St Paul's CE Primary School

Spirituality, Prayer and Collective Worship Policy

Agreed by Governing Body on:	22 May 2024
Policy Review Date:	May 2026

St Paul's CE Primary School

St Paul's CE Primary School:

St. Paul's School promotes the Christian faith within a warm and loving atmosphere, so that our children achieve their educational goals and fulfil their individual God given potential.

The school will provide education and worship, which promotes the arts, builds on children's talents and respects people of all faiths and cultures.

We celebrate God's love for every child in our school and encourage each child to develop a sense of belonging within the Christian journey, using the creativity and gifts God has given them.

We nurture our children's curiosity about our diverse and wonderful world and foster their sense of global citizenship. We are committed to an ethos of love and inclusion built on the teachings of Jesus Christ, in an environment which embraces everyone and supports the future of our young people, as they progress through and beyond our school.

Why is collective worship important for us?

Collective worship at St Paul's is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to our children's moral and spiritual development. During collective worship, we give glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. Creating an atmosphere for spiritual growth is at the centre of all our teaching. The children are encouraged to pray, reflect, contemplate and make links with daily life and religious belief on a daily basis. It helps us all to respond, lovingly, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, which is made possible through knowledge and connection with Jesus and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
Taking part in collective worship helps cement our very special community by creating a consistent structure around the core values and symbols of Christianity. Pupil participation and engagement in worship are important and all children are invited to play an active part in Christian collective worship.

Throughout the year our school community comes together to celebrate important events in the Church's calendar, such as - Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Harvest, and acknowledging major Saints' Days. Through regular prayer and worship, including the Eucharist, the rhythm of the Church's year is part of school life and each pupil's life.

Collective worship also gives children the chance to explore and understand the values at the heart of our ethos. From forgiveness and reflection, to gratitude and justice, collective worship gives pupils space and time to reflect. It helps to provide a shared language of values and the times set aside in the school day for reflection provides everyone with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community.

Spirituality

Introduction: What is spirituality?

At St. Paul's CE Primary School, we believe spirituality to be the essence of being human and to be related to God. We develop an understanding that we were created by God, in His image and likeness. We understand that He is calling us back into a relationship with Him by way of His Son Jesus.

To develop this relationship with God, we need to understand that prayer is integral. Through prayer, we will experience the importance of the Gospel and the need to live by it. Through personal prayer and reflection, we will experience the life of God within ourselves, and in liturgical prayer, we will experience our need for the life of our community and of those who live within it.

We are all spiritual beings and as a community, we acknowledge that this needs to be developed and nurtured in order to develop our relationship with God.

Aims: Why is Spirituality important for us?

We encourage all of our community to develop by helping one another to grow in our understanding of Christ. Our School Mission Statement sets this out clearly.

Prayer and worship are at the heart of our community, which has an Anglican foundation. We aim to create an environment and opportunities where our school community is able to pray and develop in spirituality by enriching their relationships with God and growing in faith.

Spirituality in Practice

Opportunities for prayer are provided throughout the day and are seen as an integral part of the life of the school. Children are given time to think and reflect. This is encouraged and developed as part of an RE lesson, a school assembly, a class Liturgy and through other curriculum areas. We encourage and promote spontaneous opportunities for prayer. We are aware of the 'awe and wonder' moments which can occur at any place, at any time during the school day. We also promote reflection and contemplation and will soon be introducing Christian meditation.

There are designated areas within our school where the children can take some time to pray and reflect. Prayer tables in each class are interactive and include a Bible and Liturgical cloths. Each class also keeps a Spiritual Journal. This is an opportunity for the children to record their prayers, thoughts and feelings – this journal will be carried up through the school with the children and will be a record of their spiritual journey at St Paul's. An extra outdoor Prayer area is being developed. Class prayers are said at the beginning or end of the day and at lunchtimes. During Liturgies and assemblies, we follow the format of Gathering, Engaging, Responding, Sending.

Gathering: A distinctive atmosphere and a clearly visible focus point are important. There should be a feeling of expectation as people gather for worship. We gather together and greet each other. We all come to play a part in this community. We are preparing to meet with God.

Engaging: This may be the main part in an act of worship. It should encourage children to engage with the Bible, Christian teaching, and most importantly, with God. We engage with the big things and the little things in life. We encounter Jesus and the stories of the Bible. We are listening for God's message to us.

