

SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY

Mr. J O'Connor – Head Teacher

Catholic Life & Mission Policy



Approved by: Joseph O'Connor

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Policy for Catholic Life & Mission

OUR MISSION STATEMENT IS

“WE VALUE ALL IN THE NAME OF JESUS THE CHRIST”

We Believe:

Everyone has the right to have their dignity respected, their worth valued and to become fully human and fully alive. (These rights are rooted in the belief that we are created in the image and likeness of God.)

We Hope:

Our hope is that all who come into contact with our school will be inspired to:

Grow spiritually, act justly, think critically and creatively, work collaboratively, as life-long learners, confident in the knowledge of God’s love for them.

We are Committed to:

We are committed, through the Catholic Dimension of our school:

- ❖ to develop the children’s spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical well-being;
- ❖ to treat all people with justice, respect and equality, as Children of God;
- ❖ to encourage, as Children of God, a spirit of community and cooperation based on Gospel Values, embracing Forgiveness and Reconciliation in all our relationships.

This mission statement is the foundation stone on which we build The Catholic Life of St Mary’s and we aim to achieve our mission by:

- Establishing, maintaining and developing a Catholic ethos which permeates through everything we do and is apparent to all those who enter the school.
- Providing frequent opportunities for conscious and active participation in collective worship through Holy Mass and other services and celebrations in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church to all in the community.

- Creating a place of learning where Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church are evident in everything we do.
- Provide an enriched curriculum which is creative, inspiring and inclusive for all pupils which is fundamentally based on the teachings of Jesus and his Holy Church.
- Developing the prayer and spiritual life of all members of our school and the community it serves.
- Being an outreaching centre of God's mission on earth in promoting the values of faith, hope and charity.
- Engendering the culture of vocation by educating pupils to be active in their faith and by reaching out to those in our community and beyond.
- Ensuring that the Gospel values are permeated through all relevant policies.
- Aiming to bring about an awareness of the needs of others.
- Developing links with the parish, diocese and wider community.

Aims and objectives.

- That every member of our school community feels that they are valued as an individual in the name of Jesus the Christ
- To deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Church, Christian Living and The Sacraments.
- That children are also taught about other Faiths. Judaism is taught each Advent term and Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism on a rolling programme.
- To provide an experience of Church through school.
- To develop the spirituality of pupils and staff.
- To ensure the mission statement is understood (by all) and lived out in all aspects of school life at Saint Mary's.
- To ensure all teachers have access to high standard training and resources.
- To be fully involved in all diocesan initiatives.

- To allow pupils and staff to develop individually through prayer/spiritual experiences by offering opportunities for:
 - Mass on Holy Days of obligation and other occasions.
 - Opportunities to attend Mass in Church
 - Opportunities for acts of reconciliation
 - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
 - Adults and children to take the lead in acts of worship
 - To take part in residential events e.g. The Briars
 - To have the opportunity to take an active part in the Mass
 - To have the opportunity to evaluate liturgies
 - To learn from one another
 - Support from the Parish Priest, Fr. Andrew

The Spiritual Life of the School

Prayer occupies an important role in our Religious Education as a means of expressing, fostering and nurturing faith. Children have a natural aptitude for prayer, they are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world around them. We, at St Mary's Catholic Academy aim to create and maintain an environment where this is fostered and developed. Opportunities are provided to enable the pupils to ENCOUNTER; discover, or discover more deeply, the importance of a personal relationship with Christ; so that they can become convinced that they are each loved by God and are invited to grow in their relationship with him. They are encouraged to be still and listen to God. We aim to teach and develop a variety of prayer methods for the children to have such an Encounter through:

- Teaching the traditional prayers of the Church alongside new prayers.
- The day is punctuated with prayer. Teachers and pupils pray at the beginning of the school day, lunchtime and end of the school day. Pupils are encouraged to pray spontaneously throughout the day by making use of class prayer areas, prayer areas around school, and through the use of the Chapel.
- Allowing the children to develop their spiritual awareness by giving them the skills to create asking, thanksgiving, praising and sorry prayers.
- Through the readings of the Gospels and the Holy Bible (Liturgical prayer).
- Through the teaching of traditional hymns alongside new style hymns.
- Through the teaching of drama, sacred music and prayer.
- Meditating and reflecting in silence whilst being inspired by liturgical music and religious art.

