



# St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

*We will prepare the way by loving, living and learning with the Lord*

## Catholic Life and Mission Policy

**Audience:** Staff/Governor/Public  
**Frequency of Review:** Annually  
**Postholder Responsible for Review:** R.E Leader

**Recommended Associated Documents:**  
Religious Education Policy  
Prayer and Liturgy Policy  
RSE Policy  
Curriculum Policy  
Behaviour Policy

**Approved by the Full Governing Body –  
Review – July 2024**

*“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:

**‘We will prepare the way by loving, living and learning with the Lord’**

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.
- Modeling 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.
- Being 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 are permeated through all policies which include inclusion, behaviour, curriculum etc.
- Enabling our children to have definite views and opinions and to have the chance to make real change.

- 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 belief that by working towards the above we play our part in the mission of Christ and his Holy Church on Earth:

1. **To provide opportunities for daily prayer and liturgy.**
2. **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's, 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
- Teachers and children create an interactive display on the prayer focus; objects, images, candles which reflect the liturgical year and feasts.
- 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 school. Teachers and pupils pray at each of these periods of the day:

At the beginning of the school day (asking prayer)  
 At lunchtime (asking prayer)  
 After lunch (thanksgiving prayer)  
 At home time (asking, thanksgiving and praising prayer)

### **Prayer Garden**

The Prayer Garden offer pupils a quiet place to contemplate and reflect during whole class and private prayer/ worship.

### **Collective Worship (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 through:

- Whole school and key Stage assemblies led by different members of staff each week.
- 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 Thursdays throughout the year.

Each of these gatherings are always 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 regularly.
- Providing opportunities for school, parish and home Masses throughout the academic year.
- Celebrating Holy Mass on Feast Days and Holy days of Obligation.
- 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.

**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 who the children themselves 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, signs and symbols. This involves progression, some repetition and deepening of understanding.

Prayers for the dead are shared in November and a school community book of remembrance is produced and prayed for (including deceased family and friends to be remembered of pupils, parents, staff, governors and parishioners).

Advent and the Christmas season is observed and celebrated through the diocesan curriculum programme of study and through a variety of collective worship gatherings. After the Christmas holidays the season is continued with the celebration of Mass to celebrate the Epiphany.

Holy Week preparations take place in school and end with a special Mass.

### **Catholic Social Teaching**

There is an expectation that members of the Church are active in their faith, but there has to be an understanding of what that means. We aim to offer a variety of ways and means of acting upon Catholic Social Teaching, following the Diocesan structure.

The starting point is always to pray and reflect on social issues in the light of scripture and Church teaching. This reflection also requires children to become educated about current issues and to have a full understanding about what the Church. Through reflection and discernment, we hope that the course of action becomes apparent.

Voluntary work of all sorts is very much an integral part of the lived experience of our children. We aim to offer many ways in which our children can be of service for the Common Good. The Church teaches us that we are called to participate in public life to make a difference for the common good of all and not just our own immediate communities. We offer children to opportunity to participate in fundraising activities for suitable causes. We will aim to raise the awareness of others towards a particular cause or issue and finding appropriate ways to act upon this as a whole school community.

### **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.

Throughout the school year we raise funds for several charities, including CAFOD, Father Hudson's Society and the British Heart Foundation. Money is raised through several events including cake sales, non-uniform days, raffles, games and competitions. We also offer the opportunity for children of different ages to work together as house groups during Lent to raise money for charity.

### **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 Class assemblies
2. Inviting them to celebrate Holy Mass and Reconciliation services at different times during the school year
3. Inviting them 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. Nativities, special Masses such as Mothers' Day Mass and Leavers Mass, Easter and Christmas celebrations.
5. Encouraging them to bring their children to Mass either Saturday evening or Sunday.
6. Encouraging them 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, Sacramental meetings, family life education meetings and through question.

