

St Mary and St John Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy



'In the Light of Jesus, we Learn to Shine'.

Reviewed and ratified on: September 2026

Signed (Chair of Governors): *Mrs A. Whitney*

Mission Statement at St Mary and St John Catholic Primary School

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them'. (Matthew 18:20)

We believe that prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

The school mission statement embraces our ethos and understanding of Christ's presence in our celebration, prayer and liturgical participation:

'In the light of Jesus, we learn to shine.'

Context

The context of this prayer and liturgy policy 'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.'

(Marcus Stock (2012), Christ at the Centre, Catholic Truth Society, 23.)

We endorse the belief that prayer and liturgy consider the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It is an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Prayer and Liturgy in St Mary and St John Catholic Primary School is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Statement of Requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. The school's provision enables pupils to experience the liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music.

In a Catholic school, prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education and must be delivered in addition to this.

The law recognises the right of parents to withdraw a child from prayer and liturgy. Any request should be made in writing to the headteacher, who will meet the parent to clarify the nature of Catholic prayer and liturgy and arrange appropriate supervision. The pupil will be treated respectfully and will not be disadvantaged. This right does not extend to Religious Education, which is governed separately.

Responsibility

Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life and mission of the school. Accountability is set out below.

Governance

- Governors act as guardians of the school's Catholic life and mission and ensure that this policy and practice follow the Prayer and Liturgy Directory and Archdiocesan guidance.
- Governors identify a link governor for prayer and liturgy, approve and review this policy, ensure an appropriate budget and receive monitoring reports at least annually.
- Governors assure themselves that the statutory entitlement to daily prayer and liturgy is met and that improvement priorities are followed through.

Headteacher

- The headteacher is the spiritual leader of the school community and ensures that prayer and liturgy remain central to school life.
- The headteacher works with the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator, ensures suitable resources, and provides induction, training and formation for staff.

- The headteacher ensures that monitoring findings inform the Catholic life improvement plan and are reported to governors.

Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

- The named Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator is Mrs Hitchen.
- The coordinator maintains an annual plan of provision covering the liturgical year, daily and weekly patterns, Masses, sacraments, special celebrations, pupil leadership, responsible staff and family or parish involvement.
- The coordinator ensures that prayer is planned daily for every pupil and is appropriate to age, capacity and experience.
- The coordinator supports progressive pupil participation in planning, leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy; makes suitable resources available; inducts and forms staff; collaborates with clergy and the parish; and maintains liaison with the Archdiocesan Education Department.
- The coordinator monitors the quality, participation and impact of provision regularly and reports strengths and priorities to the headteacher and governing body.

Overview of Prayer and Liturgy Provision

Annual Plan of Provision

An Annual Plan of Provision, read alongside this policy, sets out dates, frequency, groupings, leaders, locations and resources for daily prayer, Celebrations of the Word, Masses, opportunities for reconciliation and other liturgies. It reflects the Church's liturgical year, the school mission, parish life and pupils' progressive formation. The coordinator reviews the plan during the year and updates it in response to monitoring and evaluation.

Our Aims

- Develop our sense of belonging and increase our respect for places and objects associated with prayer and liturgy.
- Enable us to relate prayer and worship to experiences such as beauty, joy and suffering.
- Encourage us to question the meaning and purpose of life.
- Provide opportunities to express our own thoughts and feelings through art, dance, music and literature.
- Help us to appreciate the value of silence and reflection in a quiet and prayerful atmosphere.
- Familiarise the children with the symbolism of the liturgy so that they know and enjoy to the full the liturgical life and tradition of the church.
- Be appropriate in its content, form, organisation, presentation and leadership taking into account the age, ability and background of the pupils.
- Be a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.
- Be short and appropriately paced (children's attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life i.e., 5-6 mins. For Key Stage 1 and 7-10 mins. For Key Stage 2)
- Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

