



**Bishop
Hogarth**

Catholic Education Trust

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY



Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School

Willington

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1. Introduction

Regular liturgical celebrations and daily prayers in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church, should be at the heart of school life. (A7.7) The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of learning and teaching should create time for the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and develop a mature spiritual life. (A8.7)

From Christ at the Centre: A Summary of Why the Church Provides Catholic Schools, Rev Marcus Stock STL MA, Director of Schools, 2005

The Catholic School is essentially different and distinct from other institutions in both philosophy and practise. Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust recognises the importance of emphasising this distinctiveness in our acts of Collective Worship. To this end, our acts of worship are designed to:

- *Foster and develop a relationship with Jesus Christ*
- *promote an appreciation of prayer, worship and liturgy*
- *encourage the participation of pupils so as to reinforce the unique worth of each individual within our community and also;*
- *in line with the Liturgical Calendar, the directives and the translations of the liturgical books of the Roman Catholic Church.*

In accordance with the Scheme of Delegation and the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding, each school in the Trust must provide Religious Education and Collective Worship in accordance with the teachings, rites and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church and will be subject to the authority and direction of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle. The key areas of the distinctive nature of Catholic education are recorded in 'Principles, Practices and Concerns' as supplemented by 'The Common Good in Education' (Bishops Conference 1996), focusing particularly on the search for excellence as an integral part of the spiritual quest within oneself and within the wider community.

The Right to Withdraw

An Academy's Funding Agreement is drafted to mirror the requirements for Acts of Collective Worship. Each pupil must take part in a daily act of Collective Worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents, or if, in the sixth form they have decided to withdraw themselves.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship and are not required to provide a reason for doing so.

Parents will be encouraged to discuss their decision with a member of the SLT following a request of withdrawal in terms of:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the pupil taking part in.
- The practical implications of their withdrawal.

Alternative provision will be arranged for pupils who are withdrawn from Collective Worship.

- Alternative provision may involve religious worship relevant to their particular faith or denomination provided that:
- The effect of the alternative provision would not replace the denominational Collective Worship with that of the statutory, non-denominational worship.

Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school.

The alternative provision will be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum.

The Trust's Funding Agreement also states that: 'Where a Mainstream Academy is designated with a religious character in accordance with section 124B of the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#) or further to section 6(8) of the [Academies Act 2010](#):

b) subject to clause 28, the Company shall comply with the requirements of section 70(1) of, and Schedule 20 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if the Academy were a foundation school with a religious character or a voluntary school, and as if references to 'the required Collective Worship' where references to Collective Worshipping accordance with the tenets and practises of the specified religion or religious denomination of the Academy.'

c) the Company shall ensure that all quality of....the Academy's Collective Worship...are inspected. Such inspection shall be conducted by a person chosen by the Company and the Academy shall secure that such inspection shall comply with the requirements set out in any statutory provision and regulations as if the Academy were a foundation or voluntary school which has been designated under section 69(3) of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 as having a religious character.

Collective Worship in a Catholic school is, however, more than just a legal requirement. It is central to Catholic education and is an essential part of the Trust's overall provision for prayer and worship. We are proudly Catholic in both senses of the word. Everyone in our community is invited to contribute to it and gain from it, regardless of faith, level of belief and commitment.

The inspection of the Trust's arrangement for the inspection for Collective Worship and RE shall be through Section 48 Inspections. The report on Religious Education is produced for the Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle, who under Canon Law 804 and 806, as the Diocesan Bishop, has responsibility for the schools in the Diocese, and for the Governing Body of the schools concerned. *"The formation and education in the Catholic religion provided in any school is subject to the authority of the Church....the diocesan Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the Catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by members of Religious Institutes"*. ([Canons 804, 806 Code of Canon Law](#)).

The Trust is a Eucharistic Community; this means that we are a community rooted in the Catholic tradition, which gathers to celebrate Eucharist on a regular basis. The word "Eucharist" is a translation of the Greek word *eucharistia*, which means thanksgiving. Through sharing liturgical life and mutual support for one another, the trust is strengthened to live Christ- centred lives dedicated to spiritual growth and social commitment.

