

St Mary's Catholic Academy



Collective Worship Policy September 2025

*"For where two or three gather in my name,
there am I with them."*

Matthew 18:20



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

Aims

Collective Worship at St Mary's Catholic Academy aims to uphold our Mission Statement, to

"...walk hand in hand with God, loving Him, loving each other and loving ourselves, doing our best with the gifts God has given to us to make the world a richer place."

At St Mary's Catholic Academy, we are an inclusive, caring, learning community who endeavour to use the gifts and talents given to us by God to our full potential to help others and to understand the love of Jesus Christ. The life, example and teachings of Jesus underpin everything we do and who we are.

At St Mary's we strive to live, and encourage others to live the Gospel. We aim to achieve this through:

- The nurturing of our Catholic faith.
- Seeking to develop the faith of all members of our school community.
- Putting our faith into practice in the quality of care and support that we extend to others; creating an ethos that exemplifies the teaching of Jesus Christ and his mother Mary, so that others can come to know God's love as we do.
- Celebrating our faith through Mass, Celebration of the Word, personal prayer and taking part in the preparation for the Holy Sacraments.
- Welcoming the community to share all forms of prayer and worship with us making it a relevant and meaningful experience for all.
- The effective delivery of a challenging and knowledge rich curriculum that encourages our pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to grow spiritually, morally, physically and academically and to make a valuable contribution in society.
- A carefully planned, progressive and challenging Virtues curriculum that strengthens our pupils' understanding of our Catholic Virtues and encourages them to live out the virtues in their everyday actions.
- The encouragement of a positive partnership between home, school and parish, respecting all cultural and faith backgrounds and practices.
- Having high expectations for all, leading by example, encouraging pupils to develop self-respect, confidence, independence, personal aspirations and to set themselves high standards.
- The development of a strong sense of identity and belonging, through the consistent promotion of high standards of conduct and respect for all.
- Working together to help our pupils to feel happy, loved, respected, safe and valued as individuals in order for them to show our kindness, respect, tolerance, acceptance and to celebrate our differences as we work together as a community.
- Working collaboratively with all of the schools in Our Lady of Lourdes Trust and the Diocese of Nottingham to deliver the best Catholic education for all our pupils.

We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers, irrespective of race, gender, disability, special educational needs, faith or religion or socio-economic background.

We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and celebrate diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. We believe everyone has a contribution to make and will enrich our community.

At St Mary's, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. We believe every individual is created in the image of Christ and as such should be respected, welcomed and valued in order to be able to Learn to Love, Love to Learn.

'Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.'*(Religious Education and Collective Worship 1/94)*

Celebrations of the Word

The primary focus of a Celebration of the Word is to create a powerful and prayerful experience where young people can encounter Jesus and engage with their faith.

Celebrations of the Word are accessible to all and will provide students with interesting and varied opportunities to experience both contemporary and traditional prayer.

Whole School, Key Stage & Class Celebrations of the Word

During a typical school week students will have daily.

On Mondays, whole school Celebration of the Word is led by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher (also the RE coordinator) and is inspired by the Word of the Week, derived from the Catholic Ordo. Where possible, this is also linked to the Gospel from the previous Sunday. The Celebration of the Word always ends with a whole school mission. Members of our chaplaincy team, are often involved in setting the prayer focus, welcoming pupils and leading prayers. Missionary Medals are awarded to one pupil from each class who have excelled in living out our school values and school mission the previous week.

On Tuesdays, our Key Stage Celebration of the Word is led by class teachers on a rota and are inspired by the Old Testament, the liturgical year such as feast days, school themes such as virtues needed to be peacemakers, or the Bishop's themes of Encounter, Discipleship and Missionary Discipleship.

Also on Tuesdays, our Celebration of the Word takes the form of prayer through music and children learn new hymns as well as celebrating with familiar music. This is led by our music teacher Mrs Buczok.