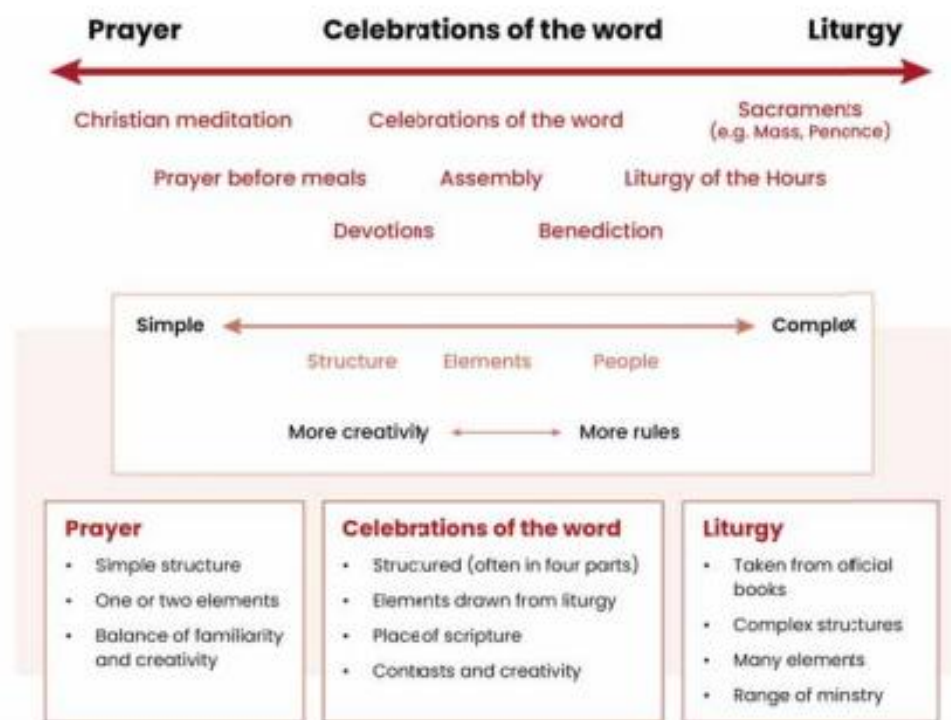
Participation Inclusion and Respect

Prayer and liturgy are recognisably Catholic and hospitable to all. Pupils and adults of other Christian traditions, other faiths or no religious affiliation are welcomed and treated with respect. They are invited to be present and to participate in ways consistent with their conscience; no one is required to receive a sacrament or make a profession of faith. Planning takes account of age, SEND, language, sensory and mobility needs so that all can encounter, participate and respond.

Organisation and Environment

Teachers plan and enable prayer and liturgy to take place each day at an appropriate time. It may be organised in the classroom, in the hall or in church. Well selected artefacts are used to provide a focus. The setting should enable a space for reflection, celebration and prayer and through the creative and purposeful use of music and song.

Structure



Many Celebrations of the Word use the four-part pattern below. The form chosen will be appropriate to the type of prayer, the liturgical season and the age and capacity of pupils:

- ❖ **Gather** – create a prayerful focus, welcome those present and help the community become attentive to God.
- ❖ **Word/Listen** – proclaim and listen to Sacred Scripture. Scripture is read from a Bible and is chosen appropriately, with the reading of the day considered as the first source.
- ❖ **Respond** – allow the Word to shape a response through silence, reflection, prayer, intercession, music, symbol, art, drama or an appropriate ritual action.
- ❖ **Go Forth** – conclude prayerfully and invite pupils to live what they have heard through a concrete response in daily life.

Pupil Participation Leadership and Evaluation

The children will be encouraged to be involved in the planning of Prayer and Liturgy opportunities, our aim in school is to facilitate the confidence in children to be actively involved in planning and taking part with the Liturgy. It is when we involve everyone that we bring the liturgy to life. We aim to support the children with their planning of Prayer and Liturgy through being a role model, we will follow the cycle outlined below which supports the children with their ownership of Prayer and Liturgy.

1. The teacher delivers Prayer and Liturgy
2. The children watch the teacher prepare and deliver Prayer and Liturgy
3. The teacher helps the children to prepare for Prayer and Liturgy opportunities
4. Teacher and children prepare Prayer and Liturgy together, with the teacher as lead
5. Teacher and children prepare Prayer and Liturgy together, with the child as lead
6. The teacher watches the child deliver Prayer and Liturgy
7. The children deliver Prayer and Liturgy on their own.

We understand that the leader of prayer puts Christ as the main focus, the leader of prayer is a facilitator to support the development of a deeper relationship with God. See detailed version of Celebration of the Word Progression in Appendix 1

Celebrations of the Word

'A celebration of the word will form the basis of many longer times of prayer, including assemblies or special liturgies to mark times in the school year.

This is a celebration which focusses on God speaking to us through the scriptures and which creates space and form for our response.'

(p39 To Love You More Dearly Directory 2023)

Assemblies

Within school, celebrations of the word take place in the classroom or in the hall. Whole school prayer and liturgy takes place twice a week, a whole school gathering linked to the Gospel of the week takes place on Tuesdays and on Fridays a celebration assembly is held which concludes with prayer and liturgy.

