



Archdiocese of Birmingham

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Fiennes Road, Banbury, Oxon OX16 0ET

Head Teacher: Ms Clare Smith

Policy for Collective Worship at St Joseph's

Mission Statement:

EVERY CHILD CALLED BY NAME

The mission of our school is for every child to know that they are a unique creation made in the image and likeness of God, uniquely precious and uniquely gifted and called by God to fulfil a special service or purpose in the world.

Our aims:

- to give glory, honour and praise to God;
- to encourage all members of the school community to develop a close relationship with God through prayer and reflection, and to promote a depth of understanding of God's love for us;
- to help children to learn and participate thoughtfully in the prayers and liturgies of the Catholic Church;
- to provide opportunities for children to be involved in planning, preparing and leading acts of worship;
- to promote and encourage the sacramental life of children and families, to contribute to community cohesion and to promote amongst all the spirit of love and service in both the school and wider communities.

Legal requirements:

Collective worship is a legal daily requirement which is distinct from curriculum time. For Catholic schools this requirement is made explicit within the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham which states: "Religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ."¹

¹ Archdiocese of Birmingham 'Instrument of Government for Catholic Voluntary Aided Schools.'

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Parents wishing to withdraw their children from collective worship for any reason need to make an appointment with the Head Teacher in the first instance.

How we achieve these aims:

Prayer is an integral part of the school day at St Joseph's.

Whole school: The whole school gathers on Monday morning for assembly based on the Sunday Gospel, which sets out a mission for the week ahead. This generally takes place in the school hall, however opportunities are always taken to engage the children's imaginations by, for example, holding an assembly outside.

The school week ends on Friday afternoon with a Celebration Assembly to which parents and carers are invited. Awards are distributed, and thanks offered for the achievements of the week.

The whole school also gathers for assembly on special occasions such as the celebration of the Harvest and Armistice Day. Children's own, "gifted" prayers are used in collective worship and particularly in Friday assemblies in order to support our celebration of the week.

In Phases: Phase assemblies take place weekly, developing a theme from the Gospel assembly, from the termly virtues or using a theme arising from school activities or current affairs at an age-appropriate level.

In Class: Children pray together first thing in the morning, before and after lunch and at the end of the day, and at other times such as in RE lessons or spontaneously. Once a week, the class faith stewards lead a class reflection in which prepare aspects of gathering, listening, responding and going forth.

Celebration of Mass: Mass is celebrated in the school hall at the beginning and end of the school year, on the Feast of St Joseph the Worker (1st May), Epiphany, Ash Wednesday and other holy days falling in term time. Each week, a class attends Mass in the Church alongside the parish, and families are encouraged to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days.

Other forms of liturgy: A service of Reconciliation with individual confessions is held in Advent and Lent. This is prepared and led by the children.

Organisation:

Whole school assemblies are organised by the Head Teacher or her representative, and often include active participation from the children. Faith Stewards plan and lead assemblies in Advent and Lent, and on occasions such as Holocaust Memorial Day or Armistice Day.

Phase assemblies are organised by the staff in the phase team, and often include active participation from the children.

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring that the pattern of prayer across the day is respected, and that children are given time and any support needed to prepare the weekly class reflection.

The RE coordinator organises the theme of the weekly reflection based on the Sunday Mass readings, Mass readings of the day, the liturgical season or relevant local or world events. She provides materials such as prayers, music etc from which the children may draw if they wish.

The RE coordinator liaises with the Parish Priests and prepares Masses in school. Whenever possible, children are encouraged to write bidding prayers and choose music. The RE coordinator draws up the timetable for weekly Mass attendance in the church and for services of Reconciliation.

Links with parents and the community

Parents/carers and friends are invited to attend the Friday Celebration Assembly, the annual Christingle or carol service, Easter liturgy, and other liturgies. When Mass takes place in school it is the parish Mass of the day, and parishioners are warmly welcomed. Families are also encouraged to accompany their children's class to Mass in the parish.

Monitoring:

Collective worship is monitored through pupil and staff questionnaires, the Head Teacher's reports to the Academy Committee and RE coordinator reports to the Ethos, Standards and Curriculum Committee.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All pupils at St Joseph's School are treated equally as individuals, regardless of gender, race or religious background. Staff ensure that children are well-prepared for Mass and liturgies so that they can participate to the best of their ability, and all participation is valued. Those who are not baptised Catholics are included in all aspects of child-prepared and led assemblies and liturgies.

Health and Safety

Care is taken whenever candles are lit, both in classrooms and in the school hall, and matches are kept out of the reach of children. A risk assessment is completed for classes going to the church for Mass. Parents/carers and parishioners who attend Mass in school are not left alone with children, in keeping with the school's safeguarding policy.

Reviewed September 2019