The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life." "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch." ([Catechism of the Catholic Church 1324](#))

In accordance with the [1988 Education Act](#) and the [DfE Circular 1/94](#), collective worship within the Trust provides opportunities for pupils and staff to come together as a community through daily prayer in the classroom, through participation in weekly assemblies and through other liturgical celebrations. Furthermore, through collective worship we are able to encourage pupils and staff to reinforce positive attitudes they may have within their community. We also highlight and endeavour to change negative attitudes within our society to encourage a common ethos and shared values amongst all.

In accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Local Governing Committee after consultation with the Principal/Headteacher.

Aims

The Trust aims to provide opportunities for pupils and staff to come together in community to worship God and to respond to the invitation from God to be in relationship with Him. Collective Worship reflects the traditions of our Church, taking into account the spiritual and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who 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, faith communities or none.

We endeavour to do this by:

- Helping to develop the faith of each individual within our community;
- Promoting the belief that our Trust is a caring community;
- Giving pupils an insight into and understanding of Gospel values;
- Developing an understanding of the responsibilities the Gospel values place upon each individual within the community;
- Developing a sense of mission;
- Encourage those who form part of the worshipping community in church;
- Help those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church;
- Include pupils from other Christian traditions, or none or from other faith backgrounds; and
- Provide an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Therefore, at the start of each day the staff in all of the Trust schools gather as a community and briefing begins with a prayer and a reflection to remind us all of God's presence among us.

2. Vision and Values of Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust

The Trust has adopted the following vision and values to guide us in our mission and to underpin all that we do:

Our Vision:

Our schools will be places of excellence – providing service and witness to children, their families and the wider Catholic community, adding value as a family of schools and enriching the learning and experience of all our young people so they may achieve their full potential.

Our Values:

The following values underpin everything the Trust and our Schools will do:

BEING Just and Responsible: We seek to act justly, fairly and responsibly in all our relationships to ensure 'The Common Good' is upheld.

PROMOTING Spiritual and Human Development: We believe a knowledge of and a personal relationship with Christ gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

ACHIEVING Quality in Teaching and Learning: We believe everyone should gain dignity and self-worth through quality teaching and learning which allow all in our school community to excel.

SHOWING Respect for Every Person: We believe that all are created in the image of God and therefore we will respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person, promoting equality and celebrating diversity.

CREATING Community: We believe our schools to be faith communities where Gospel values of truth, honesty, forgiveness and reconciliation are lived and where there is special care for those most in need.

COMMUNICATING: We value the views and opinions of the communities whom we serve and will actively engage and respond.

3. The Aims of Collective Worship at Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust

- To reflect upon the mystery that is God;
- To provide opportunities for students and staff to come to know Jesus Christ through prayer and action;
- To heighten pupils' awareness of questions related to the ultimate mysteries of life and to explore the beliefs and commitments made by themselves and others in response to such questions;
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development with specific reference to the Catholic tradition;
- To respond to life's challenges, celebrate life's wonders and comfort and console at times of difficulty;
- To celebrate the richness and diversity of our God given creation and the responsibilities we have for its stewardship;
- To give opportunities for silent contemplation, reflection, personal response and prayer;
- To explore, reflect on, express, affirm, or challenge commonly accepted personal and social values and individually held beliefs;

- To express our faith as a Christian community thus reinforcing the sense of belonging, the development of community spirit, the promotion of a common ethos and the reinforcement of positive attitudes;
- To provide staff and pupils with opportunities to worship God hence enabling individual spiritual moral development; and
- To offer pupils the opportunity to prepare themselves for challenges in their adult life.

To fulfil these aims we will:

- Ensure the Act of Worship is seen as part of the total curriculum, an integral part of the life of the school and seen to be important;
- Adopt an approach that is based on educational principles which aid the spiritual development of individuals. Therefore the form, shape and content will be educational;
- Respect the integrity of the individual, to give the opportunity to participate creatively and encourage each to make an individual response to a shared experience;
- Build up accessible resource materials for use in assemblies and the daily act of worship;
- Experiences of prayer and worship will be high quality, reflecting the liturgical seasons and feasts of the Church.
- Endeavour to provide a physical environment that is conducive to the above;
- Involve a wider combination of staff, pupils and relevant members of the community in assemblies; and
- Provide an opportunity to review Collective Worship.

