

St. Ethelbert's Catholic Primary and Nursery School



Collective Worship, Prayer And Liturgy Policy

Date of Policy/Review	September 2025/September 2026
Name of Responsible Person	Mr S. Marshall
Role of Responsible Person	Headteacher
Signature of Responsible Person	
Signature of Headteacher	
Signature of Chair of Governors	

Our vision for St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School is to be 'a school with High Expectations for All, in the Light of Christ'. All pupils will be given every opportunity to achieve their potential and encouraged to learn about and develop their hidden talents in order to reach high levels of achievement. All members of our school community will be fully equipped to meet all pupils' needs through appropriate professional development. St Ethelbert's will be an outstanding school.

'Every child at St Ethelbert's is to fulfil their academic, social, behavioural and emotional potential in the surroundings of a Catholic community, and in which each individual shares or respects the Catholic church and Christian way of Life.'

"For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them."

Matthew 18:20

This policy aims to ensure that:

At St Ethelbert's we belong to a loving, welcoming, forgiving family that lives in the life of the Gospels. We are committed to treating each child as an individual, with consideration given to children with special educational needs or disabilities which may affect the way they worship. Our children are taught in the context of a diverse and vibrant Catholic community within the teachings of Jesus Christ and are witnesses to a Christian way of life.

We celebrate that St Ethelbert's is a secure, happy school with high expectations. We embrace Inclusion, Knowledge and Thoughtfulness as our values. We recognise that children have the ability to grow spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually and creatively and so will consequently, achieve their very best in a supportive environment. We believe that God is always with us in whatever we do.

Purpose

At St Ethelbert's, Jesus is central to every aspect of school life and acts of worship may take place any time during the day. It could be a single act of worship with the whole school family or separate acts of worship in class groups. In our school there is a clear difference between Collective Worship and Assemblies. When we gather for Collective Worship we focus on the Word of God, we use symbols and ritual and we are aware of God's presence among us. Collective Worship is not designated curriculum time and is not included in any part of the curriculum, including RE.

Collective Worship in St Ethelbert's is an integral part of our ethos, aims and relationships, as our values permeate all aspects of school life and all relationships. It is a way of deepening our relationship with God together as well as individually. Through the many forms this worship takes, we grow in spiritual, moral and liturgical understanding. We allow ourselves to grow in understanding of our living faith tradition and then develop a sense of wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ. It is through Collective Worship that we share each other's faith experiences and learn the skills of prayer and reflection. This is a very important aspect of life at St Ethelbert's.

We aim to:

- To develop an awareness and understanding of the presence of God in each child's life and to encourage a personal response to that presence
- To allow each child to develop their conscience and make moral judgements based on our commitment to following in the footsteps of Christ
- To offer opportunities to deepen their faith and foster attitudes of care and respect for each other
- To live, experience and understand the Liturgical life of the Church through the Liturgical Year together with Feast days
- To promote sacramental life by encouraging parents to take an active part in the preparation of their children for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.
- To enable each child to participate and respond to liturgy and worship in an appropriate way to their age and maturity.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN OUR SCHOOL

Collective Worship takes place in our school daily. Staff and pupils are encouraged to pray with thoughtfulness and with respect through a variety of prayer experiences - whole school Mass, assemblies and prayer services together with formal classroom and individual reflective prayer. This worship follows the liturgical year and includes appropriate Feast days. It also includes Gospel Virtues, British values, world events and other faiths to enable pupils to appreciate their place in society, and respect those around them. Reception Class experiences classroom prayer and assemblies and then when they are ready, they join us for whole School Mass.

Day	Teacher	Theme
Monday	Headteacher	Whole School Gospel Reflection

Tuesday	Choir Lead	KS1/KS2 Singing Assembly (separate assemblies)
Wednesday	Deputy Head/Class Teachers	KS1/KS2 Reflection (separate assemblies)
Thursday	Teachers	Class Mass/Class Assembly
Friday	Headteacher	Whole School Achievement Celebration

UNDERSTANDING OF THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

We ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the Liturgical Calendar and key events in the Church. The symbolism of colours is made clear from the earliest days in school: purple for penance (seen during Advent and Lent), red for Holy Spirit (seen at Pentecost), white, gold for important feasts (Easter) and green for the ordinary times of the year. Blue is associated with Mary.