Mass

Pupils in Key Stage 2 attend parish Mass regularly on a weekly rota. At significant points in the liturgical year, pupils celebrate Mass together. Mass is planned and celebrated according to the Church's liturgical norms and in collaboration with the parish priest. Pupils who are not Catholic, or who are not disposed or eligible to receive Holy Communion, are included respectfully and do not receive the sacrament.

Other times of prayer

Throughout the day there are opportunities for short times of prayer which mark the time and the rhythm of the school day.

Use of a range of prayer experiences (Class prayer book) can enhance children's understanding of prayer. Teachers are also aware of the order in which traditional prayers should be introduced. (Details in class prayer book).

The children in school enjoy other times of prayer and devotion, the church has a long and varied tradition of devotions these include the Advent Wreath, Christmas crib, Stations of the Cross and May procession.

Each classroom has a focus table for Prayer and Liturgy.

Each class has a Prayer and Liturgy box for pupils to use in order to prepare the table and enhance worship gatherings, including cloth linked to the liturgical year.

Additional resources are stored in the school hall. Each class has access to appropriate artefacts, seasonal materials, Scripture and music. Ten Ten prayer and liturgy resources have been purchased to complement planning. Resources support, but do not replace, thoughtful planning that responds to the pupils, Scripture, the liturgical season and the school context.

Common Prayer

Age phase	5–7 (KS1)	7–9 (Lower KS2)	9–11 (Upper KS2)
Prayers	• The Sign of the Cross • The Lord's Prayer • Hail Mary • Glory be • Grace before meals • Grace after meals	• The Apostles' Creed • An Act of Contrition • Angel of God • Come, Holy Spirit • The Prayer of St Richard of Chichester	• Morning Offering • The Rosary • The Magnificat • Act of Faith • Act of Hope • Act of Love

Individual Prayer

Alongside communal prayer in school we also facilitate times when personal prayer can be enjoyed. We understand and appreciate that in turn personal prayer will enhance communal prayer. Each class has a designated Prayer Space which allows and supports the children in their personal prayer and reflection times. School appreciates that pupils will need guidance and encouragement about how to pray by themselves. We aim to gradually develop the practice of silent prayer with pupils.

Reconciliation and Holy Communion

Children normally celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation through the parish sacramental programme. School supports their preparation and provides age-appropriate penitential prayer and opportunities for examination of conscience. Individual sacramental confession is celebrated only with a priest and with appropriate pastoral and safeguarding arrangements.

During Advent and Lent in preparation for Advent and Lent respectively the church places a particular focus on the call of each Christian to imitate more closely the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is reflected in school as the children in Y5 and Y6 are invited to celebrate the Liturgies of Reconciliation in school. At these times of year we offer Parish opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation with our school families through our school newsletter. We encourage the children in our school to reflect and reconcile regularly through prayer and liturgy opportunities, times of silent reflection and inviting the pupils to be like Christ

Children in Y4 celebrate their first service of Holy Communion in the Spring term. A communal celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion takes place with the opportunities for the children to receive Holy Communion.

The children in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 celebrate Mass weekly on a 4 week cycle those children who have received the Sacrament of Holy Communion are invited to celebrate this sacrament with our Parish families. Parents and families are also invited to join their children at mass both on the school and parish newsletters.

Resourcing

The annual budget allocation reflects the centrality of prayer and liturgy. Resources include staff time, suitable books and music, Bibles and lectionaries, religious artefacts, seasonal materials and accessible prayer spaces. Dedicated spaces and classroom prayer focuses are maintained and reflect the liturgical season. Training and formation are funded so staff can fulfil their responsibilities confidently.

Training and formation

All new staff receive induction into the school's Catholic mission, the school's pattern of provision and the practical skills needed to lead prayer. Individual needs are identified through monitoring and appraisal. Whole-staff formation takes place at least annually, with further support for those who plan or lead prayer and liturgy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality and impact of prayer and liturgy are monitored regularly and evaluated formally at least annually. Evidence includes direct observation, the annual plan of provision, pupil voice, staff reflection, participation and engagement, learning walks, and feedback from parents and governors. Evaluation considers whether prayer and liturgy are authentically Catholic, inclusive, age-appropriate, rooted in Scripture, connected to the liturgical year, and enabling full, active and conscious participation.

Findings identify strengths and precise areas for development. Actions, named responsibilities, timescales and subsequent impact are recorded and the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator reports at least annually to the headteacher and governing body, and pupil evaluation informs future planning.

