

Prayer space in school

For many years the school has made provision for people of other faith to gather privately in prayer. This is always in response to personal need and is not part of the teaching of either the Church or the school. It is, however, integral to a school that is inclusive and welcoming to persons of other faith backgrounds.

Our guidance is taken from the document published by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 2008, 'Catholic Schools, Children of other Faiths and Community Cohesion' which states:

'If reasonably practicable, a room (or rooms) might be made available for the use of pupils and staff from other faiths for prayer. Existing toilet facilities might be adapted to accommodate individual ritual cleansing which is sometimes part of religious lifestyle and worship. If such space is not available on a permanent or regular basis, extra efforts might be made to address such need for major religious festivals.'

Last week a member of staff who is new to the school sent out an email inviting students and staff to Muslim prayer. Ordinarily, arrangements for prayer for people of other faith backgrounds are managed by our school's Ethos committee that works to ensure that we are careful both to respond to need and maintain the Catholic teachings of the school. The message from the member of staff should have gone through the Ethos committee, and had it done so it would have been framed so that it was consistent with approach the school has taken for many years. It was an act of enthusiasm on the part of the member of staff, carried out in good faith and does not in any way affect the ethos, teaching or values of the school.

There has been no change to the arrangements for prayer that have been in place for many years and were rightly praised in our most recent Diocesan Section 48 inspection.

Mr J Richardson
Headteacher