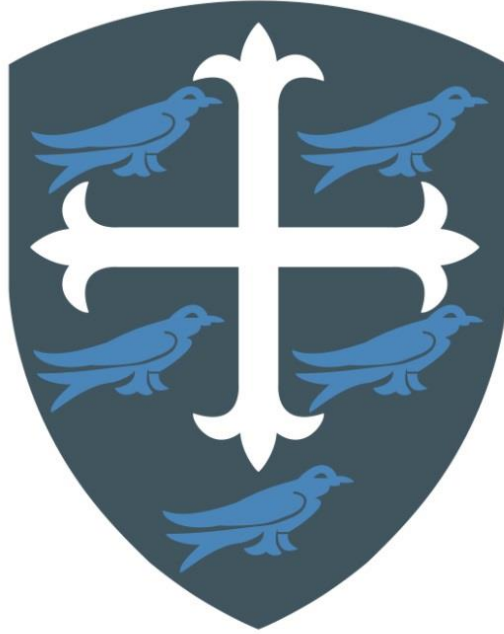


# St Mary's Catholic Primary School



## Prayer and Liturgy Policy

<b>Legal Status:</b>	Non-Statutory
<b>Review date:</b>	September 2025
<b>Next Review:</b>	September 2026
<b>Responsible Person:</b>	Governing Body

### **Mission Statement**

"The family of St Mary's strives to grow in God's love and care by learning together and valuing the uniqueness of each person."

At *St Mary's RC Primary School*, our mission is to grow together in God's Love and Care. With love at the core of all we do, we strive to create an environment where pupils:

- Love to learn together and learn to love together
- Pray together and play together
- Put their faith into action
- Grow in the love and truth of Christ within His Church for the benefit of all

Our Prayer and Liturgy Policy is deeply connected to this mission, emphasizing that participation in the prayer and liturgical life of the school is essential for nurturing the spiritual growth of our pupils. We believe that engaging in the spiritual practices of the school community helps our pupils and staff embody the love of Christ in all aspects of life.

This policy ensures that:

1. Christ is at the centre of our prayer and liturgical life. By participating in the Paschal Mystery, pupils and staff deepen their relationship with God and learn to live out the teachings of Jesus in their daily lives.
2. Holistic participation is encouraged, involving both outward actions—such as praying, singing, and responding—and inward engagement of the heart, mind, and spirit. This helps foster a personal and communal spiritual connection, reinforcing the school's values of loving and learning together.
3. Spiritual growth and formation are supported through preparation and catechesis, enabling pupils to fully and consciously participate in the liturgy in ways that are developmentally appropriate, nurturing their understanding of faith.
4. Community and individual involvement are emphasized. Full participation means recognizing that we pray, learn, and grow together as a school community, and that each person's engagement is vital to our collective worship and expression of faith.
5. Openness to God's grace is central, encouraging pupils to embrace the transformative power of liturgy, which shapes how they live their faith, play together, and contribute to the well-being of others.

Through this policy, *St Marys RC Primary School* ensures that our prayer and liturgical life not only reflects our mission to *grow in the love and truth of Christ* but also fosters a spiritually rich, loving environment where faith is put into action for the benefit of all. It is our aim to cultivate a genuine life of prayer nourished by the sacraments.

In the context of a Catholic school, prayer, celebrations of the word, and liturgy exist on a continuum that ranges from silent meditation to the formal celebration of Mass on significant Church Solemnities, such as the Ascension of the Lord. Though these practices overlap, they represent distinct forms of communal and personal expressions of faith.

## 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

Prayer is understood as the lifting of hearts and minds to God, involving both intellect and emotion. It acknowledges God's presence, offers thanksgiving, and seeks intercession for needs. Communal prayer is integral to the life of a Catholic school, fostering a shared

recognition of God's action and

expressing collective needs and gratitude. This prayer can take place in various settings, such as the classroom or staff meetings, with a simple structure that may include both traditional and spontaneous prayers. Catholic devotions like the Angelus or Stations of the Cross are also appropriate, and silence forms an important part of these prayer times.

Celebrations of the Word are more formal than prayer and occur when gatherings of the school community involve scripture proclamation, often in assemblies or seasonal services like carol celebrations. While they may use liturgical elements such as symbols or texts, these celebrations are distinct from formal liturgies and allow for greater creativity.

