



# St. Mary's RC Primary Ethos Policy

**St Mary's RC Primary School,  
Belgrave Street,  
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Manchester  
M26 4DG**

This Policy was produced in September 2016

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[This Policy will next be reviewed in September 2018](#)

# **Our Mission Statement**

**Jesus teaches us to love God and neighbours as ourselves. Our mission as a Catholic School is to put that into practise in the way we live, teach, learn and work together.**

**We will show we love God by making God part of our school day: by our prayers, by our acts of worship, by listening to the Word of God, by our respect for God's creation. We will show we love God by letting the teachings of Jesus and his Church guide our daily choices, words, actions and attitudes. We will practise compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, honesty and respect in all situations.**

**The children are our neighbours: we will show love for them by respecting them as individuals, knowing them and their needs, and carefully planning their education so that each can reach their full potential. We will show love for them by creating a safe, nurturing, listening environment. We will show love for them by having the highest expectations, and challenging them to reach for the stars and be the best they can be.**

**Parents are our neighbours: we will show love for them by offering our guidance and help, seeking their active partnership in the education of their children, and understanding their particular situations.**

**All members of Staff are our neighbours. We will show love for them by working as a team, sharing our skills and care, praising and celebrating excellence, communicating effectively and understanding each other's needs. Children and parents too will show this love by their respect for all staff and the rules that create a peaceful and safe learning environment.**

**Our neighbours are all around us in our local community: we will show we love them by a warm welcome to everyone who visits Saint Mary's, and by our outreach to those in need. The poor too are our neighbours: we will show we love them by supporting charitable works at home and abroad.**

## **School Prayer**

**Today we'll do our very best to work and learn and pray,  
With Jesus as our friend and guide in all we do and say.**

**We'll love our God, as Jesus taught, in listening and prayer;  
We'll love our neighbours as ourselves with kindness, peace and care.**

**We'll make our school a happy place, with challenges and fun  
And be the best that we can be until this day is done!**

**We know that we're not all the same but there's work for everyone.  
We'll all achieve fantastic things and say "A Day Well Done!"**

## OUR SCHOOL - A PLACE OF LIVING CHRISTIANITY

Visitors to Saint Mary's often talk about the special "feel" of our school, though they cannot often define exactly what that is! We believe it is our Catholic Ethos that they are sensing – the way in which our school, as part of Parish, Diocese and Universal Church, teaches and puts into practice our Catholic Faith. This policy seeks to describe how we achieve that. It is based around the Diocese of Salford's "Framework for Religious Inspection", otherwise known as the "Five Ws"

**The "Five Ws" are not a syllabus or curriculum, but a framework to help us understand and evaluate what we do as a faith school. They try, in an ordered way, to describe the dynamic of a living Christian faith, which is fed by God and expressed in real action. They are a measure of a school's commitment to active Christianity, which can help us to focus our efforts, and ensure that we truly are fulfilling our duties as a school with a distinctive Roman Catholic ethos.**

Maintaining and Developing the Ethos of St. Mary's  
All those within the school community are required to uphold the values of the Catholic faith: *"The preservation and development of the quality and distinctive nature of Catholic schools depends on the faith, practice and commitment of the teachers in the schools, working with their governing bodies"* The staff are *"...expected to be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of the school, having regard at all times to the Catholic character of the school, and not to do anything detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the same."*

## LEADERSHIP

### Leading by Example

At Saint Mary's, we believe that in order to develop and maintain the Catholic ethos of our school, we need to lead by example in all areas of school life, for example, in our behaviour, our relationships, our praying, our involvement in mass, in our respect of other religions and cultures.

Our Foundation Governors are all practising parishioners, who fully support the Catholic Ethos of the School: in every Governors' Meeting the Headteacher reports on the ethos of the school, with reports about Collective Worship, the Caritas in Action programme, and the delivery of the RE Curriculum. Our Parish Priest is a frequent visitor to school, well-known to the children, and always available for advice or training.

The Headteacher and Senior Leaders see the application of Catholic Faith as central to their role in the school, leading assemblies and acts of worship, and also ensuring that Religious Education and the development of this Ethos Policy are given appropriate time and attention. Our Mission Statement, which was recently reworked with all staff, guides the day to day governance and management of the school.

