**School Motto**

*God shines within our hearts.*

*Jesus walks by our side.*

*The Holy Spirit gives us strength.*

There is no better way of carrying out this intention than by welcoming visitors into our school within the ethos and philosophy expressed in the above Mission Statement.

Mission Statement

*‘Our school is a little bit of heaven on earth. It is a Christ centred community where we are the people*

# *and Jesus is the love, the care and the courage.’(Pupils)*

St. Mary’s offers a unique opportunity to ensure every child is nurtured in their journey of faith, recognising that they are all important and precious and spiritually fulfilled. They are celebrated within an environment

which has the Gospel Values of forgiveness, love and kindness embedded into everything that we do. Pupils develop an understanding of communal obligations and personal aspirations to develop their role as global citizens.

We try to follow in Jesus’ footsteps through our actions, thoughts and words especially in our charitable efforts in helping those in need within our community and the wider world.

# *‘When we help others, our trust becomes stronger.’ (Pupils)*

All children have the opportunity to fulfil their God given talents, to be the best they can be. Every child is a dream found in God’s heart. They all have a sacred purpose and that is to do something wonderful with their lives. Everyone is unique, we are all equal and we respect each other working in harmony.

# *‘We look after God’s world because he made it for us. When I look at the sky I look at God.’ (Pupils)*

**Prayer and Liturgy Policy**

In St. Mary’s CVA there is a range of prayer and liturgy including class prayer, assemblies, silent reflection, devotions, special services for times within the school year, celebration of mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Many of these are personalised to the needs and requirements of the school

Within our Catholic community, where prayer, liturgy and reflection are an important part of our daily life, the Christian values of friendship, compassion and forgiveness are shared with all.

We believe that Christian prayer and liturgy 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, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

As Catholic Christians, we are guided by the values of the Gospel and the beliefs of our own faith tradition, whilst at the same time, respectful of the beliefs of others.

Therefore, it considers the religious and educational needs of all, who share in it, whatever their denomination or religious standing.

**Legal Requirements.**

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of liturgy and prayer for all pupils. Yet it is much more than a legal requirement- it is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The headteacher is responsible for arranging daily prayer and celebration of the word after consulting with the governing body.

We understand that simply holding an assembly, which includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement.

We also acknowledge that Celebration of the word, liturgy and prayer are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering but the difference between them 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.

**Values and Aims.**

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 and parents and the wider community in supporting the spiritual, physical and educational growth of all our children.

We would truly hope to be seen as a Gospel inspired community.

We believe at this school that collective 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 liturgy and prayer.

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.

# The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that Prayer and Liturgy 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

**Through our liturgy and prayer we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:**

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 attitude

To participate fully

To take time out to ‘wonder at’ to ‘come to terms with’ and ‘give worth to.’

**Principles**

All acts of worship in this school will:

* give Glory and honour to God
* be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
* give children 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:**

* on a small scale and wherever possible, help to personalise the experience
* short and paced appropriately for the age of the children
* as simple as possible

**Planning Celebration of the word will be:**

Properly planned

Adequately resourced Recorded Monitored Evaluated

Prayer and Celebration of the Word and Liturgy is seen as an essential part of Religious experience and is therefore

an integral part of our school day.

We aim to actively involve children in ways which are suited to their age and stage of personal, social and religious development.

**Prayer and liturgy may take a variety of forms:**

* Whole School Masses
* Rejoice Celebrations
* Whole School Virtues themed Assemblies
* Class Liturgies / Masses
* Reconciliation Services
* An experience on residential visits
* In the school memorial garden and Rainbow room.
* Older pupils teaching younger pupils how to plan a celebration of the word and teach simple prayers in line with the Progression of skills Celebration of the Word document.

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

# Masses

The whole school celebrates Mass at the beginning of the year, Sacrament of Holy Communion and at the end of the Summer term.

All classes attend week day mass. Mass is also celebrated on Holy Days which occur within the school week, during term time.

In addition, Year Three children are involved in First Forgiveness and First Holy Communion celebrations. At the end of the academic year, we have a mass and a Leavers’ assembly celebrating their final year in the school. These celebrations allow the children to be actively involved in the liturgy. Parents are invited to participate in the celebrations.

# Assemblies

A whole school assembly- Celebration of the Word is held at the beginning of each school week.

Key Stage assemblies take place weekly followed by Star of the Week (based on Virtues)assembly on a Friday.

