

ST VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP, PRAYER & LITURGY POLICY



Mission Statement

*"We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as
we learn love and grow together"*

Reviewed – Spring 23
To be reviewed – Spring 25
Reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee

Signature:

John Sloan Chair of Governors

Ratified at Full Governing Body meeting

Date ratified: 14.03.23

Pope Francis

We are encouraged by the teaching of Pope Francis. In his daily Mass (October 8th 2013) Pope Francis touched on the importance of prayer and forgiveness in the life of a Christian, warning against common attitudes which “close the door” to God. He said,

***“The Lord tells us that the first task in life is ‘Prayer.’
Not the prayer of words like a parrot but the prayer of the heart, gazing on the
Lord, hearing the Lord, asking the Lord”***

A Worshipping Community

St. Vincent de Paul School is a worshipping community in which prayer, worship and liturgical celebration are at the very heart of the expression of Catholic tradition. We actively strive to provide a varied experience of worship and to promote engagement through the creative contributions of both pupils and staff.

Pupils are taught that prayer is a way of talking to God. They are encouraged to develop prayers of their own and to request God’s support during times of difficulty, and when saying sorry, or thanking and praising Him.

We understand that through prayer we can develop our relationship with God and we can talk to Him in many ways. Therefore, it is our duty to provide every child with the opportunity to meet God through engagement in the spoken word, music, dance, drama, art and through silent reflection. We particularly value opportunities to nurture pupils in developing prayer experiences of their own making.

***‘For prayer, worship and liturgy to be real educational experiences
and for them to contribute successfully to the development of faith
in each individual in the community, participation in the
preparation and the action of these events is of prime importance.’***

(Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School)

We realise that as one “instrument” of the Church we cannot achieve this in isolation and need therefore to encourage a collaborative partnership between the home, the parish and the school. Each of these groups has a responsibility to fulfil its role, regardless of any limitations from any of the others.

Vibrancy and variety

At St Vincent de Paul School, prayer is living and vibrant, quiet and loud, traditional and modern; all according to the situation and the participants. We aim for prayer not be ‘automatic’ or ‘rote’ and therefore we avoid falling into familiar patterns. As such, teachers and pupils draw from a range of prayers and styles of prayer which enable all to engage.

Our Mission Statement is used as a daily prayer along with its powerful actions.

Linking Home, School and Parish

We make every effort to reinforce and strengthen our links. As part of our faith development commitment, Children attend Mass at St Joseph's on a rota each week.

Parents are acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their child, and are regularly welcomed into the school to ensure a strong partnership is secured. They are invited to attend liturgical celebrations and opportunities for reflection. Emphasis is placed on helping them to understand the vital role they can play in developing the prayer life of their children.

Every child receives a copy of the 'Wednesday Word' each week and is encouraged to put aside some special time to contemplate the Gospel stories and associated ideas and prayers.

Involvement of Pupils

Prayer is an integral part of the day at St Vincent de Paul School and is not separated from the rest of school life; therefore pupils will share in this important aspect of our daily experience.

'For prayer, worship and liturgy to be real educational experiences and for them to contribute successfully to the development of faith in each individual in the community, participation in the preparation and the action of these events is of prime importance.' (Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School)

With this in mind, children are involved at every opportunity – in key ministries such as reading and singing and in the preparation of the worship space. We believe that children have a natural aptitude and openness to prayer. Children love to organise and to 'take charge' and at St Vincent de Paul School they are actively encouraged to 'take the lead in prayer'

The Daily Worship Pattern

Morning, lunchtime and end of day prayers punctuate the day. Some possible prayers are available in Appendix 1; however the aim is to ensure a mixture of the traditional with the modern and for variety so that prayers are not said by rote, but prayed from the heart.

The pattern for these is fluid, responding to children's needs and the age and stage of the children but generally follows this routine:

Monday Class prayers, focusing on a value for the week chosen by the teacher or the children

Tuesday Teacher & pupil choice of prayers. Many classes have their own class anthology of prayers for different times of the day to choose from. Led by the pupils.