An SLT member is given specific responsibility for Ethos, Worship and Church-School links, in order to ensure that the development of Catholic Ethos has the highest priority in our school. It is their role to formulate the policy and ensure that it is followed by all staff. They advise and support staff, keeping them informed about any new developments. They monitor and support ethos and worship within the school, with the Headteacher, through observations, learning walks, pupil interviews and some scrutiny of books.

Religious Education is treated with importance, with at least 10% of teaching time being devoted to it, with a rigorous approach to monitoring and assessment to ensure this happens. *(Please see RE curriculum policy for more details)*

The Prayer and Ethos Leader and RE Curriculum Leader co-ordinate regularly to ensure that Religious Education is placed at the core of our school curriculum.

All staff are encouraged to make the proclamation and application of Catholic Ethos central to each school day, and also the background to all teaching and learning. Daily prayer, regular worship, awareness of social and moral issues are all supported and resourced by the Prayer and Ethos Leader, Parish Priest, SLT and Pupil Prayer and Ethos Leaders (PPELs), due to become Chaplains in 2017.

## WORD

*This comes first: this is not just words on the page of a magazine or book, but the living Word of Jesus, which inspires what we do. "WORD" describes what we teach and how we teach! Word is "the Way, the Truth and the Life!" (John 14:6) We teach Jesus, and we teach like Jesus, who said "whoever carries out my commandments and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:19) In our Mission Statement we give pride of place to the most important commandments of Jesus, "Love God and love your neighbour."*

***"Let the little children come to me. Do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs."***

### **Proclaiming Jesus in Daily Actions**

The word of God permeates the daily lives of each member of St. Mary's community through daily prayer and services, masses, Golden Rules, assemblies, displays, prayer partners, Pupil Prayer and Ethos Leaders, and the way in which pupils respect and treat each other.

All staff play a major part in celebrating God's word. KS2 children hear the Word of God at Mass in Church on Thursdays and beginning and end of term masses. Year Three children attend Mass every Sunday as part of Sacramental Programme and take part in a Reconciliation Service and Benediction that celebrates the pupils becoming full members of the church.

### **Curriculum RE**

Religious Education at St Mary's RC Primary School is the core of our core curriculum. It is allocated total teaching time of approximately 10% of available curriculum time for each year group, as recommended by the Bishops of England and Wales. The 10% time allocation does not include collective acts of worship.

### **Daily Prayer**

Every classroom is a place of prayer, and each class will pray at least four times a day. One of these is always a Service, a ten-minute liturgical prayer. Prayers are said before and after lunch, and at the end of the day. Class Altars and Displays are regularly used and updated: each class has their

own "Catholic Bits Box" and "Prayer Intention Box" which encourages discussion and consideration of Catholic identity and practice.

### **Pupil Chaplains**

During the academic year 2016- 2017 we will be introducing Pupil Chaplains at Saint Mary's. Currently known as "Pupil Prayer and Ethos Leaders" (PPELs) they support the Catholic life of the school, giving support for staff in the delivery of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. They support the pastoral care of staff and pupils, assist with the delivery and development of the prayer life in school, supporting assemblies, class prayers and prayer groups. They also have an important welcoming role in school for parents, governors and visitors.

## WELCOME

### **Parental Involvement**

The first meeting we hold for our parents begins in church, to emphasise the importance of our school and church relationship. Our Year 6's Leavers' Mass is held in Church, celebrating the children, and their families, time with us at St Mary's. As we pass on their care, with the symbol of a candle, to their new high school, we emphasise that they will always be members of St Mary's.

Our parents are invited to join in every area of our school life. They are all invited to become members of the 'Friends of Saint Mary's', to come into school to support small groups of children in their learning, to become governors and more. Parents are invited to Masses and prayer services, concerts, performances and a variety of assemblies. Some of our parents have taken the opportunity of becoming welfare staff and a number have done the voluntary work required of them when undertaking NVQ's in classroom support. All members of our community are invited to support our ongoing fundraising.

The relationship in prayer is fostered by sending home the "Wednesday Word" each week and other information such as Advent calendars and feast day and liturgical information.