Stay and Pray is also delivered termly and parents are invited to provide feedback, supporting the evaluation process. (See Parent booklets)

Policy review

The governing body will review this policy annually, and sooner if national or Archdiocesan guidance changes. The review will consider monitoring evidence, stakeholder voice, the impact of staff and pupil formation, and progress against identified actions.

Appendix 1 – Celebration of the Word Progression

CW 1.1 Engagement & participation		CW 1.2 Variety & liturgical year		CW 1.3 Collaborative planning, pupil leadership & evaluation		
The experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school engage pupils deeply and lead them to a full, active and conscious participation. Pupils demonstrate this by, for example, the quality of prayerful silence, their attentiveness and response to prayer and liturgy, and their engagement in communal singing		Appropriate to their age and capacity, pupils have a detailed understanding of the wide variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. This would include, for example, the use of scripture, symbol, silence, meditation, reflection and liturgical music. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of the shape and meaning of the Church's liturgical year and how it is expressed in the prayer life of the school.		Pupils work collaboratively with others, such as teachers, other pupils and chaplains to prepare creative and well-constructed experiences of prayer and liturgy. Due to the school's provision of liturgical formation for its pupils, they can undertake liturgical ministries with confidence, understanding and skill. Pupils have a developed capacity for evaluating the quality of the prayer and liturgy they have planned and can identify how to improve next time.		
Reception	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Year Six
Join hands to pray. Listen to scripture. Take part in Circle prayers. Make the Sign of the Cross. Participate in short periods of silence. Choose suitable artefacts from a limited choice.	Join hands to pray. Listen to scripture. Make the Sign of the Cross. Participate in short periods of silence. Say Amen at the end of prayer.	Lay out the altar with guidance. Read scripture. Increasing comfort with periods of silence. Spontaneous Prayer. Pupils will typically lead	Lay out the altar independently. Spend time in silence. Read scripture confidently. Increasing comfort with periods of silence.	Set up altar independently. Prepare reading and psalm (help may be given). Using ICT) select images to be used for reflection.	Set up altar independently, being increasingly creative. Fully plan and lead acts of worship with guidance. Compose prayers in different styles to match given needs,	Set up altar independently, being increasingly creative. Fully plan and lead acts of worship independently. Compose prayers in different styles to match given needs.

Say who/what they want to pray for. Pupil will typically lead the 'Gather' element from Spring Term. Pupils, with their class teacher, will verbally evaluate the Celebration of the Word.	Lay out the altar with adult support. Choose suitable artefacts from a limited choice. Say who/what they want to pray for. Pupils will typically lead 2 elements from Spring Term then progress to lead other elements across the year. Pupils, with their class teacher, will verbally evaluate the Celebration of the Word. Pupils will recognise the liturgical colours for Lent and Advent.	the 'Gather and 'Go Forth' element from Spring Term. Pupils, with their class teacher, will evaluate the Celebration of the Word in Writing. Pupils know that the colour green is used for Ordinary Times. Pupils know the Gospel is the Word of the Lord. Know ways that we can put our faith into action.	Know all the colours for the different seasons on the Liturgical year. Know the actions and responses to the Gospel. Know 4 different types of prayer – thanking, sorry, blessing and Intercession. Evaluate which part of the CoW they liked best and why, and how it could be improved.	Know key events in the Liturgical Year. Know a range of prayers. Use a range of ways to present the scripture and response. Pupils will be able to provide meaningful written feedback with reference to the scripture covered.	Compose prayers linked to theme. Match prayers and readings with a given theme. Prayers become increasingly detailed in what they are asking for, the reasons why and what they want the outcome to be. Spend increasing amounts of time in silence. Pupils will be able to provide meaningful written feedback with reference to the scripture, including suggestions for next steps.	Prayers become increasingly detailed in what they are asking for, the reasons why and what they want the outcome to be. Invent own symbolic actions. Spend increasing amounts of time in silence. Pupils will be able to provide meaningful written feedback with reference to the scripture, including suggestions for next steps.
--	--	---	---	---	--	---

Appendix 2 – Prayer Progression

<u>Reception</u>	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>Year 4</u>	<u>Year 5</u>	<u>Year 6</u>
The sign of the Cross Grace before Meals Morning prayer End of day prayer	The Lord's Prayer Hail Mary	Glory Be Grace after meals	The Apostles Creed Act of Contrition	Angel of God Come, Holy Spirit The prayer of St Richard of Chichester	Morning Offering The Rosary The Magnificat	Act of Faith Act of Hope Act of Love