Liturgy refers to the most formal expressions of worship in the school setting, primarily the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These follow prescribed structures and rituals as outlined in the Roman Missal and the Lectionary, with limited opportunities for adaptation within the framework provided by the Church's liturgical books.

Together, these elements create a rich tapestry of faith life in the school, offering opportunities for spiritual growth, reflection, and communal worship.

The foundation of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic primary school is rooted in the person and action of Christ, as highlighted by the scripture, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20). This serves as the basis for understanding that whenever the school community comes together for prayer, scripture, or sacramental celebrations, Christ is present and actively involved.

In the Mass, Christ is present in several key ways:

- Through the gathered community, as it prays, sings, and responds.
- In the proclamation of scripture.
- In the priest who presides over the liturgy.
- Especially and substantially in the Eucharist, where Christ is wholly present in the form of bread and wine.

When the school community prays or celebrates liturgy, Christ both accepts their hopes and prayers and draws them into his own prayer to the Father for the whole of creation. This means that participation in liturgy is fundamentally a sharing in Christ's own prayer and action. However, this is made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit, who unites the community with Christ in prayer and worship.

Catholic prayer and liturgy are therefore always:

- Christological: focused on Christ.
- Trinitarian: involving prayer to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.

This foundational understanding reinforces the sacred nature of prayer and liturgy in the life of the school community.

At St Marys RC Primary School , we recognize the importance of participation in the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Central to the Church's vision of liturgy is the idea that all are called

participate in a full, conscious, and active manner. This means not only being outwardly engaged but also involving the heart, mind, and spirit in worship, ensuring both interior and exterior participation.

Participation in the Paschal Mystery: The focus of liturgical participation is to share in Christ’s redeeming work. The Holy Spirit deepens this engagement each time we gather, inviting us to live out Christ’s life and mission daily.

Interior and Exterior Participation: At St Mary’s RC Primary School, we teach that participation goes beyond actions like singing or responding. True participation involves emotional and mental engagement through reflection, imagination, and will. For example, during intercessions, we encourage children to pause and reflect on the needs of their community, bringing those prayers to God.

Full, Conscious, and Active Participation:

Full participation means involving the whole school community, ensuring each child engages fully— mind, body, and spirit—while also understanding their part in the larger Church community.

Conscious participation helps children grasp the meaning of the liturgy in ways that are appropriate for their age and development. This allows them to connect more deeply with the mystery of God.

Active participation is about being open to God’s grace, so that the liturgy transforms the children, helping them grow in faith and live out the lessons learned in daily life.

Preparation and Catechesis: At St Mary’s RC Primary School, we place great emphasis on preparation and catechesis. Our aim is to guide pupils to understand their role in the liturgy, helping them engage in a meaningful and spiritually enriching way.

In this way, participation at St Mary’s RC Primary School fosters a holistic involvement in the liturgy, nurturing both the spiritual and communal life of our pupils and encouraging them to live their faith fully.

	Morning	Lunchtime	Afternoon Teacher led- meditation – once a week
Monday	Pupil led worship	Prayer/Rosary led by Chaplaincy team/pupils	
Tuesday	Whole school Gospel Worship		
Wednesday	Pupil led worship		
Thursday	Hymn Practice		
Friday	Celebration Worship		Weekly Examen Nursery- Year 6

\*please note this is an outline, for more detail see Annual Plan of Provision

## 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

## **Appendix 1:** **Liturgical Year Calendar**

Advent (Begins 4 Sundays before Christmas)

- Focus: Preparation for the coming of Christ
- Saints:
  - Dec 6: St. Nicholas
  - Dec 8: Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)
  - Dec 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Christmas Season (Dec 25 - Feast of the Baptism of the Lord)

- Focus: Celebration of the birth of Jesus
- Saints:
  - Dec 25: Christmas (Nativity of the Lord)
  - Dec 26: St. Stephen, the First Martyr
  - Dec 27: St. John the Apostle
  - Jan 1: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation)
  - Jan 6: Epiphany (Celebrated on the closest Sunday in some

regions) Ordinary Time (First Period)

- Focus: Reflecting on the teachings and life of Jesus
- Saints:
  - Jan 28: St. Thomas Aquinas
  - Feb 3: St. Blaise (Blessing of the Throats)
  - Feb 14: St.

