowledge, understanding and tolerance in our diverse community.

The Role of the RE Subject Lead

The Co-ordinator will

- Take the lead in policy development and its effective delivery throughout the school.
- Support colleagues in the development of Collective Worship in the classroom and in assemblies.
- Arrange CPD opportunities
- Monitor progress in the delivery and development of Collective Worship.
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of resources for Collective Worship, including the collection of evidence across the school.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in Collective worship and indicate areas for further improvement.
- Use specially allocated management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe lessons of collective worship across the school.

The co-ordinator will be further supported in their role through governor links.

The quality of teaching and learning in Collective Worship will be reviewed and evaluated by the Head teacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and moderation.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.