### **School/Church Links**

School and church continue to work closely together. Half termly meetings with the Parish Priest give us the opportunity to share both

practical timetabling information as well as being able to decide on our next steps for developing our school/ church relationship and the spiritual development of our pupils and staff. Pupils visit Church regularly, for the celebration of Masses and Services, and for class visits throughout the year. Parishioners are invited to attend school masses and weekly masses attended by year groups, are parish masses. Good school and church links ensure that we have well organised and supported summer and Christmas fairs. Members of the parish have been asked to speak to pupils about their ministries.

### **Community Relationships**

We believe it is important to develop good relationships with our parish, schools and local community. We have for many years, developed relations through our choir. They regularly sing at, at a number of old people's homes and in the town centre. They have sung to raise money for charity as well as to entertain. Since the building of our new hall, we have worked hard to allow other clubs and members of the community to use the hall. We have links with Radcliffe Brass Band, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, karate clubs, gymnastics and trampolining clubs and more. Holiday clubs welcome children from a variety of schools into our school. Our new defibrillator placed where it will be accessible to school, parish and community shows our desire to develop good community relationships.

### **Class Saints**

In order to emphasise our belonging to the family of the Church, from September 2016 each class will have a class saint. They will learn about their chosen Saint at the beginning of the year, pray to them throughout the year, share information about them with other classes, and celebrate their feast day. All classes have been given a short biography about their chosen saint and a special framed picture to add to their class altar.

### **Chosen Saints**

- FS1 Saint Bernadette Soubirous
- FS2G Saint Francis of Assisi
- FS2P Saint Clare of Assisi
- 1P Saint Therese of Lisieux
- 1W Saint Anne, Mother of Our Lady
- 2C Saint Augustine of Canterbury
- 2W Saint Elizabeth of Hungary

- 3G Saint Teresa of Calcutta
- 3M Saint John Paul II
- 4B Saint Edmund Campion
- 4W Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque
- 5B Saint Alban, First Martyr of England
- 5J Saint Isaac Jogues & The Canadian Martyrs
- 6BD Saint Aloysius Gonzaga
- 6KD Saint Pius of Pietrelcina

### **Saints' Days**

At Saint Mary's we believe that the lives of saints should inspire staff and children. Staff are all provided with a calendar of Saints' days, and this is also displayed in the staffroom and other areas of the school. Staff choose specific saints to focus on, ones who are important to our school and community, to children and their families, the patron saints of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and others which may be relevant in their learning. The Parish Priest produces a school calendar of saints' days for each member of staff. Staff are encouraged to include learning about Saints in their weekly Religion lessons and prayers. Prior to year group masses, the children learn about the saint of the day.

### **House Teams**

All KS2 children are members of 'houses' (points system) which are named after Saints. The children learn about the saints each year and celebrate their House Saint's Feast Day.

## **WELFARE**

***"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself!"***

### **Holistic Approach to pupil Welfare**

At St Mary's we believe that the welfare of our children and their families is paramount. We begin our relationship with our families before the children start at St Mary's in our nursery and we feel this gives us a good insight into their needs. We work hard to develop good relationships with families and all the stakeholders and outside agencies who can help us in our support of these families. Good staff communication ensures that concerns about children are shared and we can work to fulfil their needs through donations, advice, signposting etc. We work hard to ensure

that we provide for a wide range of needs from academic, medical, social, physical and emotional, planning, differentiating and employing a variety of teaching styles and resources to cater for children's abilities and learning styles.

We encourage parents at least annually to find out if their child is entitled to Pupil Premium funding so that we can ensure that they receive all the support they should.

### **Support of Families**

We attend all meetings that help our children and families. We find ways in which we can support families such as places in holiday clubs and Before and After School care, money for trips, food parcels, uniform donations etc. Good links with the SVP and Catholic Family Care help us with the provision of care and support.

### **Rainbows/Sunbeams**

We run Rainbows throughout the year to support children with loss and bereavement. It is run by one of our support staff. She has now been trained to run Sunbeams for the younger children.

