Prayer and Liturgy Policy

St. Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

Approved by the Governing Body: Spring 2026

Next Review: Spring 2028

MISSION STATEMENT

"As we walk together with Jesus, we love, live and learn."

1. 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.)

At St Thomas More's school, we aim to be a community which shows Love of God and one another.

We pray to God together and worship Him as a school and as part of St James the Less and St Helen parish.

We aim to be a community that will be known as Christian because of our love.

At St Thomas More's school, prayer and liturgy is integral to developing the children's relationship with Christ. Gospel values are embedded in all that we do with Christ at the centre. Prayer and liturgy is central to our Catholic ethos and we expect all staff to lead and model good practice in prayer. It provides an opportunity for all to reflect on God's word and to celebrate and respond to the beliefs and attitudes which characterise Christian life. At St. Thomas More's school, we strive to provide a rich variety of prayer and assemblies, which will deepen the pupil's sense of belonging to the faith community of our school and to the wider church. Children take an active role in planning, leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy. We believe prayer and liturgy remembers and celebrates God's work in our lives. It celebrates His presence amongst us today and allows children and staff the opportunity to be joined with Him. Prayer and liturgy refers not only to whole school gatherings but to those acts of worship which take place in a number of different settings and groupings of people in and around the school. In our school, prayer and liturgy takes many forms including prayer, song, assemblies, meditation and liturgies. We strive to provide many opportunities for the children to develop their relationship with God. Children are encouraged to meditate and reflect deeply on the Gospel Values and carefully consider how these will impact on their lives and the lives of others.

2. Statement of Requirement

All Catholic schools in England and Wales are required by law (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) to take part in an act of collective worship (prayer and liturgy) on each school day which must be in accordance with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. In Catholic schools this is therefore "in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church". (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20, Instrument of Government, clause 2). However, prayer and liturgy are more than just a legal requirement; they are essential to spiritual development and are therefore central to what we offer at St. Thomas More's.

The law requires all academy schools to recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children up to the age of 16 from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A)). The school's provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil pupils' entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which pupils in the school will be familiar. Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

3. Responsibility

(a) Governance

The governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

(b) Headteacher

The headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy

- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Lead/s

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations, as well as opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments
- there is daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- pupils are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and pupils
- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- there is collaboration with local clergy and parishes
- liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

4. Overview of Prayer and Liturgy Provision

At St. Thomas More's children are taught daily prayers and also the prayers and responses of the Mass as appropriate to their age and stage of development (see Appendix 2). They learn that talking and listening to God is an important way of showing their love for God.

Each classroom has a focal prayer point and RE area, and children pray, together with their teacher, at the beginning and end of the day, and also at lunchtime. Opportunities for spontaneous prayer and individual reflection exist both in the classroom and during prayer and liturgy.

Prayer takes many forms and may be carefully structured or more informal. Children are encouraged to pray for the needs of others and for special requests. They may themselves ask prayers for particular intentions.

Above all prayer is about communication with God: we both speak and listen to Him. It may take the form of adoration, thanksgiving, repentance or intercession.

Children and staff alike are encouraged to be drawn into prayer and liturgy through a variety of celebrations. We believe it is important that children enjoy or are inspired by the opportunities for prayer in our school. We want these occasions to be meaningful and memorable for our children. These are enhanced by the use of:

- hymns
- reflective music
- silence
- spoken and sung prayers
- movement/dance
- scripture
- stories
- atmosphere – candles, icons, focal points
- drama.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school is concerned with giving glory, honour and 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.

A collective act of prayer and liturgy takes place daily in the classroom or in the school hall. In addition, each class prepares a termly assembly, which is a reflection and celebration of their work in class or a liturgical or topical event.

Whole school Masses or services are held in the Church on Holy Days of Obligation, and special occasions as well as our own programme of class masses and liturgies. The children are actively involved with the preparation and celebration of these services. (Appendix 1)

The whole school is involved in Christmas Concerts and Easter services. Parents, governors and friends are invited to participate in these celebrations.

We recognise the importance of enabling the wider community to pray and celebrate God's word with us and we promote these opportunities whenever we can.

During May and October parents, pupils and staff are invited to pray the Rosary.

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and The Eucharist is an integral part of the Religious Education Directory. However, full sacramental preparation is undertaken within the parish setting, being supported in school where possible.

