

*St Thomas More
Catholic Primary School*

Collective Worship Policy

Adopted by Governing Body: December 2024

Review: December 2026

“Try to be like Jesus in all that I think, do and say”

Introduction

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.

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

We celebrate achievement in all aspects of school and home life - everyone is unique and a child of God.

Aims of Collective Worship

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

- To promote in children a sense of awe and wonder for God's created world and to have an awareness of their unique place in it*
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues*
- To explore their own beliefs*
- To respond 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 positive attitudes*
- To listen to the word of God*

All acts of Worship in this school give glory and honour to God. We provide children with 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 and wherever possible help to personalise the experience*
- Be short and appropriately paced*
- Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and settings*

In our school, Collective Worship takes place daily, either as a whole school or within each class. Prayers are said at the beginning/end of each school day and before lunch. On a Monday and Friday, worship is incorporated into our whole school assemblies. Every day the children have the opportunity for Prayer Ministry.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes prayer said either by the teacher or everyone present does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear. 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 act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

In this school, responsibility for ensuring Collective worship takes place rests with the Governing Body, in consultation with the Head Teacher.

Right of Withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 and 1994 Education Reform Act.

The Head Teacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school take place regularly and highlight a special occasion or reflect the season of the Liturgical year.

These Masses are a wonderful opportunity for school and parish to worship together. Mass is celebrated in St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. The school Chaplain, staff and children prepare the music, prayers and readings for these celebrations.

Monitoring and Review

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. Collective Worship is recorded through displays, collections of pupils' contributions such as prayers, reflections, photographs etc. Powerpoint presentations and within RE planning.

This policy is monitored by the RE Co-ordinator and is to be evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years.