



St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT)



CATHOLIC LIFE POLICY

Mission Statement

'Follow me, I will make you fishers of men'

(taken from the coat of arms of St John Fisher).

In our school we want to follow the example of St John Fisher. He was known for his holiness, his faithfulness to the Church and for his learning and his work opening Universities. We put our faith into action by helping the poor in Leicester and our brothers and sisters in the Third World.

Each child is trusted to use their unique abilities and this is shown through caring for one another.

The children said:

"Learn how to love like Jesus.

We love one another like Jesus loved us.

Love everyone not just yourself.

Listen to everyone and love them every day.

Don't fall out, be nice to one another."

Faith Inspiration Caring

This Mission Statement is the foundation on which we build The Catholic Life of the School and we aim to achieve our Mission by:

- Establishing, maintaining and developing a Catholic ethos which is permeated in everything we do and is apparent to all those who enter our school.
- Providing frequent opportunities for conscious and active participation in collective worship through Mass, whole school liturgies, class liturgies and other services and celebrations in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church to all in the community.
- Creating a place of learning where the Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church are evident in everything we do.
- Modelling the image of Christ in the way we lead and manage our school.
- Providing an enriched curriculum, which is creative, inspiring and inclusive for all pupils, which is fundamentally based on the teachings of Jesus and His Holy Church.
- Developing prayer and spiritual life of all members of our school and the community it serves.
- To be an outreaching centre of God's mission on earth in promoting the virtues of Faith, inspiration and caring.
- Promoting the culture of vocation by educating pupils to be active in their faith and by reaching out to others in our community and beyond.
- Ensuring that the Gospel values, (which are linked to Every Child Matters agenda) are permeated through all policies.
- Meeting the pastoral, spiritual, moral and social needs of every child.
- Providing good Catholic role models.
- Maintaining and developing successful links with home, parish, local community, diocese and the wider world.

At St John Fisher we believe that:

Children can develop as a person through prayer.

Prayer is turning our attention to God. It is raising our minds and hearts to God. It is putting ourselves in His presence and so our starting point for prayer is the place where we find God.

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.

We do this by:

- Providing children with the skills to develop their own prayer life - through the reading of the Scriptures, music, drama, dance and prayer
- Providing opportunities for reflection
- Developing the environment - each classroom in the school has a crucifix, prayer focus area which reflects the liturgical year and has relevant Christian symbols and artefacts relating to the current 'Come and See' topic
- Training members of the Chaplaincy team, two from each class from Year 3 – Year 6, to take the lead in organising weekly whole school liturgies throughout the year.
- Homework set based on Bishop Patrick's three themes
- Travelling Nativity during Advent
- Opportunities for parents to encounter Christ with their child; class masses and liturgies (Confession and Adoration)
- Fundraising opportunities

Prayer occupies an important role in our Religious Education as a means of expressing, fostering and nurturing faith. Children are open to God; they have a natural aptitude for prayer. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world around them. We, at St John Fisher, aim to create and maintain an environment where this is fostered and developed.

Children are encouraged and supported in finding many different ways in which to pray; formal, informal, private and communal. They are encouraged to be still and listen to God. We aim to teach and develop a variety of prayer methods to the children such as:

- Teaching traditional prayers of the church alongside new prayers.
- Giving them the skills for creating spontaneous prayer for asking, thanksgiving, praising and saying sorry.
- Through the reading of the Gospels and the Bible. (liturgical prayer)
- Teaching of traditional hymns alongside new hymns.
- Teaching of drama, sacred music and prayer.
- Meditating and reflecting in silence whilst being inspired by liturgical music and religious art.
- Lectio Divina – Scripture based prayer

Through developing the children's spirituality, we endeavour to encourage children to develop:

- Sets of values, principles and beliefs, from the tradition of the Catholic faith, which informs their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour.
- An awareness and understanding of their own and others beliefs.
- Respect for themselves and others.
- A sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion for those in need.
- An ability to show courage in defence of their beliefs.
- A readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit e.g. lack of self-confidence and belief, aggression, greed, justice, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination.
- An appreciation of moments of Wonder and Awe e.g. beauty, truth, love, goodness, order as well as Mystery, paradox and ambiguity.
- A respect for insight as well as knowledge and reason. An expressive and/or creative impulse.
- An ability to think in terms of the 'whole' e.g. concepts such as harmony, interdependence, scale, perspective and an understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely impact.

