Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Policy produced by the school and diocese

Adopted by Full Governing Body -Academic year 2025/26
Review date- Academic year 2026/27 – updated 30/9/26

Our Lady's Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Our School Mission Statement

Go, shine in the world and live as Jesus lived.

Our school offers a distinctly Catholic education in an inclusive environment, welcoming children and staff of all faiths and none.

'To have eyes for the good things of the Lord is to live by faith, to see life with the eyes of faith.' Cardinal Vincent Nichols

As a community, we have identified **nine core values that stem from the Mission and** are woven in to the very fabric of the school. We expect all members of the school community-pupils, staff, governors, clergy- to model these. These are also closely linked to the **four foundations** of our **curriculum design.**

1. Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills (value link- excellence)
2. Educating for Hope and Aspiration (value link- determination and inspiration)
3. Educating for Community and Living Well Together (value link-compassion, integrity, friendship)
4. Educating for Dignity and Respect (value link- honesty, integrity, respect)

Determination This means resolution, resolve, willpower. "**Stand firm, and you will win life.**" (Luke 21:19)

Respect This means regard highly, value, honour. "**And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.**" (Luke 6:31)

Friendship This means mutual trust and support. "**Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.**" (1 John 3:18)

Inspiration This means the process of being given passion and/or ideas for a task. **I can do all things through him who strengthens me.**" (Philippians 4:13)

Excellence This means being outstanding or extremely good. "**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord.**" (Colossians 3:23-24)

Community This connects us with each other. **We who are many, are one body in Christ.**" (Romans 12:5)

Compassion This means having a deep awareness and sympathy for another's suffering. **When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.**" (Mark 6:34)

Honesty This means truthfulness, loyalty, fairness, sincerity. **The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.**" (Proverbs 12:2)

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Integrity This means having strong moral principles e.g. honesty, decency, fairness, equality; having pure and balanced moral character. **Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.**" (Philippians 4:8)

The distinctive nature of our approach to education can be found in our explicit Christian values, the quality and range of our Prayer and Liturgy (Collective Worship), our Christian ethos and in our Religious Education.

As a Catholic school we believe **every** child is made in the image of God, and therefore we want the best for them. We value our school community as a place where love can flourish.

Our mission and Christian values are at the core of everything we do. In order for us to think about and understand how Jesus lived his life, we underpin our teaching and learning with stories and parables from the Bible. We also provide an environment which fully prepares the children to be confident, compassionate, honest and happy human beings so that they can:

Go, shine in the world and live as Jesus lived

Our School Mission Statement is based upon Matthew 5:14-16

Where does our school mission statement come from?

It has its roots in the Gospel of St Matthew who walked with Jesus during his ministry. ‘’You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives off light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven.’’

Staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities e.g., behaviour expectations, staff relationship guidelines, displays, assemblies, links in lessons.
Parents and the wider community are informed about the statement through school signage, our newsletter, school policy documents, website and at parents' meetings...

Background
Our school is situated within an increasingly diverse community, reflecting a multi-faith and multi-racial community, which we recognise and value. The school aims to reflect the local community while ensuring that the Christian foundations are still maintained.
As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting individual beliefs. Upon introduction to the school, parents/ carers are informed about the Catholic basis of our teaching. It is therefore unlikely that parents/ carers would wish to exercise their legal right of withdrawal. However, should such a case arise, the parents/ carers concerned should consult the Head of school.

Our school aims

Our school aims to provide a caring, stable, stimulating environment where all

children can develop to their full potential. Staff are committed to ensuring that the children's time at school is productive and successful. We aim to raise achievement in all aspects of the curriculum; developing self-confidence, motivation, self-reliance and co-operation.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and serve the local community by welcoming children from all backgrounds and faiths. Whilst our ethos is positively Catholic, we value and respect the diversity of our community and aim to set all children on life's path through compassion, thoughtfulness and understanding to one another and respect for one another's differences.

We believe that parents and teachers have a responsibility to ensure that children leave school with:

- the knowledge that they are special in God's eyes
- good skills in English, maths and computing
- a love of learning
- good social skills
- a sense of responsibility towards society in order to make a difference
- the confidence to stand up for themselves in an appropriate way

so that they are well equipped for a successful future.

'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.)

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.

Statement of Requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils (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).

Nurturing spirituality

Children are capable of deep spiritual experiences from an early age. Before they even find words to express it, they become aware of something other than themselves and their small worlds, something that is inspiring and good. An understanding of God is already within children and we are asked to give them the verbal vocabulary to express what they already experience.

Through liturgy and through everyday experiences, children come to know that they are not alone in their spiritual beliefs and that there are ways of communicating with and about their spiritual nature.

What is prayer?