### **Charities**

As a Catholic school we support numerous charities and teach the children why it is important to do so. We feel it is important to consult our parents to discover which charities they would like us to support throughout each year. We ensure that we support local, national and international charities. Some charities, such as Caritas (Saint Joseph's Penny) and CAFOD, are supported annually. During the year 2015- 2016, we also supported Macmillan Cancer Care, Cornerstone, TextSanta, North Manchester Hospital, British Heart Foundation, British Legion Poppy Appeal, local flood victims and SUDEP. Other charities we have supported over the last few years include The Christie Hospital, Bury Hospice, Grace's Place, The Alzheimer's Society, police hampers, and our own Church Building Fund.

### **World Events**

We ensure that at Saint Mary's, the children learn about world events through prayer, religion, assemblies and other curriculum areas. For example, we might pray for peace in a war-torn country, for a soldier who has been killed and their

family etc. We can find out about a country hit by disaster, how we can support them and what aid we can give them.

## **WORSHIP**

***What does Jesus say? "In truth I tell you, the day is coming when you will worship ... in spirit and in truth."***

### **Masses**

Every week a year group from KS2 attends the Thursday morning Mass at Church. Our weekly school year group masses are the opportunity for us to take part in a parish mass, observing members of the parish read, give communion and do the offertory. This is the parish's opportunity to lead by example.

Our beginning and end of term KS2 Masses are the school's opportunity to take on some of the roles we have observed at the weekly mass, the readings, bidding prayers and the offertory. Some of our children who are altar servers, also serve on the altar during school masses.

Children in Foundation Stage and KS1 have Prayer Services at the beginning and end of term led by the Parish Priest, as part of their developing introduction to the liturgy of the Church: Y2 children are invited to Mass in Church at the end of the year as part of their transition to KS2.

### **Liturgies/ Prayer services** *(see Prayer and Worship Policy for further information)*

Every day a class prayer time takes the form of a more organised "liturgy". We recognise that these Services are an essential part of the curriculum, a special time of prayer and reflection. We have a number of liturgy books to support staff and also advise them to use the CAFOD website where there are materials for each week. Three times a term, as part of the "Come and See" RE Curriculum, staff and pupils will lead a formal "Respond" liturgy on the current topic.

### **Liturgical Calendar**

We believe that the children need to learn about the Liturgical life of the church. We do this not only through curriculum R.E, but also through assemblies, involvement in producing displays and

setting up altars, masses and prayer services, power points, bible stories etc. The Parish Priest provides a calendar of saints and other liturgical events for each term.

### **Assemblies** (See *Prayer and Worship Policy*)

At Saint Mary's, all our assemblies begin with an act of worship. Our assemblies are usually led by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher but are also led on occasion by another member of staff or the Parish Priest. Our themed assemblies support the ethos of the school and cover topics such as world religions and festivals, different cultures, charities, world events and the liturgical life of the church. Staff develop/ continue with this learning, in class.

Our 'Wednesday Word' services focus on the Sunday Gospel, often based on the CAFOD liturgy. This year we are introducing the Wednesday Word take home sheet, to develop prayer links with parents and the home. Our Year Group assemblies are held throughout the year on a variety of themes e.g. Harvest and Mothers' Day.

Our 'Golden Book' assemblies celebrate the children's achievements. Parents are invited to attend these assemblies and are invited to join in with prayers and hymns. Our children perform appropriate religious productions at Easter and Christmas telling the stories of Jesus' life at these times.

## **WITNESS**

***What does Jesus say? "Truly I tell you, the person who stands up for me in the presence of others, I will stand up for them. The one who disowns me, I will disown them."***

### **Altars**

At Saint Mary's, each classroom has an altar which provides a visual stimulus for prayer. The altar can be quite simple, consisting of perhaps a Bible, a candle, a crucifix or cross, a statue or icon and a drape in an appropriate liturgical colour. They will also include prayers related to the liturgical season or theme and short passages from scripture or a Bible.

A new feature in this Academic Year is the "Catholic Bits Box", containing items (many donated by

parishioners) intended to provoke discussion and learning about Catholic prayer, identity and culture. The displays around the altar also include links to Caritas in Action, raising awareness of needs both in the school, the local community and overseas, such as Saint Joseph's Penny displays or CAFOD posters. Each class will either choose to change their altar throughout the year according to the liturgical season, or add another display/ area.