Role of Trust Head of Catholic Life

The Trust Head of Catholic Life acts as a resource to support to Lay Chaplains and Chaplaincy Teams. Their role is to provide:

- Training and support
- Point of contact
- Identify and meet the training needs of those involved in chaplaincy in our schools
- Oversee spirituality timetables
- Assistance with sacred spaces
- Opportunities to meet and discuss ideas and problem-solve together
- Assistance with the planning and preparation of key Liturgical celebrations including major feasts and seasons across sectors
- Resources for websites

The Trust Head of Catholic Life will work with school Chaplains and those with responsibility for coordinating collective worship to develop ideas to:

- Make prayer engaging and meaningful
- Increase involvement of our young people in the prayer life of their school
- Develop whole Trust MAT spirituality events including retreats and liturgies

The Role of the Coordinator for Collective Worship

The role of the Coordinator for Collective Worship is detailed at **Appendix 1**.

Mrs Madeleine Fulton, *is the co-ordinator with a defined role and responsibility for Collective Worship*

Organisation of Collective Worship

The organisation of collective worship is detailed at **Appendix 2** (each school to complete).

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship Coordinator. It is evaluated and reviewed by the Headteacher, members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Collective Worship Coordinator with the whole school teaching staff and Governors every two years.

The Role of the Coordinator for Collective Worship

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith 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 including withdrawal from collective worship
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

Our planning, recording, monitoring and evaluation of CW ensures that we:

- Maintain and develop effective procedures and documentation
- Observe Acts of Collective Worship and provide feedback
- Inform the Headteacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with 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 Department for Education

Professional development/Ongoing formation

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

Organisation of Collective Worship

Planning, content and celebration

Collective Worship at OLST is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, Life to the Full (Ten Ten) feast days, the Curriculum and significant dates such as Holocaust Day, CAFOD Family Fast Day etc. Parents and our Parish community are invited to participate in many of our celebrations.

The timetable of Collective Worship is as below:

Daily / Weekly

Monday -

Class based Worship lead by children 20 mins (Class Teachers to timetable individually)

Tuesday -

Whole School Worship 30 mins (based on the Gospel reading of the previous Sunday).

Wednesday -

Class Based Worship 20 mins lead by teacher (Class Teachers to timetable individually)

Thursday -

Separate KS worship led by members of the SLT on a rota basis - this worship will relate to Curriculum, significant days or Come and See / Life To the Full rather than the Church Seasons. This will also be the day when we have the class-lead worships for members of the Parish and Parents to attend.

Friday -

Whole School Worship 30 mins rooted in Social Teaching of the Church and our role as Custodians of the Earth

* Opportunities within the week for the children to journal in their prayer journals, spontaneous prayer and daily reflective Worship as well as more standard Catholic prayers.

Termly

One CW per half term led by children for parents and parish.

Annually

Welcome worship for our new Reception Class and Parents in **September / October**

One Whole School Worship Christmas and Easter with Parents and Parish Last week of term - **negotiated with Parish Priest so he can be part of this Worship**

Y6 Leavers' service - whole school. Last week of term. 30mins + **negotiated with Parish Priest so he can be part of this Worship**

Worship is collectively held in the School Hall or outdoors and in classrooms for class-based worship.

***These Collective Worships are interspersed regularly with School Masses but are becoming ever more important as our Priest in Residence is less able to offer Mass and our Parish Priest has many other Parishes to attend to.**

Recording

Each class has a Collective Worship planner and children and teachers record their Class worship there - it may be written by the children or teacher or may be a standard Collective Worship which is a print out from Ten Ten or Come and See.

There is an Annual overview of our whole school Worship. This highlights which Key Stage (weekly) that each Senior Leader will deliver and Key Stage and Whole School Worship for Parents. Masses are also detailed and will take place wherever possible if we have a Priest to deliver the Mass.

Formal Collective Worship to which Parents and Parish are invited are created and stored electronically on the Google Drive.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The CW coordinator or Head Teacher will monitor CW across the school once per term. We ensure that a range of our CW is monitored and evaluated and feedback is given to staff members within the same day.

Children evaluate their own CW celebrations on a weekly basis and Class Teachers ensure they follow the given standard organisation as shared by the Diocese.

Collective Worship monitoring is recorded using forms as approved by and sourced from the Diocese.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform SEF 48.

The learning environment

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment'

Every classroom has a Sacred space where the above are displayed and changed in accordance with Church seasons and celebrations. Children also set up their own spaces when delivering their Collective Worship and they are taught to be respectful and reverent in their handling of religious artefacts. Symbols of our faith are found all around school and within the school hall there is an altar which is central to our whole school Collective Worship.