Prayer is communion with God. It involves listening as well as speaking in thanks, praise, petition and blessing. Prayer can be an individual or communal activity. Prayer can use words that others have composed or words of our own. Prayer need not involve any words at all.

What is liturgy?

Liturgy always includes prayer, reflection and worship. It involves participation through symbol and action (ritual). The most familiar forms of the liturgy celebrated in school are the Mass and the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The liturgical books, such as the Roman Missal and the Lectionary, set out the structure to be followed, the words spoken, the gestures to be performed, and the symbols to be used when celebrating a liturgy.

What is reflection and meditation?

Reflection and meditation are used to develop our spiritual nature through reflecting on the presence of God in the world and in scripture, whilst encouraging children to silently contemplate their lives.

Prayer and liturgy in our school

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.

The range of opportunities for prayer, celebrations of the word and liturgy in our school

- Gospel assembly - following up on the Gospel teaching in church from the previous Sunday. This is an example of when we celebrate the word.
- Values assemblies –They focus on one of our core values each week and are related to Gospel stories.
- Celebration Assembly - this is a time to share and celebrate school and individual achievements e.g. special mention certificates which are linked to our Christian Values and learning heroes, person of the week certificates and attendance awards, sporting achievements etc.
- Teacher led reflection
- Children Leading Worship

- Christian Meditation - this takes place in all year groups every day after morning break times or lunch times.

- Class masses or liturgies - these are led by our parish priest. Parents are invited to join us.

- Whole school mass - whole school mass is led by our priest. This takes place at least once a term at school and sometimes at the church. Parents are invited to join us.

- Daily prayers at the start of the day, before lunch and at the end of the day

- End of Primary School Leavers' Service

We also celebrate the major Christian festivals throughout the year. Parents/carers are invited to join us at school. These include Advent, Christmas, Lent (which itself includes Ash Wednesday, Holy Week/ Easter), The Feast of Our Lady and Harvest. This is another example of where we celebrate the word

KS2 children undertake a Reconciliation Service twice a year, during Advent and Lent.

Themes of Prayer, Celebrations of the Word and Liturgy

Throughout the school year our themes of prayer and liturgy are divided into two main strands. We follow the current cycle in the liturgical year of the Church and our key stage Acts of Worship reflects the Gospel reading of the previous Sunday. In this way the children develop an awareness of the Catholic Church traditions and journey, with the wider church, through the life of Christ from birth to Resurrection, the promise of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the Good News. In this way too, the children gain experience of the seasons in the liturgical calendar and so Advent and Lent are given their rightful significance.

The second strand of our themes of prayer and liturgy looks at a range of spiritual and moral issues which the children encounter, at differing levels. Through interactive acts of worship, issues such as sharing, fair and unfair, right and wrong, recognising choices, meeting needs, making a contribution etc are explored and discussed. Children are invited to contribute their ideas and opinions. We also invite outside speakers to address the children on a variety of issues, for example, charitable giving.

Prayer services held in classrooms throughout the year reflect either the current topic of study in RE or the liturgical year.

Prayer

We believe that prayer should encompass the following:

P Praise

S Sorry – for the things done wrong by us and others

A Asking for things – for others and ourselves

L Listening – to God

M Meditating on the mystery of God and the wonder of Creation

Prayer is the way in which we develop a relationship with God. We want to teach our children how to pray so that they can become close or closer to God. In very simple terms, prayer is talking to God. Meditation in the form we have in school of Christian Meditation is listening to God. There is no one way, correct way to pray, we are teaching children to talk and listen, this is a relationship with God. Prayer has been traditionally described as 'lifting up the hearts and minds to God,' which means it involves our whole person – our head as well as our heart. This definition expresses a fundamental understanding that God is concerned and interested about what goes on in our loves; is due our expression of thanksgiving and gratitude; and responds to us when we express our needs. This basic dynamic of recognition, thanksgiving and intercession forms the core of all prayer and liturgy. It is wholly appropriate that communal prayer forms an essential dimension of life in our school. Communal prayer takes place, for example, at the beginning and end of the school day in every classroom.
Children should know and understand that God, is with us as we pray either on our own or with a group
Children have an opportunity to write their own prayers. To support the importance of individual prayer lives, the children have a prayer book that begins in Reception class and is added to termly with the child's own prayers. This book follows the children throughout their time at school and is presented to them when they leave our school.
We also teach the traditional Catholic prayers – we have a progression in prayer document which clearly outlines when these are taught.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Spiritual and Moral Development is a life-long process and in the life of the children, is shared between parents/ carers, the school and the wider community. We acknowledge the wide variety of beliefs that make up our community; however our policy reflects the Catholic focus of our school. Therefore, we seek to foster values and morals based on Christian teaching, which are also shared by the major world faiths. Key ideas and words that have been identified as being particularly appropriate when exploring spiritual and moral concepts and include the following:

