

Saint John Fisher Catholic Primary School



Catholic Life Policy

“To live, love and learn and learn in our caring community.”

Saint John Fisher Catholic Primary School



The Catholic Life of the School Policy

“When we say that God is at the centre of our life, then this must be experienced by our whole community in some way, even by the youngest. It isn’t a case of dragging God or religion into everything we do – God is already there. What we are doing is looking at education as God’s work”

Our Mission is

To live, love and learn in our caring community.

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

Establishing, maintaining and developing a Catholic ethos which is permeated in 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/celebrations in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church to all in the community.

Providing a supportive Sacramental Programme in collaboration with the Parish in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church and diocesan policy.

Creating a place of learning where Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church are evident in everything we do.

Modelling the image of Christ in the way we lead and manage the school.

Providing 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.

To be an outreaching centre of God's mission on earth in promoting the virtues 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, (which are heavily linked to the Every Child Matters agenda) are permeated through all policies which include inclusion, behaviour, curriculum etc.

Caring and meeting the pastoral, spiritual, moral and social needs of the children.

Providing good Catholic role models for the younger citizens of the future so that they may follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Maintaining, working with and developing successful links with the home, parish, archdiocese, community and the wider world.

It is our hope that by working towards the above we play our part in the mission of Christ and his Holy Church on Earth.

To provide opportunities for daily collective worship.

To provide a caring, inspiring and creative environment.

The Spiritual Life of 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 round them. We, at St John Fisher Catholic School, aim to create and maintain an environment where this is fostered and developed. Our classrooms, work areas and school entrance are welcoming, bright, colourful and creative so that our Mission Statement is being lived out through our surroundings.

We aim to promote the culture of prayer by reflecting on the promise of Christ:

“Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be open to you.”

Children are encouraged and helped to discover the many different ways in which to pray, formal and informal, private and communal. They are encouraged to be still and listen to God. We aim to teach and develop a variety of prayer methods to the children such as:

Teaching the traditional prayers of the church alongside new prayers.

Allowing the children to develop their spiritual awareness by giving them the skills to create asking, thanksgiving, praising and sorry prayers. (Spontaneous prayer)

Through the reading 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.

Prayer in the classroom.

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.

This prayer focus should have a bible which shows the previous Sunday's Gospel readings; or the reading associated with a feast day; or a reading which is relevant to that scheme of work.

Teachers are encouraged to be creative when creating an interactive display on this focus. Objects, images, candles which reflect the liturgical year and feasts.

Teachers are encouraged to provide a prayer box where children can write petitions so that the class as a community can pray for the need of the class.

Each room in the school has a crucifix which reminds us all of the sacrifice of Christ for all of humanity; it reminds us that Christ is the foundation stone of Catholic education and that Christ is at the centre at everything we do.

Providing class collective worship on a daily basis.

It is required by law to provide daily worship in the classroom. Teacher and pupils pray at each of these periods of the day:

At the beginning of the school day (asking prayer)

At Lunchtime (Thanksgiving prayer)

At Home time (asking, thanksgiving and or praising prayer)

Garden of Prayer

The Prayer Garden offer pupils a quiet place to contemplate and reflect.

Collective worship at whole school level.

In addition to the daily requirement of collective worship in our classrooms we provide collective worship at a whole school level and for the different educational groups in the school. We do this each week on a:

Monday – Key Stage assemblies led by the different members of staff

Friday- Whole School assembly led by Head Teacher/ Deputy Head Teacher or member of SLT.

Class assemblies for parents and the school community are also held on Fridays.

Each of these gatherings are always based on or linked to a Catholic Christian theme. When we plan for these occasions we keep the following points in mind-

Structure – Gather Listen Respond and Go (based on the Holy Mass model)

Is the language being used suitable for the age group?

Are the symbols being used relevant and meaningful?

Can everyone identify and join in with what is happening?

Can this celebration be related to the lives of the children?

Is it meaningful?

Providing opportunities for Holy Mass to be celebrated.

We acknowledge and revere the most Holy Sacrament of the celebration of the Eucharist. We believe it is central to our roles as being members of the Body of Christ and the redeeming life graces and blessings it provides. We firmly believe in the importance of celebrating the Mass by:

Encouraging all our school members to go to Mass on a weekly basis.

Providing opportunities for School, parish and home Masses throughout the academic year.

Celebrating Holy Mass on Feast Days and Holy days of Obligation.

Having Mass celebrated in school or on the grounds of the school.

Celebrating Masses as part of the Sacramental programme.

Celebrating Mass at the key times of the school year-blessing of the school year and a leavers Mass for Year 6.

By teaching the structure of the Mass to the children

By basing all our assemblies, meetings and gatherings on the four part model of the Mass.

We are all part of the Eucharistic Community. This is not just a matter of saying that Mass is important in our school but rather that it has a profound effect on our life as part of the community

The Church's Liturgical Year and Traditional Devotions

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 follow the development through the Curriculum Directory, introducing children to the lives of saints, to the changes of season and the mood and colour expressing these changes.

Children are given the associated language, sings and symbols. This involves progression, some repetition and deepening of understanding.

A soundly based devotion to Our Lady as Mother of Jesus and our Mother is encouraged. A simple form of the Rosary is introduced in October across the school. Marian prayers and songs are nurtured in May having a procession and celebration for the Crowning of Mary's statue.

The prayer garden is open at lunchtime during Lent and October for Stations of the Cross and the rosary.

Prayers for the dead are encouraged in November

Advent and the Christmas season is observed and celebrated through the diocesan curriculum programme of study and through a variety of collective worship gatherings such as a reconciliation service for Key Stage 2 and blessing of the school Christmas tree. 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 Holy Mass or a collective worship gathering.

Holy Week preparations take place in school and ends with a special mass where the events of Holy week are re enacted in church. Passover celebration takes place in Parish Centre with Year 5 children during Holy Week.

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. A tin sale is arranged for parents and donations are sent to CAFOD for Fast Day

During the seasons of Lent and Advent we raise funds for various charities at home and overseas, e.g. raffles, non-uniform days, cake sales, weighing of coins, sponsored walks etc which are often planned and organised by the school council

Children are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in our community. 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.

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:-

- 1 Inviting them to Friday assemblies
- 2 Inviting them to celebrate Holy Mass and Reconciliation services at different times during the school year
- 3 They are invited to parent meetings when Religious Education is discussed e.g. as their children enter school in Reception, at Curriculum Open Evenings and later as they begin their immediate preparation for the Sacraments.
- 4 Inviting them to special celebrations e.g. Christmas Play, Welcome Home Mass. Leavers Mass, Easter and Christmas celebrations
- 5 They are encouraged to bring their children to the Holy Mass either Saturday evening or Sunday.
- 6 They are encouraged to support the Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and discuss with their children work being completed when preparing to receive the Sacraments.
- 7 Providing information evenings on the Sacramental Programme and Family life education.
- 8 Inviting them to share their views through curriculum evenings, pupil progress meetings, Sacrament meetings, family life education meetings and through questionnaires.

Signed:

Date: September 2017