St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

We grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus

Approved by	
Name:	Carley Miller
Position:	RE Coordinator
Signed:	Carley Miller
Date:	**September 2026**
Proposed review date[2]:	September 2027

Prayer and liturgy policy

This prayer and liturgy policy has been approved and adopted by the governing body on 9.9.2026 and will be reviewed on 9.9.2026

Signed by the Chair of Governors

Signed by the Headteacher

School Mission Statement

Our school has its own distinctive mission statement which expresses our shared sense of purpose:

"At St Mary's we grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus"

Fundamental to this purpose is the belief that every person is made in the image and likeness of God and if we follow the gospel values we will become better people.

Our mission is to seek the ongoing development of every pupil and young person and to promote their well-being and freedom. This vision shapes the daily life of the Catholic school as a community in which faith is expressed and shared through every aspect of its activity.

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.)

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 9.4 Model prayer and liturgy policy 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.

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) – Carley Miller

• 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

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in St Mary's Catholic Primary School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience

- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

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

At St. Mary's many devotions relate to the liturgical year. Their purpose is to provide times of prayer which often draw on all the senses and lead us back to the liturgy with a deeper prayerful understanding of what we celebrate.

Alongside communal prayer, the Church teaches the importance of encouraging personal prayer. In St. Mary's we understand that there is a relationship between the two. Within any liturgy or time of prayer there will be times for personal reflection and prayer, as a school will also facilitate the individual prayer of our pupils. In turn, we believe that personal prayer will enhance communal prayer.

To assist this we:-

• Time: allowing moments within the school day for individual prayer, formally or informally at break times.

• Space: our chapel is used for individual prayer.

• Content: we provide pupils with guidance about how to pray by themselves, and encourage them to do so. We use a mixture of familiar prayers, spontaneous prayer, and silence. Gradually developing the practice of silent prayer with pupils.

Prayer and Liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, the RED, feast days, and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial Day. Prayer in class takes place daily with each class praying our morning prayer, grace before and after meals and the home-time prayer. Celebrations of the Word take place regularly each week, with a range of whole school, key stage and classroom based celebrations.

Liturgy is celebrated with our Parish Priest throughout the school year, both in school and in our Parish Church. Parishioners and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations. A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion. The timetable of Prayer and Liturgy is as below.

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 are 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. Within each classroom you will find a resource box of Religious artefacts and fabrics suitable for all seasons of the Liturgical year; resources to support child-led Prayer and Liturgy and age appropriate Bibles and Prayer books. Other resources are available in central storage for particular feast days etc. The teacher and/or children may choose items from this box when planning and leading their own Prayer and Liturgy.

The Learning Environment

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment' There are focal points in each classroom and throughout the school which will reflect the liturgical season and will also reference Curriculum RE topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos and mission.

Expectations for Prayer and Liturgy

As a Catholic School, Jesus Christ is central to all aspect of school life. All pupils are educated in the beliefs and devotional practices of the Catholic Church.

• Every class will have a prayer table – a focal point for Prayer and Liturgy – which will be treated with reverence, be liturgically correct and follow the Church's year.

• Daily prayers will be said at the start and end of each day, as well as praying grace before lunch.

• Hymn practice is celebrated each week; the purpose of which is to enrich Prayer and Liturgy.

• Class Liturgies will always have a specific theme according to the Liturgical season.

• During the months of May and October, all children are expected to pray the Hail Mary each day

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.

Planning

Prayer and Liturgy in our school follows a pattern of:

• Welcome/Gather: we think about how we come together, the environment, and a focal point.

• Word/Listen: we hear a reading from the scriptures, have time to reflect and say a prayer to match the
theme.

• Worship/Prayer/Response: we think about how we will respond to the word of God.

• Witness/Send/Mission: we give the children something to take away from their liturgical experience that they can act on in their lives and/or share with others.

This planning format is followed in all our Prayer and Liturgy times; whether it is led by the class teacher, pupils or as a whole school worship.

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. The school's provision of Prayer and Liturgy will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils; whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities to organise and lead Prayer and Liturgy and whether it truly reflects the aims, ethos and mission of the school. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

Retreats

Children in Upper School are given the opportunity to visit a range of religious settings to deepen their faith.

In Year 6, pupils visit the Grotto at Cleator Moor; a place for local pilgrimage.

In Year 4 and 5, pupils are given the opportunity to visit Castlerigg Manor (Diocesan Youth Centre) on a two-night residential retreat.

Pupils are given opportunities for voluntary worship through parish celebrations e.g. Stations of the Cross, praying the Rosary. Staff are given opportunities for voluntary worship through RE focused training days and participation in the pupil centred opportunities.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations form a very important part in our Prayer and Liturgy strategy. Opportunities for children to participate are ½ termly, during feast days which occur during school time and parents and parish members are encouraged to attend.

Children attend Mass at St Mary's Church, whenever possible throughout the year. In addition, our Parish Priest, Father Kevan Dorgan, celebrates Mass from Nursery to Year 6; with pupils participating in Liturgies of the Word.