Parents play an invaluable role in leading their children in prayer. They are informed of the class prayers for their child and are invited to celebrate Mass and assemblies when their child is involved.

5. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation; prayer and liturgy (and RE) are given priority funding, including staff time and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy are furnished and maintained as such and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs are funded separately to ensure that all staff can fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

Each class has a RE box with artefacts and fabrics suitable for all seasons of the liturgical year, religious iconography, posters and age-appropriate Bibles. New resources are purchased when necessary.

Other resources are available in the central store including:

- other faiths resources
- candles
- CAFOD materials
- graphic Bibles
- collection of RE reference books on a variety of topics.

6. Training and Formation

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development and formation at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, and involve all key stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. Termly reports are included in the Headteacher's Report to governors. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

8. Review

This Prayer and Liturgy policy has been approved and adopted by the governing body Autumn 2026 and will be reviewed on a 2-year cycle.

Appendix 1

Annual Plan of Provision 2026-2027	Date
Year 6 assembly	9th September
Whole School Mass (led by Y6)	15th September
Year 5 assembly	16th September
Year 4 assembly	23rd September
Year 2 assembly	30th September
Month of the rosary years 5 & 6	Duration of October
Year 3 assembly	7th October
Year 5 Mass	13th October
Year 1 assembly	14th October
Harvest Service	22nd October
Year 6 assembly	4th November
Year 4 Mass	10th November
Remembrance Service	11th November
Reception assembly	12th November
KS1 Liturgy (led by Y3)	17th November
Year 5 assembly	18th November
Joint School Christmas Concert	27th November
EYFS and KS1 Nativity	Week beg 30th November
Advent Mass	1st December
Year 4 assembly	tbc
Year 3 assembly	tbc
KS2 Carol Service	18th December
Epiphany Mass	6th January
Year 2 assembly	13th January
KS1 Liturgy (led by Y2)	19th January
Year 1 assembly	20th January
Year 5 Mass	26th January
Reception assembly	27th January
KS1 Liturgy (led by Y1)	2nd February

Year 6 assembly	3rd February
Year 4 Mass	9th February
Ash Wednesday Mass (KS2)	10th February
Ash Wednesday Service (KS1)	10th February
Reception assembly	24th February
Year 3 Liturgy	2nd March
Year 1 assembly	3rd March
Year 2 assembly	10th March
Year 3 assembly	17th March
Holy Week	22nd-25th March
Easter Service	23rd March
Stations of the Cross	24th March
Year 4 assembly	21st April
Year 5 assembly	28th April
Reception assembly	5th May
Ascension of the Lord	6th May
Year 1 assembly	12th May
Year 2 assembly	19th May
Year 3 assembly	26th May
Year 6 assembly	9th June
Year 3 Mass	15th June
St Thomas More's Day Mass	22nd June
Feast of St Peter and St Paul	29th June
Year 6 Leavers' Mass	15th July
Assemblies	
Whole Gospel Collective Worship (Lead by HT/DHT)	Weekly
Praise Assembly (Collective Worship through Hymns)	Weekly
Global Assembly (Collective Worship with a CST Focus), (led by staff on rota)	Weekly

Achievement Assembly (Collective Worship with a celebration of Weekly Achievement)	Weekly
Prayer	
Morning, before lunch, after lunch and end of day prayers	Daily
Prayer of the Month after every RE lesson	Daily

APPENDIX 2

Common Prayers

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

Appendix 3

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory be to the Father…

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now,
and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

Grace before meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts

which we are about to receive from your bounty.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Grace after meals

Thank you, God, for the food that we have eaten Thank you, God, for all our friends Thank you, God, for everything Thank you, God. Amen

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Act of Contrition

O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and with the help of your grace, I will not sin again.

Angel of God

Angel of God, my guardian dear,

to whom God's love commits me here,

ever this day be at my side,

to light and guard,

to rule and guide. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit

V. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

R. And kindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And you will renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of your faithful, grant that by that same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in your consolation, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which you have given me, for all the pains and insults which you have borne for me. O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the most-pure heart of Mary, I offer you all my prayers, thoughts, works and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your most Sacred heart.

The Rosary

The Joyful Mysteries

(Recited Monday and Saturday)

The Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38)

The Visitation (Luke 1:39–45)

The Nativity (Luke 2:1–7)

The Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:22–35)