Responding: For every child and adult present, some response should be possible. All should understand that this is time set aside for deep thought and for each to respond in an appropriate way. We respond to what we have heard and seen. We respond together and as individuals. We are given the opportunity to worship God.

Sending: The ending of the act of worship should be full of purpose, as people are sent out to be different and to 'do' differently. We are sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the world. We are all dismissed with God's blessing.

Collective Worship

***'Whenever two or three of you gather together in my name, I am there in the midst of you.'* (Matthew 18:20)**

Introduction

At St Paul's CE Primary School we believe that we are an 'active faith' community. We acknowledge the importance of corporate prayer and worship as well as private prayer and reflection. The opportunity to gather as a community for collective worship is an essential part of our school life. We believe that this time together for prayer and reflection strengthens the children in their relationship with God and each other. We value highly the chance to pray together, listen together, sing together and celebrate together. Our celebrations are based on the teachings of Christ and the catholic tradition of Anglicanism, represented by the churches on our foundation. However, we conduct them in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school. While all the acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also take the opportunity, through our world faith days, to learn about other religious traditions that are represented in the wider community and respect the value of them to their followers.

Aims and purpose

At St Paul's the aims and purpose of collective worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship God;
- to give glory, honour, praise and thanks to God;
- to help children grow and develop in their personal faith and spirituality;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship and explore the importance of the Eucharist and other sacraments.

Organisation of collective worship

Celebrations can take many forms, all of which attempt to help children understand some of the elements of liturgy. For example greeting, silence, reflection, prayer, singing and community praise. They help to prepare children to share and take an active role in the liturgical life of the Church. As we develop as a faith community children and adults participate in masses, liturgies and assemblies. During the summer term, the Year 5 children prepare for the sacrament of Holy Communion. We provide opportunities to involve children and in KS2, children are given the opportunity to organise Acts of Worship themselves.

We hold a daily act of worship in our school. This is normally a whole school or key stage gathering. The end of worship has a reflection or prayer and children know this concludes the assembly. We use this assembly time to develop the school as a community, to celebrate the work of children, and to create a coherent school family.

We regard worship as a special time. We expect children to enter quietly and behave appropriately. We ask them to be thoughtful and listen carefully and encourage them to participate fully. We aim to create a worshipful atmosphere by using music, appropriate symbols of light or other resources. We teach methods to express their prayers such as the folding or clasping of hands, and the shutting of eyes, as physical expressions of the worship of God.

Worship is not all, however, conducted verbally. It should encourage children, through the use of silence, music and thought, to engage with the world around them and with the situations in which they are placed in awe, wonder and reverence.

The following are some celebrations in keeping with the Liturgical Calendar.

- Celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist in whole school or class masses in St. Paul's, St. Michael's and St. Nicholas Churches;
- Celebrations on special Saints' days and Holy Days;
- Opportunities to reflect on the word of God (assemblies, class assemblies, at Mass, in prayer areas, at Prayer tables.);
- Opportunities for spontaneous prayer as well as formal prayer;
- Use of music, art, song, drama, dance assemblies, Liturgies, and within lessons;
- Contributing to our Prayer areas and to prayers and displays around the school (e.g. for Lent)

Assemblies nurture children and keep them growing in faith as individuals and as a community taking into account the needs of all our pupils.

The headteacher and members of the teaching staff lead worship, together with the parish clergy, on a weekly basis. The usual pattern is as follows:

Monday:	Whole school in the hall	Headteacher
Tuesday:	Key stage assemblies	Rota of teachers
Wednesday:	Whole school in the hall	hymn singing Music co-ordinator
Thursday:	Whole school in the hall	Clergy
Friday :	Celebration assembly	Headteacher.

We also invite charitable organisations to lead assemblies.

Gospel Assemblies

The Head teacher or RE Coordinator lead our whole school assemblies on Wednesday mornings. The focus for this assembly is the Sunday Gospel, Bible reading or a special feast day. When new RE topics start the RE coordinator will hold an assembly introducing the new topic and sharing common themes and ideas with the whole school.

Class Assemblies – planned to commence post pandemic

These will take place once each full term and are prepared by the class teacher. The class assembly will be presented to the school and parents and friends will be invited to join us. This will provide the classes with an opportunity for the children to share and celebrate their work with the school community. All class assemblies will incorporate prayer (linked to the topic). On occasions key stage assemblies cannot happen, an 'in-class' act of worship/liturgy takes place. Occasionally this assembly slot is used for other assemblies such as presentations by the school council committees or EPR themes.

