



St. Anne's and
Guardian Angels

Excellence Together with Christ at the Centre

Prayer and Liturgy Policy and Procedures

Approved by:	St Anne's and Guardian Angels Primary School Governing Body	Date: July 2025
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‘Excellence Together with Christ at the Centre’

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:

1. 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
2. There is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator). In this school the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators are the RE lead and Headteacher.
3. The prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
4. 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:

1. 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
2. They work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
3. 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
4. There are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

1. 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
2. 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
3. There is daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
4. 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
5. Resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and pupils
6. Induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
7. Staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
8. Monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
9. 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
10. There is collaboration with local clergy and parishes
11. Liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

4. Definitions of Terms

Prayer, Celebrations of the Word, and Liturgy form a continuum with silent meditation at one end and a celebration of Mass on a Solemnity of the Church (e.g., Ascension of the Lord) at the other. Of course, there are areas of overlap between the categories. The following definitions are taken from *To Love You More Deeply: The Prayer & Liturgy Directory for Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales* (2023).

Prayer

Prayer has been traditionally described as ‘lifting up of 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 lives; 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 a Catholic school. Staff and pupils are invited to recognise God's action in their lives and the life of the school, and in response to express together their needs and those of the whole human family, and to offer thanks for all that is good. Communal prayer takes place, for example, at the beginning or end of the school day, in the classroom, or at a staff meeting.

Such prayer times will have a clear, simple structure. Texts used may include familiar prayers as well as prayers written for the occasion, but there is also scope for spontaneous prayers, for example, intercessions. Long-standing Catholic devotions, such as the Angelus or the Stations of the Cross during Lent, can also be suitable. Giving space for appropriate silence forms part of the prayer.

There is virtue in variety and also great scope for creativity: varying the focus and the format according to the liturgical year reinforces the essential Catholic focus of the school while providing opportunities for pupil engagement.

Celebration of the Word

As the time allotted to prayer lengthens and the number of people involved grows, there is a corresponding need for more formal structures. The term 'Celebrations of The Word' is used for celebrations which are created for the school community and not directly taken from the liturgical books of the Church. These celebrations will take many forms, but the common element is the proclamation of scripture. These include assemblies, carol services, and other gatherings of all or part of the school community for special times and occasions. They may draw upon elements of the liturgy, such as its texts, symbols, and gestures, which help to reinforce their Catholic nature, but the various elements may be used with greater creative freedom than in the liturgy itself.

Liturgy

The most familiar forms of the liturgy celebrated in school are 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 to be spoken, the gestures to be performed, and the symbols to be used when celebrating a liturgy. The possibility for some creativity and adaptation remains but they have to be exercised within the parameters authorised by the liturgical books.

5. Principles of Prayer and Liturgy

At St Anne's and Guardian Angels Primary School, prayer and liturgy are central to our identity as a Catholic school.

All acts of prayer and worship in our school community aim to:

- Give glory, honour and praise to God;

- Be high-quality, meaningful experiences that are integral to the daily life of the school and express our Catholic character;
- Offer children engaging and age-appropriate encounters with liturgical prayer, rooted in their own experiences and backgrounds, to help form them for full participation in the worshipping life of the Church.

Prayer

Prayer is woven into the fabric of daily life. Guided by the vision set out in *To Love You More Deeply* (2023), we understand prayer as the lifting up of hearts and minds to God, and we seek to create opportunities for our whole school community to encounter God in meaningful and varied ways.

We begin, pause and end each day with prayer, helping to orient our thoughts and actions towards God. Children are taught three core daily prayers, which are used consistently across the school. In addition, each year group learns and reflects upon specific prayers of the Church in keeping with their age and stage of development. These include traditional Catholic prayers and devotions such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, the Angelus, and the Stations of the Cross.

Throughout the year, pupils are given opportunities to engage in different forms of prayer: spoken, written, sung, silent, spontaneous, and symbolic. Classroom prayer corners and reflective spaces provide an environment for private prayer and quiet contemplation. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own relationship with God through opportunities to write their own prayers, offer intercessions, and take part in meditative and imaginative prayer practices.

Prayer is also central to our communal gatherings—whether in classrooms, assemblies, or whole-school liturgies—and responds to the rhythm of the liturgical year. These moments offer space for thanksgiving, intercession, and reflection on Scripture, helping children to recognise God’s presence in their lives and in the wider world.

Parents and families are welcomed and encouraged to share in the prayer life of the school. Opportunities to join us in prayer are provided at key points in the school calendar, including Masses, liturgical celebrations, and collective worship assemblies. Through this daily rhythm and rich variety of prayer experiences, we seek to nurture children’s spiritual development and help them grow in faith, attentiveness, gratitude, and love.

Celebration of the Word

The Celebration of the Word holds a central place in the prayer life of our school. Each act of worship is thoughtfully planned using a clear and consistent structure, with careful reference to the liturgical calendar, significant feast days, and relevant themes from the curriculum. Scripture lies at the heart of most celebrations, anchoring our worship in the Word of God. Planning is undertaken in consultation with staff and is shaped by the school’s mission and wider aims, ensuring that worship is both purposeful and reflective of our Catholic identity.

At the same time, our approach remains flexible and responsive, allowing us to adapt to events and needs as they arise within the school community or the wider world. A key aim of our provision is to empower pupils not only to participate in worship but to develop the confidence and skills to lead it. Through guidance and encouragement, children are supported to plan and deliver meaningful acts of collective worship for their peers.