Through the opportunities offered in school we will encourage all to hear and respond to the invitation to be Christ's **DISCIPLES**; to follow him more closely, and to seek to serve him generously in our daily lives. We will provide pupils with opportunities in which they are able to share their personal relationship with Christ and encourage others to develop theirs. Through their relationship they will be role models for others and inspire others in their discipleship. This will be

developed across the school both through the Chaplaincy team and our Catholic Life and Mission Team.

We will seek through missionary discipleship to give pupils a greater recognition of, and openness to, the help, guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to enable them to become; faith-filled, joyful and outward-looking Christians who are growing in confidence to speak humbly of the difference that knowing Christ makes to their lives, and who bear witness to His love in their service of our brothers and sisters, especially those most in need. The service to which Christ calls us is always the action of the Holy Spirit working in us. We will achieve this through our support of and fundraising for:

- Apostleship of the Sea – shoebox appeal
- CAFOD
- House Charity fundraisers
- Comic Relief
- Harbour Place
- Sport relief
- Children in Need
- CARE
- NSPCC number day

The celebration of Mass

The celebration of the Eucharist is at the centre of the spiritual life of the School. We aim to provide a variety of opportunities and experiences attend to the different stages of development of our faith.

Masses are carefully planned with Fr. Andrew (Our Parish Priest) so that all children have the opportunity to lead and celebrate. Children are involved in preparing prayers of the faithful and the penitential rite.

By using the ancient tradition of the Liturgical year as a framework, we draw on the wealth of the whole church to teach our children who God is and what they are. We introduce children to the lives of saints, to the changes of the season and the mood and colour expressing these changes. Children are given the associated language, signs and symbols. This involves progression, some repetition and deepening of understanding.

Marian prayers and songs are nurtured in May, having a procession and celebration of the crowning of Mary.

Prayers for the dead are encouraged in November.

Advent and the Christmas season is observed and celebrated through the Come and See programme of study and through a variety of collective worship gatherings such as Advent liturgies, Christingle services, carol service and Mass. After the Christmas holidays the season is continued up to its official ending with a celebration service based on the Epiphany which either

includes the saying of a Holy Mass or a collective worship gathering.

Holy week preparations take place in school and during Lent we have Lent liturgies and the term ends with a Passion Play.

Giving to others

We aim to bring about an awareness of the needs of others. This is an on-going process and those less fortunate than us are remembered in daily prayer.

During the autumn season children and the community are encouraged to bring in food for those less fortunate during the harvest festival celebrations. The food is given to a local charity, either Harbour Place or CARE. There is also a non-uniform day where the children donate money and the proceeds are sent to CAFOD for fast Day.

It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture a generous giving of self, an appreciation and respect for one's own property and that of others. Chaplaincy team, Mini Vinnies are responsible for organising different fundraising activities to support these charities along with our CLMAT (Catholic Life & Mission Action Team)

Prayer in the classroom. The environment

Each classroom in the school creates a prayerful environment by each having a prayer focus. It is required that this focus is dressed in the liturgical colours of the year as a visual sign to the children to show the change and the mood of the liturgical calendar. Each class has a box containing artefacts to support prayer and acts of worship, both teacher and child led.

Policy for development of worship

Our Catholic Faith is central to day to day life of our school and all aspects of the curriculum, and pupils are encouraged to recognise the importance of their faith and they respond to all forms of liturgy and collective worship with respect and reverence. (Please see Liturgical Prayer Policy)

Parental Involvement

We believe that if our Religious Programme is to be effective, we must at each stage seek to involve parents and give them the confidence to play their part in the formation of their children. The school supports and develops the primary task of parents as the first teachers of their children in the ways of Faith. We aim to involve parents by: -

- Inviting them to Friday celebration assemblies
- Inviting them to special celebrations e.g. Christmas celebrations, Christmas Carol Service, Harvest Festival, Easter Acts of Worship, Leavers Mass, and Easter celebrations.
- Having an open-door policy.

POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is monitored by the Religious Education Lead/ headteacher and is evaluated and reviewed by the Governors and whole staff annually or when the need arises.