Celebration Assemblies

Celebration assemblies are held once a week and children are given the chance to celebrate their gifts and talents with the whole school community. During these assemblies children's efforts, hard work, achievements and community contributions are recognised and celebrated. We also use this opportunity to celebrate where children have been followed our 'Gospel Values'. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. St Paul's CE School is a successful school and we shall celebrate the successes of all the children in assemblies.

Other Religions/Worldviews Assemblies

We hold a half-termly 'other religion / world view' assembly focus based on key festivals and celebrations during the year. These are delivered through the use Shap calendar resources and www.assemblies.org.uk (which are for Church schools).

Eucharistic Worship

The Eucharist is celebrated twice a term for all children. This can be in school, or with the children from Year one to six visiting one of our three linked churches. Each term there will be one in church and one in school.

We will visit each of our three churches in our community once a year, that is St. Paul's, St. Nicholas and St. Michael's, for special services, which may include a celebration of the Eucharist. However, more visits to the churches are often arranged by class teachers, within our RE curriculum.

Prayer

Children are encouraged to develop their prayer life in different ways. They are made aware of the different ways in which God makes Himself known through his Word, other people, the world and through the sacraments. We aim to help children to explore and develop their own personal way of talking to God as well as teaching children important prayers of the Church, prayers of thanksgiving and praise. In addition, we aim to teach children about different prayer forms such as meditation.

Prayers are said at the beginning of the day, before lunch and at the end of each day. Spontaneous prayers and reflections may take place during the school day, during RE lessons and if there is a particular intention to pray for or when a news story has impacted on the children. All teaching and support staff are expected to take part in worship and prayer with the children.

Focus areas and interactive displays are within the school to give the children opportunities to reflect on the themes and ideas that may be suggested to them during collective worship. These are organised by subject leaders, we also have input from a new Spiritual council. Opportunities are provided for the children to go individually or with a friend to write a prayer, pause for thought or create a reflection. For example, writing a prayer for the 'Remembrance Display', writing promises for Advent, Lent and the New Year, a child's reflection on their RE topic and so on.

Each class has a prayer table, which is linked to the current RE topic. These are interactive and the children are encouraged to take responsibility for displaying the artefacts, flowers, prayer pebbles and fabrics. Displays in the classrooms reflect the changing liturgical Seasons. These are regularly monitored by the RE subject leader.

Resources

We use a variety of resources including the church and clergy. Each class has an RE resource box which contains coloured fabric, pictures, artefacts, candles and other special objects. The children choose items from these boxes to put on their class prayer table. The children are also encouraged to bring in any special objects in from home, which can be used.

Books, music, candles and other items which support collective worship, are kept in the RE resource area and headteacher's office. These are monitored and updated regularly by the RE subject leader.

Planning and record keeping

We plan our worship in themes and the cycle of the Church's year. These are planned under the oversight of the Worship and Ethos committee. Copies of these plans are in the Headteacher's Office and Staffroom.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement the policy. It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the worship is carried out and the parish priests of St. Paul's and St. Nicholas, as ex-officio governors, shall monitor on behalf of the governing body. They do this through discussion with the Headteacher at their regular meetings advising and supporting the implementation of the themes and reviewing the assembly/worship records.

Right to Withdraw

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.

Appendix 1:

Classroom Prayer Tables and Displays

Class prayer tables should be current, interactive and 'belong' to the children.

The prayer table should:

- be accessible for the children
- reflect the current liturgical season / current topic
- have a bible, candle, Spiritual Journal and other religious object
- have a class prayer box
- include some interactive activity
- have something contributed or chosen by the children.

RE Displays should reflect the current topic and be prominent, interesting and child friendly.

Displays should include:

- The title of the current topic
- The key words linked to the current topic
- Key questions and learning
- Illustrations
- Reflect the current liturgical season

Signed …….. Chair of Governors

Signed …….. Headteacher

Appendix B:

Prayer Table Leaflet for staff

The Liturgical Year

Liturgical Colours

Liturgies celebrated during the different seasons of the liturgical year have distinctive music and specific readings, prayers and rituals. All of these work together to reflect the spirit of the particular season.

White (the colour of joy and victory) is used for the seasons of Easter and Christmas. It is also used for the feasts of Our Lord, for feasts of Mary, the angels and for saints who are not martyrs. Gold may also be used on solemn occasions.