The Celebration of the Word is organised through our *Annual Plan of Provision for Prayer* (APOP), which supports staff by setting out weekly themes, leaders and key liturgical dates.

Liturgy

Guided by the Church's liturgical books—the Roman Missal and the Lectionary—we celebrate the liturgy with reverence, joy and fidelity to the traditions of the Church. The structure, words, gestures and symbols prescribed by the Church are respected and followed, while allowing for some appropriate creativity to engage children meaningfully and support their understanding.

The most familiar liturgical celebrations in school are the celebration of the Mass and, where appropriate, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Mass is celebrated regularly, including for major feasts and liturgical seasons, and at key points in the school calendar. These include the start and end of the academic year, Holy Days of Obligation, and significant moments in the lives of our pupils and school community.

Pupils are prepared to participate actively and prayerfully in the liturgy. They are supported in learning the responses, understanding the structure and meaning of the Mass, and taking on roles such as readers, altar servers, and those bringing up the offertory. Our celebrations are inclusive, age-appropriate, and rooted in the rhythm of the liturgical year.

We also provide opportunities for children to encounter the Sacrament of Reconciliation, particularly during Advent and Lent, in partnership with our parish. These opportunities are supported by appropriate catechesis and reflection.

Through our liturgical celebrations, we aim to form pupils in the richness of the Catholic tradition, enabling them to grow in communion with God and with one another, and to recognise the sacred in the rhythms of daily life.

6. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

A detailed overview is outlined in our *Annual Plan of Provision for Prayer* (APOP).

Prayer
• 3 x Daily classroom prayers (morning, Grace before meals and end of day) • Class-based Act worship: held three times a week, consisting of but not limited to: traditional prayers of the church; spontaneous prayer; scripture based prayer (for example, Lectio Divinia); guided meditations; silent reflections; prayerful action (intentions); Examen etc. • Weekly whole school musical worship • Rosary prayer group: daily during the months of May and October • Stations of the Cross • Thematic prayers across the year: for example, prayers for justice and compassion during Refugee Fortnight and Black History Month
Celebration of the Word
• Whole school Gospel assembly: held every Monday, based on the reading used in Sunday's Mass and following the Gather, Listen, Respond and Mission structure. • Class Celebration of The Word: held weekly and planned with input from pupils as appropriate to their age and aptitude • The Nativity (Christmas Carol Service) • The Passion of Christ (Easter Service)
Liturgy
• Weekly class mass at St Anne's Church: Y1-Y6 attend on a weekly rotation • Whole school mass: Holy Days of Obligation, celebrations (for example, new school year, Leavers Mass etc.) • Sacrament of Reconciliation (Lent and Advent) with our parish priests

7. Prayer Progression

Year Group	Core Prayers & Practices	Mass Prayers & Responses	Seasonal/Devotional Prayer	Prayer Skills & Participation
Nursery	- Sign of the Cross - Simple morning and evening prayers - Grace before meals	Simple responses: <i>Amen, Alleluia</i>	- Prayers for Harvest Time (November) - Blessing of the Advent Wreath	- Quiet listening - Joining in with gestures - Candle lighting
Reception	- Daily School Prayers including Grace before Meals - Glory Be	Simple responses: <i>Amen, Thanks be to God, And with your spirit</i>	- Prayers for the Laying of Palms - Easter Gardens - May Procession with a Crowning of Mary	- Join in simple class prayer - Share personal intentions verbally
Year 1	- Hail Mary - Our Father	- The 'Litany of Mercy' (<i>Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.</i>) - The Sign of Peace	- May and October – Month of the Rosary - Blessing of the Stable at Advent	- Contribute to shared prayers - Contribute to setting up prayer focus
Year 2	Act of Sorrow (simple child friendly version)	- Sanctus (<i>Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts...</i>) - Prayer at the Breaking of the Bread (<i>Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world...</i>)	- Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels (2nd October) - Litany of the Saints (1st November)	- Begin class-led liturgy planning - Participate in Mass responses with increasing confidence
Year 3	- Act of Contrition (traditional) - Prayer after Communion - Guardian Angel Prayer	Orate Fratres response (<i>May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands...</i>)	- The Solemnity of the Annunciation (March) - Farwell to the Alleluia (last gathering before Ash Wednesday) - Welcoming the Alleluia (first gathering after Easter)	- Write own prayers and intercessions - Begin to read in whole school Celebrations of The Word - Begin silent and meditative prayer
Year 4	- Eternal Rest prayer - Prayer to the Holy Spirit	Response to Invitation to Communion (<i>Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof...</i>)	- Stations of the Cross - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January) - Reconciliation (Lent and Advent)	Start to lead class liturgy/Celebration of The Word
Year 5	Apostles' Creed	- Mystery of Faith (all three versions) - The Confiteor	- Full Rosary - The Solemnity of the Ascension - Prayers for the Pentecost Novena	- Prepare and lead Mass bidding prayers - Experience Lectio Divina
Year 6	- Nicene Creed - The Magnificat	Gloria	- Prayers for Racial Justice (October – Black History Month) - Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus - Prayers for Refugees (June – Refugee Fortnight) - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	- Lead school liturgies - Compose personal or group prayers - Spiritual journals/reflections

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. Review

The policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and Standards Committee of the Local Governing Body every 3 years.