



# St Thomas' Catholic Primary School

## PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

### *'Learning in the Light of Christ'*

#### **The Nature of Collective Worship**

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school 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.

#### **Legal Requirements**

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. 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.

As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, "on a special occasion".

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

#### **The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School**

We endorse the belief that Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those whom 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.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

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

We believe that Collective Worship in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- 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 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 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 kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience
- be short and appropriately paced
- be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

#### **Worship and Liturgy will take the form of:**

- Prayers at the beginning and end of the day, before and after meals
- Other times for prayer and quiet reflection eg start and end of RE lessons
- Class, key stage and whole school assemblies
- Staff led reflections and prayer each morning
- Liturgies and Masses – from Year 3, all classes attend Mass at the Parish Church each term

|       | KS1                                                 | KS2                             | Reflection for All |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Mon   | 08:55 Whole School                                  |                                 | 08:50am and 1:25pm |
| Tues  | Class/Group or Individually Led                     | 08:55 KS2                       | 08:50am and 1:25pm |
| Weds  | Class/Group or Individually Led                     | Class/Group or Individually Led | 08:50am and 1:25pm |
| Thurs | 08:55 KS1 Prayer & Liturgy                          | Class/Group or Individually Led | 08:50am and 1:25pm |
| Fri   | 09:00 Whole School led by a Class – parents invited |                                 | 08:50am and 1:25pm |

#### **The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship**

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Catholic Social Teaching Principles, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

#### **Recording**

Collective Worship is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, etc.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

#### **Resources**

*A variety of books/ posters/ mass directories etc are available in the staff room and Headteacher's office. Staff also keep their own personal resources which they are willing to share with others on request.*

#### **Voluntary Worship and Retreats**

Throughout the year we are always open to worship with the wider community.

There are regular commitments we have as well as others we will respond to on request.

These are all highlighted in the yearly planner given to staff at the beginning of the academic year. Examples: Eucharist Procession, Lent Stations of the Cross, Passion Week Liturgy,

Harvest Celebrations. Our Parish Priests support us in school by leading whole school responses and reflections.

### **Eucharist**

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. Masses, when possible, will take place in the church. Masses are said at the start and end of each term and on Holy days of Obligation as well as other special occasions. Children from Year 3 also attend a week day mass each term.

The preparation for the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation is carried out by the Church, but the school supports the coordinator in their work. Reconciliation services are held at school and children are given the opportunity for individual confession.

|                     |                                       |                     |                                               |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Date of Last Review | September 2026                        | Date of Next Review | September 2028                                |
| Author              | R.E.& Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator | Owner:              | St Thomas' Catholic Primary School, Sevenoaks |
| Type of Policy:     | School Level                          | Approval            | Local Governance Committee                    |

## Appendix 1

### **The Role of the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship**

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship which may at times form part of the school development plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family 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

### **Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating**

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Collective Worship
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

### **Communication**

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts 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 RE Centre

### **Professional development / Ongoing formation**

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- 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