Developing Parish Links

The school and our Parish have always had extremely strong links from the time when the Irish Miners built our church and school to the present day. Willington is a small, close knit community and the Catholic element of this town even more so. Many members of our Parish attended OLST school themselves and are now grandparents and great-grandparents of the children who attend our school presently. Two members of staff and an ex-head teacher are members of the Parish and live locally. Up until recently, Father Brian has been a visible presence in school and children are taught about how the school and Parish are linked from the day they start in Reception. Parish members are invited to all our school celebrations and are always present in Mass when the children celebrate their monthly Masses and special events such as First Holy Communions. Children know key members of our Parish and the work they do. Our Parish supports the initiatives we work on such as collecting toys for the Salvation Army and we support the Parish i.e. collecting and donating for the Foodbank.

Prayer

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion. Children pray every day at the beginning and end of the day as well as before lunch and gathering together in the afternoon. They pray as part of daily reflection and are encouraged to complete prayer journals weekly. Our children are encouraged to think about alternative forms of prayer and are also exposed to prayer forms of other world religions through pupils of other faiths - for example, we have Buddhist children in school at the present time and they have taught their classmates forms of prayer that they follow at home.

Children are taught formal prayer as part of our faith but understand that informal prayer is just as special a way of talking to God too. They know that Singing and dancing are also ways of communicating our thoughts and feelings to God.

Staff pray together at every staff meeting and whenever we gather for CPD.

Daily Worship

See previous timetable. Each class worships daily in some way as defined in the above timetable.

Retreats / Pilgrimages

We are a small school with a very precarious budget and therefore, external retreats and pilgrimages are not a viable option at present. However, we use our beautiful outdoor space in many ways and one of those is to take time to reflect and have quiet time away from the busy time of our everyday lives. Teachers design programmes of prayer, reflection and mindfulness to give the children time to reflect on the world around them and the part they play in it.

Year 6 always attend the Youth Village every year as part of the celebrations across the Diocese for Year 6 - these days have been sorely missed in the past two years.

In the school year 2021-22 we are hoping to have a whole school retreat To the Emmaus Village. This is something that after our RE inspection of 2020, staff felt would enhance the prayer -life of our school. However, due to the pandemic and budget constraints, we have been unable to facilitate this as yet. We would hope that this would become an annual event to start the school year in a spiritual and meaningful way.

Feast Days / Holy Days of Obligation

Our Parish church celebrates Holy Days of Obligation / Feast days at weekends. Therefore, staff draw the children's attention to them in school. Where possible, we have a Collective Worship and in classrooms, staff will prepare a special class worship.

Sacred Spaces (Primary) / Chapel (Secondary)

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they are an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Charity

Our children learn that charity to others is central to our faith and that this is faith in action. There are key charities both local, nationwide and global that we as a school support. All these charities apart from CAFOD, are charities to which we have a personal connection.

The annual Salvation Army toy appeal which is a local charity and helps children in our local area at Christmas. This is part of our Reverse Advent calendar and is very well supported. In the last two years alone, we have contributed gifts distributed locally to over 160 families (some of our own children have received these gifts through the Salvation Army such is the deprivation that many of our families continue to live in).

- The Little Sisters of the Poor - annual collection
- CAFOD
- Lenten Alms appeal - annually
- Father Ejaz - Pakistan Orphanage appeal (supported by our Parish along with two other parishes)
- Local food bank
- McMillan Coffee Mornings
- Race for Life Cancer Research

We also respond to emergency appeals as and when they arise

Holy Mass & Celebration of Sacraments

As previously stated, the ability to attend Mass as a school has greatly declined over the last three years. Our Parish Priest has a number of Parishes to attend to and our Priest in Residence is now unable to deliver children's Masses. However, in the coming year, the CW coordinator has plans to work with Father to plot dates for five school Masses across the school year with predetermined dates.

Celebration of the Sacraments is annual and our Y4 children are those who receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

- **Sacramental Preparation: Supporting Parishes**

Catechists from our Parish prepare the children for Holy Communion supported by the Y4 teacher in school. This has not been possible over the last two years due to Covid restrictions and so our Head Teacher has prepared the children this year.

Resources

TenTen - Life to the Full

Come and See

Various resources from Pauline Media and the Diocesan Education Team

Gospel Readings