

Collective Worship

As a Catholic School, Chaplaincy and Religious Education is central to the life of the school. Our Catholic faith influences all the work of the school which strives to follow the gospel values of compassion, respect, truth, service and forgiveness.

Every day begins with a religious assembly or prayer in tutor rooms. Mass is at the heart of our celebrations and is practised weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation. Many acts of worship revolve around our Chapel which is at the centre of the school and is open for all to take the opportunity of a few minutes to reflect and pray.

Fund raising takes place in many different ways e.g. cake sales, non uniform days, sports and music events etc to help the following charities: Fr. Hudson Society and Cafod.

The curriculum for Religious Education is varied and offers students many different opportunities to learn about Christianity with a specific focus on the Catholic faith as well as major world faiths. In Key Stage 4 all students will follow a full GCSE course and have the opportunity to take Religious Studies A level at KS5.

Pupils worship together prayerfully, respectfully, actively and with sincerity. They understand that the Catholic Christian ethos lies at the heart of the school that we are practising faith community. Whilst there are clear expectations set by the school regarding collective worship, pupils respond positively and participate fully not simply because they are told to but because they are engaged, inspired and want to make their personal contribution.

Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and skill. For example in whole school mass and Friday mass pupils provide the music, write/lead the bidding prayers, bring the offertory gifts and distribute communion. Altar servers from all the parishes serve during whole school masses, on a rotation organised by the most senior altar server, usually a member of the Sixth Form or Yr 11. All pupils contribute to the singing and responses; several visiting priests and bishops have commented on the quality of singing, both of individual soloists and of the whole school. Hymn practices are excellent!

Pupils from all year groups contribute to the celebration of whole school mass. Each form is asked to prepare one Friday mass though pupils from other year and form groups are welcome and do attend regularly even when it is not their mass. When Friday mass is for a particular intention, it is especially well supported.

The Service of Reconciliation for each year group during Advent and Lent are led with confidence and enthusiasm by each year group. Different forms have had the opportunity to prepare the drama, the prayers and the readings. Pupil behaviour during the hour long service is always prayerful and respectful. Visiting priests from the deanery and the Oratory in Oxford have commented on how well pupils respond in the Services of Reconciliation and how positive the experience of hearing confessions is. The former chaplain of Gregory the Great took our model for services and indeed the content of the services (eg. Power point, play, prayers) for use in his school.

Prayer runs through daily school life for both staff and pupils. Staff briefing begins with prayer and form time at the start of every day begins with a prayer of choice. Form tutors can refer to the staff handbook, the planner, Bible Alive, the weekly reflection newsletter or the 'prayingeachday' website. A BGN Prayer Book containing a mixture of traditional and pupils' own prayers has been produced. All assemblies (whole school and year group) begin with the sign of the cross and are a prayer in themselves. All RE lessons begin with prayer and the Angelus is said in all lessons in Period 3.

The chapel is always open for quiet reflection and Sixth Form currently lead a lunch time prayer and discussion group. Members of the department have led praying the rosary in October during lunchtimes and Sixth Form or Year 11 Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist lead Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays.

The Celebration of Mass is an essential part of the Yr 6/7 Induction Programme – there is a Yr 6 New Intake Mass in July for pupils and their primary school teachers and Yr 7 Welcome Mass in October for pupils, parents and staff.

Pupils leaving the school (in Yrs 11, 12 and 13) also celebrate the mass together with their parents and staff, taking a lead role in preparing the readings, music and bidding prayers.

Mass is celebrated every Friday lunchtime, usually at the beginning and end of terms and on special feast days eg. BGN Day, All Saints, Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Pupils lead the celebration of the mass both in school and in the parishes eg. Youth Sunday, Feast of Christ the King. On an ordinary Sunday many pupils are active in their own parishes as welcomers, bringing the offertory gifts, altar servers, readers, musicians, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

Everyone understands that individual beliefs are to be respected. This is demonstrated through the involvement of everyone at communion, those who receive the Blessed Sacrament and those who receive a blessing. Everyone is also involved in the Services of Reconciliation, whether they receive the sacrament of reconciliation, pray, act in the drama, read or simply take the time to reflect upon their own lives.

Every pupil in the school is encouraged to participate in the spiritual life of the school but specific pupils have particular roles in their house and it is their responsibility to develop the Catholic Christian ethos and spirituality of the school through house council meetings. There are also members of the Sixth Form with special responsibility for the Catholic Life of the School.

Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and understand that their faith should influence their behaviour and moral choices.