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- Thursday KS Word Assembly
In class prayer a link is made to the Wednesday Word (using the school provided notes / PPT / links to songs)
- Friday Teacher & pupil choice of prayers. Many classes have their own class anthology of prayers for different times of the day to choose from. Led by the pupils.
Pupil Led Collective Worship (based upon the Wednesday Word) from Y2 upwards.

The Word Assembly

The Word Key Stage Assembly is a high point of the week. It is usually led in one KS by the Headteacher and in the other by the Deputy Headteacher. It usually reflects the readings of the forthcoming weekend where appropriate and helps to strengthen the links between The Wednesday Word, Sunday Mass and the Gospel theme for the week. Pupils participate by leading the readings, prayers and singing appropriate hymns. There is always a prayer focus and a display on the big screen to capture and hold attention. The pupils leave the assembly with a copy of the Wednesday Word for their class prayer focus. Physically following the Word back to their classes, they make a commitment to living out its message in the classroom, on the playground and at home.

The Word Assembly acts as a stimulus for the planning of the Friday Pupil Led Worship. Staff who support with this are encouraged to attend The Word Assembly for their own continuing professional development.

Pupil Planned & Led Worship

Groups of pupils from Y2 upwards use what they have experienced in The Word assembly to inspire their own pupil led Collective Worship later in the week. A framework of structured activities guides our pupils to initiate prayer within a sensitive and respectful environment. Pupils have the freedom to bring themselves before our God in a fearless and joyful way, working with their friends in an age appropriate way. Pupils are encouraged to be increasingly independent in their approach to planning these opportunities; in KS2 pupil led worship, although supported by adults, is very much inspired, planned and resourced by the children themselves. It is an expression of their interaction with the scripture and their priorities.

Pupils plan for these sessions using a common format – see Appendix 2. Planning sheets are kept in a folder near the RE table.

Special Times in the Year

As a school we recognise that there are special times within our Catholic tradition that we focus on specific prayers. During May and October, Our Lady and the Rosary are a special focus. Pupils, staff and parents before school to pray a decade of the Rosary

and to share the reflection. Similarly, there are weekly prayers opportunities before school during Lent which explore key messages and lead everyone in prayerful reflection and preparation.

These special prayer gatherings are led by the Headteacher and attended by various pupils, parents and staff.

The school also has its own May procession when the life of Our Lady is honoured.

The Feasts of St Joseph (patron of our parish) & St Vincent de Paul (patron of our school) are celebrated with great joy.

The liturgical year is marked with Masses on Holydays of obligation wherever possible. Where this is not possible an age appropriate Liturgy will occur. Other key points in the liturgical year are marked through special liturgical celebrations and prayer services.

Spontaneous Prayer

In addition to the morning, lunch and evening prayers, we also value spontaneous prayer. Each classroom has a special prayer space that reflects the current topic and the liturgical season. The prayer areas are intended to support pupils in their communication with God and allow them to initiate their own prayers whilst providing a thought provoking and attractive focus. A central prayer area in each hall enables the pupils the opportunity to post their own personal prayers. Children are also exposed to the tradition of placing a prayer under the pillow of sleeping St Joseph.

Traditional Prayers of the Church

Knowing prayers by heart is a gift for life so staff also plan opportunities for pupils to learn formal prayers. These are introduced early in a child's school journey so that they gradually become familiar with their words and meaning. Children love to recite familiar words and to hear from staff and parents that they also learnt these prayers when they were young. These prayers are introduced at key points and are integral to the planned RE curriculum.

Reflection Opportunities

We have created a prayer garden which is an ideal area for reflection. This is an ideal setting for RE lessons and provides a tranquil area for meditation. It can be used for group or class acts of collective worship.