There are also several altars/displays around school which are changed on a regular basis. All classes are involved in the hall altar/display at some point during the year, which ensures that all children develop an increased understanding of the Liturgical Year and can display that understanding to the whole school, to staff and to visitors. Other displays throughout school will include work by different classes/year groups on members of the Church such as the Pope, the Bishop or our Parish Priest, work on different Saints, the 5W's, the Rosary etc. Classroom displays will be linked to the current RE curriculum unit of study and will be in the form of a 'Big Question' Working Wall in Key Stage 2.

### **World Religions**

At Saint Mary's we believe it is important that children learn about other major religions so that they may be understanding and tolerant towards others and behave towards them as God intended. Knowledge and understanding of other religions and cultures is essential in our multi-cultural and multi religious society. We are using 'Come and See' to support our teaching and are focusing in particular on Judaism and Islam. We also do this through our multi- faith assemblies and the use of the Caritas in Action scheme for SMSC Education.

If Catholic students are truly "prepared to face the world in the spirit of the gospel" they must behave as God intended, remembering God's words "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). To love unconditionally, as God does, students must have an understanding of others' faiths so as they may be tolerant and accepting. We believe that it is important that we don't just teach world religions as a curriculum subject but that we support the children in developing tolerance and respect through leading by example. A calendar of events

is displayed in the staffroom and all staff are given a copy of the World Faith's calendar to support their teaching.

### **Culture**

At Saint Mary's, we believe it is very important that we teach the children about different cultures in all areas of the curriculum. We try to ensure that the children can distinguish between culture and religion. We ensure that pictures of people of different cultures are displayed around school, that in music we listen to music and learn songs from different cultures, that in Geography we learn about different countries, that in the library we have books from different cultures etc.

### **Sacramental Programme**

The sacramental journey at Saint Mary's is a shared role between parish, families and school. We believe it is important that as a whole school we celebrate and support the children on their sacramental journey. Since the changes in the sacramental programme at Saint Mary's were introduced by the Parish Priest in September 2010, we have seen a huge effect on the children in Year 3. All children now attend Sunday mass weekly, and all staff are aware that this has made a huge difference to both the children's and their parents' involvement in their sacramental journey. Father James said: *'There is a real and visible effect in our children's understanding and participation in Mass.'* Staff and governors are all invited to join in the celebrations of Reconciliation and Holy Communion with the children and their families.

## **RESOURCES**

We have books in school which support staff in prayer and worship, and the ethos of the school, for example, a book explaining the Stations of the Cross with matching posters, a variety of prayer books, a book explaining the rosary, liturgy books and numerous books about the saints. Power points developed by the Ethos and Worship Leader or recognised as being good examples, are shared with all staff and placed on the server. e.g. 'Pope

Francis', The Rosary, Saint Philip Neri, Advent, Lent, Easter etc.

Classes have their own resources for display purposes in their classrooms and other resources are kept on the RE shelves e.g. Pope statue and information books, liturgy books etc.

Some resources such as Prayer booklets, Prayer guidance for staff, Saint's day calendars, Multi-faith calendars, class saints' pictures, prayers specific to a season etc. are given out to all staff.

Other relevant documents

- R.E curriculum policy
- 'Come and See' scheme
- Prayer and Worship policy
- 'Caritas in Action'

### **Inset**

5W's- Spring 2015 and November 2016

Mission Statement review Summer 2015

Prayer- Summer 2015 and November 2016

Annual ethos and worship updates

Termly ethos updates

### **Staffing and Responsibilities**

#### **Policy, Monitoring and Review**

As part of the school's monitoring programme:

Learning Walks are undertaken by the SLT and Ethos and Worship Leader.

Observations of classroom worship are undertaken and feedback shared with all staff, SLT and governors.

Book scrutinies and Pupil Interviews are completed by the Ethos and Worship Leader.

Ethos reports are shared with governors each term at governors meetings.

The Ethos governor attends masses and services.

The Ethos and Worship Leader presents an annual action plan which highlights the priorities for the academic year.

This policy is monitored by the Ethos and Worship Leader and is evaluated by the staff and governors on a regular basis.

It will be reviewed in September 2018.