Red (the colour of blood) is used on days when we celebrate the passion of Jesus on Passion Sunday and Good Friday. It is also used for birthday feasts of the apostles and evangelists and for the celebrations of martyrs. Red (the colour of fire) recalls the Holy Spirit and is used on Pentecost and for the sacrament of Confirmation.

Green seen everywhere in plants and trees symbolises life and hope and is used during Ordinary Time.

The colour purple/violet in Advent helps us to remember that we are preparing for the coming of Christ. Lent, the season of penance and renewal, also uses the colours as a sign of suffering.

Rose may be used on the Third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday and on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Laetare Sunday. It expresses the joy of anticipation for Christmas and Easter, respectively.

Prayer Table Checklist

When using your Prayer Table, think of the following points:

Topic title clearly displayed.

Key words from your topic displayed.

Key questions to develop children's thinking.

A well situated prayer table.

Opportunities for personal and spontaneous prayer.

Interactive and independent tasks.

Celebration of children's work either on the table or on the display.

Topic scripture along with key questions or quotes to think about and reflect upon.

Colours on the prayer table reflect the colours of the liturgical year.

Reflective and calm music.

Prayer book.

St Paul's CE Primary School

Prayer Table Leaflet

Prayer Tables

As educators in a Faith school, we have a unique opportunity to share our faith story with the children we encounter. Our stories are important. Our journey with God is an important aspect of how we teach and reach our pupils. Share your journey and your stories with pupils and help them recognise the journey they are on every day with God.

What is a prayer table?

A prayer table is a special place in the classroom where pupils can go to spend quite time in prayer. This table can be set up by different pupils each week. The children can be creative-bringing a cloth or covering for the table, a special statue or artifact or even a special item from home. They can decorate prayer pebbles with our Gospel values or add their own prayers to a class prayer box. The children could gather near their prayer table each day for opening or closing prayers.

Perhaps the most important detail of a Faith school classroom is the prayer table. With mindfulness and child led involvement, the prayer table can become central to the life of our classrooms. Some prayer tables simply aren't large enough to reflect the role of prayer in our daily lives. It is important to make sure the prayer table is cared for regularly by the children and placed in an accessible location for them.

How can you make your prayer table meaningful to the life of the classroom?

Consider the following:

- Where is the table situated?
- What objects and symbols of our faith are present on a regular basis?
- What items on the prayer table are only their temporarily?
- How do the children interact with the contents of the prayer table?
- How is the prayer table used in RE lessons?

Some Ideas

The best prayer tables are linked closely to the current RE topic, are uncluttered and contain purposeful artefacts that encourage children to interact regularly with it.

Position the prayer table as the focal point of the room.

Focus on the reading of the week.

Set up the table to relate to the lesson of the day or Liturgical season (Advent, Lent, Easter etc.)

Some of the most common sacramental artefacts that you will find on a prayer table are a key Bible verse and cross as its focal point and will include other artefacts, pictures and verses to engage the children in thought and prayer.

The prayer tables can also be used for children and staff to share their prayer intentions in an intentions box.

The cloth used on the prayer table should reflect the Liturgical year. For example, purple for Advent, green for ordinary time.

Appendix C:

A Guide to Spiritual Journey Books

Spiritual Journal Guidance

Religious education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together

Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person. (Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019)

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Guide to...

Spiritual Journals

How to use a Spiritual Journal

The use of a Spiritual Journal is intended to encourage children to reflect on experiences they have had, ask questions or just celebrate a school event through prayer and personal response. It provides another opportunity within the curriculum and beyond to develop children's spirituality.

The Spiritual Journal should be on display in a prominent position on the class prayer table. It should be viewed as a very special book owned by the whole class. The quality and look of the book are equally important, giving an important message. It doesn't matter that things get glued inside, the book gets bigger and more 3D in appearance. This reflects that the book is bursting with ideas.

Spirituality is...

A developing awareness that there is:

- Something more to life than meets the eye.
- Something more than material.
- Something more than the obvious.
- Something to wonder at.
- Something to respond to.

Some ideas of how the children might use the Spiritual Journal:

- Personal response to world event or a newspaper article. The children can write prayers or take the opportunity to discuss what has happened.
- Education Sunday reflections.
- Armistice Day reflections.
- Class Mass children reflecting on their involvement.
- Leaflets from mass.
- Harvest festival thoughts and prayers.
- Advent and Lenten promises.
- To celebrate our links to Uganda and Spain.