

Prayer and Liturgy Policy
St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Reviewed: September 2026

Love, Listen and Learn

Mission Statement

St. Mary's school community follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, working together to develop the whole child, in a spiritual, moral, academic, physical, social and emotional way, within a caring and supportive environment.

Ethos

We recognise that there is a challenge in creating an enriching environment for all those involved at every level of school life. We take our lead and inspiration from Christ with regard to the Gospel values: the belief that all human beings are uniquely created and loved by God and worthy of respect. This challenge manifests itself in the way that we treat and value:

- Our relationships with each other and the wider community
- Our respect for one another
- Our welcome to and interest in all those who visit our school
- Discipline inspired by forgiveness, healing and reconciliation
- Our school environment

Through rising to this challenge, we aim to create an awareness of a sense of belonging to and being part of the life of St Mary's.

The Aims of our School

We will endeavour to create a Catholic Ethos in our school, which reflects the Gospel values, through the love, care and respect we show to each other, and to all who come to our school. We will teach the beliefs, traditions and practices of the Catholic Faith.

Through the prayer and worship in school we will try to be a living community of people celebrating their love for God and one another.

We believe the quality of the curriculum, with Religious Education at its core, is of prime importance and will focus on the development of the whole child. We will at all times try to make provision for children with special needs, so that all members of our school community achieve their potential.

We will help the children to develop an awareness of and respect for other religious and cultural backgrounds, as we believe this to be an essential preparation for adult life.

We believe that good communication between governors, staff, parents and children is important for the wellbeing of our school, and we will work in partnership with the wider community especially the home and parish in developing each child's potential.

The Aims for Each Child at St Mary's Catholic Primary School

- ◆ Whilst at St. Mary's School I will learn about being a Christian. I will experience the beliefs, traditions and practices of the Catholic Faith.
- ◆ I will achieve as much as I possibly can in each area of the National Curriculum.
- ◆ I will know how to learn and enjoy learning, and will view work in a positive and conscientious manner.
- ◆ I will co-operate and communicate with others effectively, independently and in a group, and try to win and lose graciously.
- ◆ I will tolerate and respect the religious beliefs, views and values of others, understand the need for good behaviour and moderate my behaviour accordingly. I will respect the belongings and property of others.
- ◆ If I have a problem I know I can find someone who will discuss it with me.
- ◆ I will try to learn from my mistakes and accept there is always room for improvement.
- ◆ I will share a sense of responsibility for my school, parish, local community and the wider environment.

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.)

2. Statement of requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, including those in the sixth form (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; 70 Instrument of Government, clause 2). Academies in England are required by their funding agreement and Articles of Association to comply with similar requirements (The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement, December 2020; Model Articles for Catholic Academies, February 2019).

The law requires all maintained 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)). Sixth-form pupils can choose to withdraw themselves from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1B)). 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 Coordinator)
- 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 Coordinator

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

Children at St Mary's are given a rich variety of opportunities to engage in prayer and liturgical life throughout the school year. These opportunities are designed to be age-appropriate, inclusive, and rooted in Catholic tradition, fostering a personal and communal relationship with God. Prayer and liturgy is established in the following ways:

Daily Prayer	Daily prayer is a central and regular part of school life, helping children to develop a rhythm of prayer and a habit of turning to God throughout the day. • Morning Prayer sets the tone for the day, inviting children to offer their work and actions to God. • Grace Before and After Meals encourages gratitude for God's provision and reminds children of the needs of others. • End-of-Day Prayer allows for reflection and thanksgiving, helping children to end the day peacefully.
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	- Prayers are adapted to suit different age groups and may include traditional Catholic prayers (e.g., Hail Mary, Our Father), spontaneous prayers from the children, or meditative silence. - Each classroom features a dedicated prayer table or sacred space decorated in accordance with the liturgical season, helping to visually and spiritually focus children's attention on God. - Each class has a designated Prayer Leader whose role is to lead class prayers and who together form a School Prayer Team. - Around the school there are designated school prayer areas where children have the opportunity to pray together or independently in reflection and with prayer boxes for children to offer up their own prayer intentions.
Whole School Collective Worship	To be re-established in 2025-2026. Whole school worship takes place on a regular basis (e.g., weekly), bringing the entire school community together to encounter God through shared prayer, reflection, and celebration. - These gatherings are structured around the Sunday Gospel, liturgical feasts, or core Gospel values such as love, compassion, and justice. - They often include scripture readings, hymns, silence, pupil-led reflections, and themed prayer intentions. - Worship may be led by school staff, parish clergy, or children themselves, encouraging active and thoughtful participation. - Celebrations of significant feasts or events (e.g., Harvest, Remembrance, Laudato Si' Week) are often marked with special collective worship sessions.
Class and Key Stage Liturgies	Smaller group liturgies enable more intimate and reflective worship experiences, tailored to the children's stage of development and spiritual needs. - These liturgies are often linked to the Religious Education curriculum, helping children to see connections between what they learn and how they worship. - Children are encouraged to help prepare these liturgies by choosing themes, writing bidding prayers, selecting hymns, and preparing readings.
Celebration of the Sacraments	The school works closely with the parish to support children in their preparation for and participation in the Sacraments. First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are typically prepared for in Year 3, with catechesis provided through Religious Education and additional parish sessions. - Children are supported spiritually and pastorally as they approach these milestones. School Masses are celebrated regularly (e.g., termly or for special occasions) either in the school hall or the parish church, with children taking on active roles as readers, altar servers, singers, and in the offertory. - Opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation are offered during penitential seasons (Advent and Lent), often with the support of parish priests.
Liturgical Calendar and Feast Days	The liturgical year shapes the rhythm of prayer and worship in school, with a strong focus on key seasons and feast days. - During Advent and Lent, special assemblies, liturgies, and acts of charity help children prepare spiritually for Christmas and Easter. - Holy days of obligation and major feasts (e.g., All Saints, Ash Wednesday, Pentecost) are celebrated with special liturgies or Mass. - Saints' feast days, particularly those linked to the school's patron or class saints, are marked with classroom prayer and related activities.

	Children lead the Rosary in the months of October and May after school in dedication to Our Lady.
Pupil Led Worship	Developing leadership in faith is a key aim of our worship provision. - Children are given regular opportunities to plan and lead prayer services, either individually or in small groups, supported by staff. - This may take place within class, during assemblies, or for parents and the wider community. - Roles include selecting a theme, preparing scripture and reflections, writing prayers, and leading music or visuals.
Prayer Through Music and Art	Creative expression plays an important role in helping children pray and connect with the divine. - Hymn practice sessions and liturgical singing form part of the regular timetable, especially in preparation for major celebrations. - Music is integral to collective worship, often featuring psalms, reflective songs, or traditional hymns. - Visual and expressive arts (e.g., creating prayer cards, icons, banners) are used to enhance liturgical spaces and deepen understanding of religious themes. - Opportunities such as composing psalm-based music, illustrating scripture, or contributing to prayer walls invite children to participate with their full range of talents.

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 and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, 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 will be furnished and maintained as such, and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

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 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 at least annually, and involve all key stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

8. Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.