- Life, birth, creation, death
- Sleep, refreshment, renewal
- Friendship, fidelity, love, passion, patience
- Imagination, inspiration, enlightenment
- Elation, delight, joy, gladness, laughter
- Sorrow, sadness, grief, reconciliation, forgiveness, self control
- Injustice, pain, suffering, anger, courage, shame, guilt
- Kindness, gratefulness
- Pity, compassion
- Wonder, awe, reverence, adoration
- Splendour, beauty, perfection

- Stillness, calm, peace, silence, tranquillity, harmony
- Light, darkness
- Eternity, mystery, infinity
- Hope, dream, fact, fantasy
- Insight, intuition, belief, faith, trust
- Truth, certainty, uncertainty, proof

Poems, stories, paintings, photographs, natural objects, and music are some of the ways that children can be encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective.

Resources

Resources are kept in the classrooms. The resources are specifically chosen to deliver the relevant themes from the acts of worship overview. Class teachers may access these at any time to plan and prepare to lead their act of worship.

Prayer, Liturgy and Celebration of the Word including Plan of Provision

The plan of provision informs members of staff of the themes for each week and is agreed between the Head of school, one of the parish clergy and RE/Catholic life of the School leader.

Children Leading Worship

The themes of these are related to the liturgical calendar, the children's Come and See topic or pertinent current affairs. The children use the four areas of 'Gather', 'Word', 'Respond' and 'Mission' to structure their act of worship.

Year 6 Leavers' service

Each year, a special service for Year 6 leavers takes place at school. Leavers are invited to "tell their story" and are also presented with a Bible and their school prayer book. They are also reminded that the Church (as well as the school) will continue to be there for them in the years that lie ahead.

Assembly Themes

1. A teacher led or child led reflection in class- we use the structure of Gather, Word, Respond and Mission.
2. Gospel assembly where we listen to the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. A child will always read directly from Scripture and this is then reflected on to support children's understanding of the Gospel and its messages. There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.
3. KS1 Christian Values Assembly – there is a reading from a Scripture story linked to one of our seven Christian values. This is then reflected on to support children's understanding of the Christian value and how it links to their lives. There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.
4. KS2 Christian Values Assembly – there is a reading from Scripture story linked to one of our seven Christian values. This is then reflected on to support children's understanding of the Christian value and how it links to their lives. There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.

5. Celebration Assembly- In this Assembly we celebrate Person of the Week from each class, special mentions which are linked to the school Christian values, learning heroes and the attendance award. We give out a prize for the newsletter slip, times tables and any trust group nominations. We also pray, hold a silent reflection and sing a hymn or song.
6. Children leading worship in class - we use the structure of Gather, Word, Respond and Mission. Gather: the children gather together whilst listening to or singing a song (usually in a circle on the carpet around a focus in the middle e.g. a cross and the candle). Word: a short piece of Scripture is chosen by the children (6 children are the leaders for the term). The scripture can come from the Gospel of the previous Sunday or linked to the learning in RE for that week. Response: A prayer or symbolic action e.g. all think about the reading and put a pebble into the middle of the circle, all reflect in silence on the message of the reading. Mission: the children are given 4 options and in they decide (silently) what they will do following on from the Word which will enrich their lives e.g. smile at friends, give Mum a hug, be kinder, pray.

At the start of all assemblies…

Assemblies are led by an adult with two prayer leaders (children) from Y2-Y6 every week. The same two children lead for every assembly for the whole week. The adult will lead the sign of the cross, with all adults and children joining in.

May and October

The months of May and October are traditionally linked to Our Lady and during these months we will all say The Hail Mary at the end of the KS1 and KS2 assemblies in Mary's honour, instead of other prayers.

Prayer leaves

These are prayers written by children which are for their own personal intentions. Four children read out a prayer leaf as part of each weekly Gospel assembly and then hang their prayer on the tree. The organisation for these prayers will be: Autumn term Year 3 and Year 4, spring term Year 5 and summer term Year 6. The head of school will give the Year 3 to Year 6 class teachers 30 prayer leaves in the first week of the relevant term. The teachers give their class one session in which to write their prayers and they are then given to the Head of School at the end of that week. The writing of prayer leaves is optional, the children do not have to write one, but are encouraged to write one if they'd like to. When setting up for the Gospel assembly, 4 prayers are chosen at random and those children read out their prayer in the assembly, then hang them on the tree for others to read. At any point, a child can request a prayer leaf from the Head of School and their prayers will be added to the leaves read out.

Responsibility

Governors

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.

Executive Headteacher

The Executive 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.

The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for prayer and liturgy 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 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.

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.

Induction

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.

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.

Review

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