



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement

This is our school St Werburgh's and St Columba's
A place to be inspired, be accepted, be yourself and be unique.
Be able to grow spiritually, academically and morally.
Be able to contribute to the community and be a responsible global citizen.
Be able to reach for the stars and fulfil your potential.
A place, providing an excellent Catholic education for everyone.
Where we belong, where everyone belongs.

Action: Spring 2024
Review: September 2026

The Nature of Prayer and liturgy

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It 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 Place of Prayer and liturgy in the Life of our School

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Prayer and liturgy takes into account the spiritual and academic 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 will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

The Aims of Prayer and liturgy

We believe that Prayer and liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce 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.'

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way;

Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church (Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.).

- In order to do this, celebrations will:
 - be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
 - 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.

Prayer and liturgy in our schools will be (by the children):

- properly planned
- adequately resourced
- recorded
- monitored
- evaluated

Resources

All RE resources are stored on the server or designated RE cupboards.

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

Children are encouraged to use The Quiet Place and Prayer Garden for individual prayer. All year groups participate in retreats each year.

As part of their First Sacrament preparation, the Year 3 children go on two Retreats at our Parish Churches. The First Forgiveness Retreat takes place in January and the Holy Communion Retreat takes place in April.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for children to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to the '*Directory for Masses with Children*' as a basis for our practice. We believe that children are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

The Co-ordinator for Prayer and liturgy

The RE Subject leader will co-ordinate organisation of Prayer and liturgy along with ordering and organising resources required.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the RE Subject Leader and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for Prayer and liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer and liturgy which may at times form part of the school development plan.
- Ensuring that Prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes, and family backgrounds of pupils.
- Ensuring that Prayer and liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'.
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Prayer and liturgy.

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Prayer and liturgy
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in Prayer and liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Prayer and liturgy
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Prayer and liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Prayer and liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community

- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Advisor

Professional development / Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Prayer and liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Prayer and liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently
- Establish a working group to plan Prayer and liturgy.

Appendix 2

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that prayer and liturgy and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, "on a special occasion".

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Prayer and liturgy rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Prayer and liturgy. However, given the importance of Prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.