Some months of the year have a special focus: October is the month of the Rosary, November is the month when the Holy Souls (the deceased) are prayed for, May is the month when Mary is especially remembered and June is the month of the Sacred Heart when we remember especially the great love Jesus has for us.

Preparation for Collective Worship

Before each act of Collective Worship, staff consider:

- Is there a plan available with content to meet the needs of all present?
- Are children involved in the planning or delivering of the Collective Worship?
- Is there an appropriate focus? Are the resources being used suitable? Is there ICT and/or music prepared and ready?
- Do all the readers / leaders have all they need? Have all support staff been briefed?

During the Collective Worship, staff focus on getting the children to show respect, know Jesus is present and create a prayer atmosphere. Everyone is made to feel welcome and the purpose of the worship is made clear. As children go forth, they consider and reflect on the message they take away with them and leave in a respectful, orderly manner.

MASSES

The whole school celebrates Mass together with our parents and parish community every half term. Alongside this, one class from Year 2 upwards, attends Mass every Thursday, which is on a rolling timetable. Children play an active part in each Mass, through reading, praying and

singing; they can take it in turns to lead and prepare the celebration based on the liturgical year.

Pupils and their families are also invited to participate in Mass at the parish Sunday Mass which supports their journey of faith as members of our wider Church Community.

ASSEMBLY

There are two weekly whole-school assemblies led by the Headteacher. The first of which focuses upon the liturgical year and reflects on the Gospel reading from the previous day. The second 'Celebration' assembly celebrates the achievements and success of our children's God-given talents. Class assemblies are also used as a way of reflecting on important Church and RE curriculum themes.

FORMAL AND TRADITIONAL PRAYER

Children develop their individual prayer life through daily participation in our formal prayers such as our school prayer, lunchtime prayer and the end of the day prayer. It is important that we enable pupils to participate in community of the Church through learning our traditional Church prayers. Formal prayers, appropriate to the age and maturity of the year group are taught through the RE scheme of work we use, 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'. Each class has a list of the prayers that their class are expected to learn in each year.

HYMN PRACTICE

The children participate in a weekly hymn practice, where they learn Mass responses and sing both traditional and modern hymns. Music is central part of worship in our school and hymns are used in all areas of worship from supporting themes within Mass and assemblies to providing atmosphere throughout the school. The children enjoy singing and a number of them sing in the school choir, which has an important part to play in Mass and liturgical celebrations.

LINKS WITH PARENTS

Liturgies and celebrations and events related to the Catholic Life of our school are shared in our weekly school newsletters and on our School Facebook page, as well as the school website. Parents and families are regularly invited to join the school community in Masses and fundraising activities. Parents of children in Sacramental year groups are also invited to Sacramental Meetings and Mass as part of the Sacramental Preparation Programme.

DIFFERENTIATION

Each child can participate in Collective worship at St Ethelbert's and respond to liturgy and worship in an appropriate way to their age and maturity, but also using a formal and reflective prayer in a variety of ways to suit the needs of our children and allow them to worship in ways in which they feel comfortable. Collective worship is accessible to all children in our school.

Parents

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from Religious Education (RE) lessons and Collective Worship if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. However, since those who choose to belong to a Catholic school are subscribing to its ethos and values, to which both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship are central, it is reasonable to assume that parents, pupils and all staff will respect and engage with these central aspects of the school's life. In addition, the daily act of worship may take place in a variety of ways.

GOVERNING BODY

RE, together with Collective Worship, is always a key part of the School Development Plan, and is reported termly as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors. Governors are also invited to join with other members of the whole school community in the celebration of Mass and attend INSET Days relating to the Catholic Life of the School.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Subject Leader for Religious Education, following discussions with the Headteacher, governors and other colleagues. Any amendments will be presented to the whole staff.