We aim to develop the Spirituality of our children by:

- Providing opportunities to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs and the way they have an impact on people's lives.
- Providing opportunities to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they impact on people and how an understanding of them can be helpful.
- Developing an ethos within which each pupil can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.
- Celebrating differences and respecting the integrity of individuals.
- Promoting teaching styles which value pupil's questions and gives them space for thought, ideas and concerns.
- Encouraging pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference e.g. asking *why, how, where* and *what*.
- Monitoring in simple and pragmatic ways the success of what is provided.

Chaplaincy Team

The Chaplaincy team consists of 2+ members of each class from year 3-6 and is led by the school chaplain Mrs Johnson. They meet weekly to prepare whole school liturgies and review certain aspects of the school's Catholic life. They plan and lead the weekly whole school collective worship and play an integral part in leading other services and liturgies such as the Reconciliation services and Stations of the Cross.

Giving to Others – Faith in Action

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. This is an on-going process and those less fortunate than us are remembered in daily prayer.

There are various fund raising events throughout the year co-ordinated by the School Council, which is made up of 2 children from each year group 1-6.

- Harvest Mass – children are encouraged to bring in food, which is distributed by the St Vincent De Paul Society.
- During Lent we raise funds for charities such as CAFOD.

- We take part in the Annual Children for Children Catholic School's Carol Concert at De Montfort Hall in aid of a local charity Menphys.
- Non-school uniform days, sponsored events, cake sales, coffee mornings and games also raise funds for a variety of causes e.g. Leicester Royal Infirmary, LOROS, McMillian.

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.

Faith in Action National Award

Year 6 children can volunteer to complete the nationally recognised Faith in Action Award – PIN level, guided and supported by Mrs Johnson. Through the Faith in Action Award, we aim to enable our children to respond to the invitation in active service to others and reflection on that service. Children accrue credits of service and reflect on that service in the context of teaching of the Catholic Church throughout their award journey.

“The Faith in Action Award encourages young people through recognising, rewarding and celebrating their active faith lived out through service and reflection. The Award helps them connect their life and faith in a tangible manner.

In journeying through the Award, young people should experience a deepening of their relationship with God and find themselves exploring that relationship. It is hoped that through their relationship and action, others will see God's love through them.”

Visible Signs and Religious Symbols

Every effort is made to provide a spiritually uplifting 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’ resources.
- There are displays in the corridors, main hall, prayer corner and just inside the entrance.
- Displays within each classroom is from work undertaken in lessons using the ‘Come and See’ programme.
- There are original embroidered art works of the Gospel writers Saint Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (also house names) in the main hall.
- The mission statement is ‘walked’ throughout the school with footprints from the children depicting what the mission statement means to them.

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 and class masses, and liturgies for Harvest, Advent, Holy Week and for our Year 6 Leavers.

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 John Fisher operates an open-door policy.

Parish Involvement

Links with parishes are a vital part of Catholic Life in school. Parishes which serve our school include St Mary's in South Wigston and Immaculate Conception in Oadby. Our parish priests are Canon Fr Michael Moore and Fr John Owens.

Children visit the parishes to look at the different aspects and features of a church. Parish priests also support the teaching of curriculum RE in school e.g. baptism, reconciliation, vocations. Links with the parish priests are strengthened as they celebrate various different services in the school with the children and staff e.g. Mass, reconciliation and confession, Carol service, Ask Wednesday.

We align our school masses with the parish calendar and invite parishioners to come to our school masses as active witnesses. We regularly write in our parish newsletters with notices about vacancies, new entrants and school events. We allow the parish to use our facilities when appropriate for family events such as the St Mary's and St John Bosco family 'funday' which was held in September 2019.

Leadership, Monitoring and Review

The coordination and planning of Catholic Life is the responsibility of the RE subject leader and Chaplaincy Lead, who also supports colleagues in their efforts towards developing the spiritual life of everyone within our community. The RE subject leader will provide CPD opportunities for all staff where necessary, and will lead Catholic Life staff meetings to ensure staff are aware of expectations within school and Diocesan initiatives.

The RE subject leader will feedback half-termly to the full Governing body regarding initiatives in school. There will also be opportunities to conduct learning walks and pupil interviews regarding the development of the Catholic Life of the school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies connected to religious education e.g. Collective Worship and Religious Education, Relationship and Sex Education and PSHE.

Policy Updated June 2020

Name: Mrs Ruth Moloney **Role:** RE Subject Leader **Signature:** *R Moloney*

Date: 15.6.2020

Head Teacher: Mr Anthony Gallagher **Signature:** *A Gallagher*

Date: 16.6.2020

Date of next review: June 2022