Valentine Lent (Begins on Ash

Wednesday)

- Focus: A time of penance and preparation for Easter
- Saints:
  - Feb 14/15: Ash Wednesday
  - March 17: St. Patrick

- March 19: St. Joseph, Husband of Mary
- March 25: Annunciation of the

#### Lord Holy Week (Last week of Lent)

- Focus: The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus
- Key Days:
  - Palm Sunday: Beginning of Holy Week
  - Holy Thursday: Commemoration of the Last Supper
  - Good Friday: Commemoration of the Passion of the Lord
  - Holy Saturday and Easter

#### Vigil Easter Season (Easter Sunday until Pentecost)

- Focus: Celebration of the Resurrection
- Saints:
  - Easter Sunday: Celebration of Jesus' Resurrection
  - Divine Mercy Sunday (2nd Sunday of Easter)
  - May 13: Our Lady of Fatima
  - May 31: Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
  - Ascension (40 days after Easter): Jesus' Ascension into Heaven (celebrated on Sunday in some regions)
  - Pentecost: The coming of the Holy

#### Spirit Ordinary Time (Second Period)

- Focus: Continuing the teachings of Jesus and the work of the Church
- Saints:
  - June 13: St. Anthony of Padua
  - June 24: Nativity of St. John the Baptist
  - June 29: Sts. Peter and Paul, Apostles
  - July 11: St. Benedict
  - August 15: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)
  - Sept 29: Sts. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels
  - Oct 1: St. Thérèse of Lisieux

- Oct 4: St. Francis of Assisi
- Nov 1: All Saints' Day (Holy Day of Obligation)
- Nov 2: All Souls' Day
- Nov 30: St. Andrew the Apostle
- Nov/Dec: Christ the King (last Sunday before Advent

begins) Other Important Saints and Feasts to Include Throughout the Year:

- Jan 24: St. Francis de Sales
- Feb 2: Presentation of the Lord
- July 22: St. Mary Magdalene
- August 4: St. John Vianney
- September 23: St. Padre Pio
- October 7: Our Lady of the Rosa

## **Appendix 2:** **Calendar Year**

**These monthly dedications provide a framework for devotions and prayers throughout the year, helping us to focus on different aspects of our faith at different times.**

January: The Holy Name of Jesus

- January is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus, focusing on honouring and reflecting on the sacred name of Christ. The Feast of the Holy Name is celebrated on January 3.

February: The Holy Family and the Passion of Christ

- February often includes a focus on the Holy Family, with prayers for families and their sanctity. It also includes preparations for Lent, with some devotions related to the Passion of Christ leading into Ash Wednesday.

March: St. Joseph

- March is dedicated to St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus and the patron of the Universal Church. His solemnity is celebrated on March 19.

April: The Holy Eucharist (Depending on Easter)

- April often includes the celebration of Easter, and this month frequently focuses on the Holy Eucharist and the Resurrection of Christ.
- The Divine Mercy devotion is also highlighted, especially if Divine Mercy Sunday (the Sunday after Easter) falls in April.

May: The Blessed Virgin Mary

- May is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, with special Marian devotions such as the crowning of Mary and the May Rosary being prominent in Catholic parishes and schools.

June: The Sacred Heart of Jesus

- June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, focusing on Christ's infinite love for humanity. The Feast of the Sacred Heart is celebrated on the Friday following the second Sunday after Pentecost.

July: The Precious Blood of Jesus

- July is dedicated to the Precious Blood of Jesus, which represents Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of the world. Devotions to the Precious Blood focus on Christ's redemptive suffering.

#### August: The Immaculate Heart of Mary

- August is dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is a time for reflecting on Mary's heart, her virtues, and her deep love for God and humanity. The Assumption of Mary is also celebrated on August 15.

#### September: The Seven Sorrows of Mary

- September is dedicated to the Seven Sorrows of Mary, focusing on Mary's sufferings throughout her life, particularly during the Passion of her Son, Jesus. The Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows is celebrated on September 15.

#### October: The Holy Rosary

- October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary, highlighting the importance of this Marian devotion. The Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated on October 7.

#### November: The Souls in Purgatory

- November is dedicated to praying for the souls in Purgatory, particularly on All Souls' Day (November 2). It's a month for remembering the faithful departed and offering prayers for their eternal rest.

#### December: The Immaculate Conception/Advent

- December focuses on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on December 8, which marks Mary's conception without original sin. It also includes Advent, a season of preparation for the birth of Christ.