# Sacrament of Reconciliation

At Key Stage 2, a class reconciliation services take place during the seasons of Advent and Lent. The celebration includes readings, prayers and songs and the children are also given time for quiet reflection.

An opportunity is then given for the children to receive the sacrament individually.

The children at Key Stage 1, participate in less formal services.

# Class Liturgies

Within the classroom setting, liturgies may take the form of celebrations for each topic or may focus on seasonal events.

Parents / guardians / governors are welcome to attend any of the liturgies and masses.

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

Each classroom also has a focal point for prayer. There is a crucifix, and there may be a poster or a special book chosen by the teacher and the children. This display with the appropriate coloured cloth changes to suit the liturgical season. Each class has a holding cross which is kept on the class prayer focus.

It may be used privately by children or during class prayer times and liturgies.

**The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy is planned:**

* Following a structure with reference to the Church’s seasons, linking with the R.E. scheme, or significant dates. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship.
* Involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies.
* With flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.
* To develop the children’s skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
* Guest visitors and clergy members are also used to deliver assemblies on a variety of topics including supporting various kinds of charity work.

**Recording Prayer and Liturgy is recorded:**

* In a liturgy folder so that there is a note of themes, leaders, children’s groupings and resources.
* Through displays, collections of children’s contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

We also feel that each Religious Educationlesson is an act of worship.

The celebration of the Eucharist, being central to the Catholic life of our school and collective worship, allows for masses and services to be celebrated throughout the year, to mark special events in the church’s liturgical year and /or life of the school.

**Resources**

The subject lead oversees the provision of resources. All the children have access to a range of cloths and items with which to dress the focus table, in order for it to reflect the church’s liturgical year and or special events in the church’s calendar.

* Each class has its own liturgy box, which they use to plan class or key stage worship.
* The school has a wide variety of bibles (including class sets) which are age appropriate. Each class also has a range of books which are concerned with religious subjects such as prayer, the mass and people of faith.
* We have a forest school area, where collective worship regularly takes place, especially in key stage 1 in order to better appreciate the wonder of creation.

# Voluntary Prayer

The chaplaincy team meet each week and help younger pupils to prepare a celebration of the word and teach them simple prayers.

They will also celebrate important events in the church’s year e.g. meet once a week in October and May to lead the Rosary.

The Rainbow Room, opened by Bishop Malcolm, is always available for quiet prayer and reflection during playtimes and lunchtimes.

Parish Community Parishioners are always encouraged to join us in celebrating the Eucharist, liturgies and to attend whole school worship throughout the year.

**Pupil Leadership**

All pupils participate in liturgy and prayer with clear identification of liturgy leaders.

**Pupil engagement and creativity**

A range of role play, quizzes, group discussion and art are regularly used within worship.

# Personal Impact

Pupils link liturgy and prayer to world events through their teaching in Global Learning and Picture News (for example G7 and Climate Change) and liturgical themes.

# Monitoring and Review of the policy

The coordination and planning of Prayer and Liturgy is the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

* Supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in Prayer and Liturgy, and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject in the school.
* Evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in Prayer and Liturgy and indicates areas for further improvement.
* Evidence of the children’s work, and to observe lessons of Prayer and Liturgy across the school. The quality of teaching and learning in Prayer and Liturgy is reviewed and evaluated by the Headteacher as part of the school’s agreed cycle of monitoring and moderation. Subject leaders are further supported in their role through governor links.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

The headteacher keeps a record of monitoring, to ensure worship meets the neds of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship. Members of the LGB also monitor Acts of Prayer.

The chaplaincy team will also monitor liturgies occasionally. Our new Lay Chaplain also organises with the pupils’ class retreats and supports pupils and teachers in the delivery of liturgy and prayer. The children themselves evaluate the liturgies and the responses are shared with the children and kept in a file.

The policy is monitored by the RE subject lead, who is also the headteacher and is to be reviewed by the staff and governors every two years. It is due to be reviewed in October 2025.

**This policy is based on the CMAT Trust Aims, Diocesan Expectations, Staff and Pupil Voice in conjunction with the Governing Body and the lay Chaplain.**

Guidance on the right of withdrawal from religious education and/or collective worship in schools in England

(CES)

(i) The right of withdrawal from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship Parents of pupils in VA schools and voluntary academies9 are permitted, by law, to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of religious education10 and/or collective worship11 given at the school and any such request shall stand until such time that a parent’s request is withdrawn