On Wednesdays, our pupils lead the Celebration of the Word in classrooms. Students work together, supported by an adult, to create and lead varied and interesting worship experiences. Let Us Pray resources are used to support our pupils in their planning and the trust planning and evaluation sheets ensure a consistent approach to the planning and delivery of Celebration of the Word in each classroom.

On Thursdays, each class takes turns to participate in an afternoon retreat led by our school

chaplains, Maria Williamson and Tim Edwards. During this time pupils lead Celebration of the Word in classrooms, supported by our chaplains. and based upon the theme of their class retreat. We welcome parents to attend and share in this Celebration of the Word.

Every other Thursday, we gather together to celebrate the many gifts and talents given to us by God in our Congratulations assembly. Class teachers celebrate the achievements of chosen children, offering their good work and deeds to God. Parents of children receiving awards are warmly invited and attend in good numbers.

Where prayer and liturgy opportunities are being led, in locations around school other than the school hall, care will be taken to make the space suitable and reverent.

Prayer and Liturgy throughout the liturgical year

Our Annual Plan of Provision (APOP) underpins and supports all prayer and liturgy throughout the community. When important dates in the liturgical year fall within term time, specially prepared liturgies and Celebrations of the Word, are celebrated by the community and are led by staff and students. These are planned, prepared and delivered with the same high standards ensuring that we make a special effort to celebrate the Catholic liturgical tradition in an inclusive and accessible way.

Planning, Delivery and Evaluation

Celebrations of the Word will be thoughtfully prepared following the Gather, Word, Response and Mission approach. Always rooted in scripture, the aim is for pupils to be able to use as many of their senses as possible to access the liturgy and deepen their understanding and personal faith.

An appropriate atmosphere, representative of the liturgical season, will be created through the use of music, lighting and a prayer focus area. Pupils will be dismissed in a prayerful and meaningful way, to carry the spirit of the mission into their day.

All new teaching staff and support staff are trained on how to plan and deliver collective worship using the Let Us Pray resources and the trust planning and evaluation documents.

Where possible, prayer and liturgy will be evaluated, either informally through discussion and comment or using the trust evaluation sheet. These will be collated regularly in our collective worship evidence folder. The style and nature of our prayer and liturgy will continually be open to the needs and views of our community, incorporating new ideas and experiences in response to evaluation, whilst always staying true to our Catholic ethos.

Mass

Mass is celebrated as a whole school community at least once a term. These masses are celebrated at church, helping us to strengthen our link with our parish community. Our pupils lead every aspect of Mass including serving on the altar where possible. We share our love of singing at these Masses too.

On Thursdays, each class will take turns to attend a parish Mass. For these Masses our parish members continue to lead.

Parents and family members are invited to all Masses, whole school and class, and dates are shared on Newsletters ahead of time.

Throughout the school year we lead weekend Masses in our parish church. This gives our wider parish community the opportunity to together with us in celebration of Mass. Again, our pupils lead all aspects of these weekend Masses including the music.

Prayer throughout the day

Staff will ensure that a prayer is said at the start of every day, at the end of the last lesson before lunch and at the end of the last lesson of each day. A prayer progression guide supports our teachers and ensures that as pupils progress through our school they are introduced to new prayers both modern and traditional.

Additional opportunities for reflection will be encouraged by staff and students. Staff and Governors' meetings and staff briefings will also start with a time of prayer and all those present will be invited to share in whatever way they feel comfortable. Opportunities for personal prayer for children are planned for in each class in a creative way.

Each class has a class prayer book. Children take home this book and are encouraged to write their own prayer intentions which they then bring back into school and share with their class. In our younger classes, children also have a 'prayer bear' to accompany their class prayer book.

During the seasons of Advent and Lent, in line with our APOP, children also take home our Travelling Crib and Cross. We encourage children to use these to create a prayerful and reflective space within the home and share with their families. This gives children further encouragement to pray during these liturgical seasons and strengthen the prayer partnership between home and school.

Reviewed: September 2025

RE Lead: Susan McDonald