Similarly, special areas within school have been developed to assist and focus prayer. These may reflect a specific liturgical season or a current Catholic focus such as Laudato Si, Adoremus or The Word. These displays can be found both within classrooms and in communal spaces such as the hall or entrance area. The digital screen in the main school entrance raises the profile of our Catholic life and reminds the whole community of our special 'prayer life'

Music, Dance, Drama and Art

As people of faith we will all have our preferred way of 'speaking to God'. Music, dance, drama and art often appeal to children in a way that the spoken word fails to do. It is important that we give children the opportunity to experience prayer through different activities so that they learn at an early age that there are many ways of praying. At St Vincent de Paul School we endeavour to engage our pupils in a wide variety of prayerful activities so that they grow up with respect for and an understanding of all prayer forms.

We remember that:

"Prayer is the raising up of the mind and heart to God"

From The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Our Diverse Catholic Community

We identify opportunities for pupils to pray using their mother tongue and these prayers can also be shared during assemblies, liturgies and celebrations.

Senior leaders encourage the various diverse groups to use the school and school grounds for celebrations which reflect their own Catholic traditions. For example the Filipino community and the Kerala community use the school grounds for special religious processions such as those seeking the intercession of Mary

Adult Prayer

Opportunities for prayer are enabled for all members of the community.

The weekly whole staff briefing begins in prayer as do all meetings of staff and governors.

The newsletter always ends with a prayer.

Future Developments – Prayer & Liturgy Directory

Senior Leaders are aware that a Prayer and Liturgy Directory is due to be published by the Bishop's Conference, following its publication of a new Curriculum Directory. This will contain some key requirements for how Catholic Schools support Prayer, Liturgy & Worship in a school context. The RE leadership team have kept abreast of developments in this area and will review policy and practice when this document is published.

Monitoring and Review

The quality of prayer and collective worship is monitored on a weekly basis by the Senior Leadership Team. At least once per year it is formally monitored by the RE Leadership Team and feedback is given to staff in relation to potential development points. The RE Governor considers the ethos for prayer, liturgy and collective worship when visiting the school and keeps the Governing Body informed of this 'climate'.

Appendix 1:

Examples of school prayers which may be used. These are not exclusive and are only suggestions. Variety is important.

Morning Prayers

Nursery

Jesus loves me, This is true. Wherever I am, Whatever I do.
Amen

Reception

Jesus loves me, This is true. Wherever I am, Whatever I do.
Guide me Jesus through this day, In all I think and do and say.
Amen.

Key stage One and Two

God our Father, may this day be yours, All that I think and do and say,
My work and enjoyment; the hard things and the happy things, everything.
May your son Jesus my friend and brother, be with me throughout the day
to do your work and guide my ways.
Amen.

Midday Prayer

Bless us O Lord as we sit together. Bless the food we eat today.
Bless the hands that make the food. Bless us O Lord,
Amen.

End of Day Prayer

O my God, I've come to say, Thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family and all the friends you give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night and in the morning send your light.
Amen.

Appendix 2: Pupil Planned Collective Worship – planning proforma

	<h1>COLLECTIVE WORSHIP</h1>
<p>Date:</p>	<p>Class:</p> <p>Names of the children who have planned and led the session:</p>
<p>Gather</p> <p>Timings</p> <p>Where the leaders will sit/stand</p> <p>Where pupils will sit</p> <p>How the pupils will start the session (let us pray/speak/play music...)</p> <p>What will there prayer focus be?</p>	
<p>Word</p> <p>Scripture reference they are responding to</p> <p>What will the leaders read?</p> <p>The Wednesday Word (focus word) is:</p>	
<p>Response to the Word –</p> <p>Prayer/Symbolic Action</p> <p>Worship section the pupils prepare</p> <p>Will they read/create/have a hymn to listen to</p>	
<p>Mission</p> <p>What are they going to encourage the class to DO in response to their collective worship</p>	
<p>What the children thought...</p> <p>Ask the leaders at the end of the session</p>	