

Catholic Life Policy



St Clare's Primary School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve.

Colossians 3:23-24

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1. Mission Statement

‘Learning Through Faith’

Learning develops independent thinking children, through exciting challenges, expecting success with faith at the centre of all we do.

- To build and develop our Catholic faith community and actively promote the partnership of home, school, parish and the wider world.
- Leading by example, we encourage all members of our community to value, respect and co-operate with each other and others, learning to show love, kindness, tolerance and patience. To develop team- work between children, families, staff and governors, so that we can improve and develop.
- To learn about the world we live in, promote democracy and celebrate the rich diversity of our community and wider world.
- To provide a safe; welcoming; stimulating and healthy environment.
- To facilitate achievement by developing life- long learning skills through an enjoyable, balanced, differentiated and creative curriculum, which nurtures a positive self-image and regard for others.

2. The Spiritual Life of our School

We aim to develop the spiritual life of everyone within our community, regardless of their beliefs. We provide spiritual development for pupils and staff alike, and invite our families to develop spiritually in connection with the school and parish.

- All pupils and staff have the opportunity for daily collective worship. This is either a class or a whole school act of worship. Children plan and lead class liturgies weekly.

- Christian Meditation and Lectio Divina take place in every classroom, every week, providing time for pupils to quietly reflect on their faith.
- The school environment supports spiritual development through a crucifix in every classroom and in communal areas, prayer corners, displays reflecting the Liturgical Year and other religious images and symbols.
- Home-school initiatives throughout the year, including the Travelling Nativity during Advent, prayer initiatives during Lent and homework at the start of every Come and See RE unit.
- Teaching the children when and how to be reverent and when and how to show the joy of their faith through collective worship, songs, words and actions.
- The opportunity to be part of the Chaplaincy Team (see section 4).
- Providing and fostering opportunities for prayer (see section 3)

3. Prayer Life of the School

Prayer has an important role in our Religious Education as a means of expressing, fostering and nurturing faith. We aim to create and maintain an environment where this is developed. Our classrooms, work areas, corridors and school entrance are welcoming, bright, stimulating and creative so that the Catholicity of the school is being lived out through our surroundings. 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 in a variety of ways:

- Daily prayers in class: morning prayer, prayer before lunch, home time prayer
- Traditional prayers are taught, alongside those written by significant individuals
- Prayer areas are in every classroom
- Spontaneous prayer area in the corridor
- Class prayer boxes which are taken outside for use at lunchtime
- Christian Meditation
- Lectio Divina
- Pupils are taught how to write their own prayers of asking, thanking, praising and saying sorry.

4. Chaplaincy Team

Our Chaplaincy Team consists of one pupil from each class in years 1 – 6. Their role is to support their peers to grow in their faith. They do this by:

- Maintaining and developing class prayer areas
- Maintaining and developing communal prayer areas
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school acts of worship
- Taking class prayer boxes outside at lunchtime and encouraging their peers to pray

- Undertaking large projects such as developing a prayer garden
- Keeping the pupils updated with information about donations to charity, such as for foodbanks and CAFOD
- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence and joy where applicable.
- Writing and leading whole school acts of worship, such as the Remembrance Liturgy.

5. Giving to Others

We aim to develop and harness an awareness of the needs of others: locally, nationally and globally, and foster a spirit of generosity and compassion.

There are various fundraising events throughout the year co-ordinated by the Chaplaincy Team:

- Harvest – children are encouraged to bring in food for local foodbanks and the school is a permanent collection point for donations throughout the year.
- At Remembrance, we sell poppies and related merchandise to raise funds for the Royal British Legion.
- In Advent, a charity of the pupils' choosing is supported, as well as collecting gifts for local veterans and the elderly
- During Lent we raise funds for CAFOD through activities chosen by the pupils.
- We support the work of the Nottingham Diocese Catholic Youth Service on World Youth Fun Day through a non-school uniform day.
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes through the year such as LOROS and McMillan through cake and biscuit sales and other initiatives.

Children are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in the community. It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture a generous giving of self, and an appreciation and respect for others.

6. Parental Involvement

Parents are the first teachers of their children and we work in partnership with them. They are encouraged to support Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and discuss with their children work being completed when preparing to receive the Sacraments.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year, which include: class assemblies, curriculum meetings, whole school Masses and liturgies which take place throughout the year both in school and at St Wilfrid's Parish Church and events such as the Christmas Celebration.

They are encouraged to participate with their children during Advent when the 'Travelling Cribs' are sent home, encouraging a time of sharing and reflection and also during Lent when Christian Meditation is encouraged at home.

Parents are encouraged to join the PTA to help organise and host a range of events for our school community. All funds raised support the development and enhance the provision we offer for our pupils and families.

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. St Clare's operates an open-door policy.

7. Parish Links

Links with the local Parish are a vital part of Catholic Life in school. The Parish which serves our school is St Wilfrid's. Our parish priest is Fr Gabriel Ofor.

Children visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church. Father also supports the teaching of curriculum RE in school by coming in to talk about various topics such as baptism, reconciliation and vocation. Links with the priest are strengthened as they celebrate various services in the school with the children and staff, including Mass and the commissioning of the Chaplaincy Team. We support the work of the Parish Justice and Peace group through promoting their campaigns and act as a collection point for donations. We also share with our school community communications from Father Gabriel in order to encourage attendance at church and involvement in church events.

8. School Environment

Every effort is made to provide a spiritually uplifting, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment within our school.

- All rooms have a crucifix.
- All rooms have a prayer area.
- All rooms have a statue of Our Lady, liturgy boxes and 'Let us Pray 2Gether' resources.
- There are displays in the corridors with reflection on our Mission Statement, information about St Clare, Pope Francis, Bishop Patrick McKinney and the current Liturgical Season.
- Displays in the hall document the activities of the Chaplaincy Team, the School Council, our work with the local community and how we work towards the Bishop's three themes of Encounter, Discipleship and Missionary Discipleship. Pupil voice is evident throughout.
- Displays within each classroom reflect the 'Come and See' topic being taught, the Liturgical Season, work produced by the pupils, key prayers and scripture.
- There are child-friendly quotes from scripture around the corridors and celebrations of the virtues and the structure of a liturgy.

9. Leadership and Monitoring

This policy is the responsibility of the headteacher who also oversees the Chaplaincy Team. They report back to governors on Catholic Life half termly. The headteacher will monitor the Catholic Life of the school and update the Catholic Life action plan accordingly, ensuring actions are undertaken and Catholic Life enhanced.

10. Links with other policies

This Catholic Life policy is linked to the following policies:

- Religious Education Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy