



St Mary's Catholic
Voluntary Academy

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

'Do little things with great love'

St Therese of Lisieux



Date Adopted: November 2026

Date of Review: November 2028

1. Intent

1.a. Our School Mission



We Believe, We Succeed and We Soar

Christ is at the centre of St. Mary's as we strive to nurture and care for our community and encourage them to Believe, Succeed and Soar. Through God's love, we support our pupils in recognising their God given gifts, strengthening their work as missionary disciples.

'Do little things with great love' St Therese of Lisieux

The mission of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is that of Jesus Christ; to build a teaching and learning community where we show due regard for the development and understanding of the uniqueness and dignity of each person. At St Mary's, each child is valued as a unique individual, a child of God, made in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our School Vision

Our vision is for St Mary's to be an inspirational Catholic school which truly reflects God's love. Through a safe, caring and Christ-centred community, we nurture our pupils' spiritual development and support them in developing their unique God-given gifts. We aim to provide an outstanding Catholic education which equips our community with knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence and prepares them to serve the common good whether that be locally, nationally or globally.

1.b. Our Gospel Values

Our school values influence the whole school culture at St Mary's. They shape everything we do and every decision we make. They are the central thread, interwoven throughout our curriculum, our behaviour system and our pastoral support. Our pupils and staff endeavour to live these out every day.

Our Gospel Values

With God's love we show:



Love

'My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you.' John 15:12

We recognise God's unconditional love to be our source of love. A Christ-like love respects the talent of each person in our school.



Respect

'In everything, then do to others as you would have them do to you.' Matthew 7:12

We believe that, as children of God, we have a duty not only to respect our friends and teachers but also to show respect to our environment as we are stewards of the earth.



Honesty

'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.' 1 John 3:18

We show honesty in all we say and do, in the pursuit of justice and fairness.



Forgiveness

‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.’ Luke 6:37

We believe that mercy will be shown by the way we forgive others, finding God in all things.



Generosity

‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ Acts 20:35

Just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, we have a role to serve our neighbours and the wider community. Through fundraising and prayer, we will strive to help the people in our world, our common home.



Patience

‘Jesus replied, ‘You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’ John 13:7

We remember to be patient and trust in God as we know he has a much greater plan for us. He allows us to be tested so that we learn to walk in his ways and trust in him.

1.c. Aims

At St. Mary’s, prayer and liturgy is far more than a statutory requirement. It is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to our pupils’ moral and spiritual development. Prayer and liturgy is our loving response, in word and action, to God’s invitation to enter into a relationship with Him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer and liturgy at St Mary’s aims to provide an opportunity for all staff and pupils:

- ❖ to encounter Christ in their daily lives
- ❖ to contemplate something of the mystery of God, giving thanks and praise to Him
- ❖ to reflect on and promote spiritual and moral values in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church
- ❖ to explore their own beliefs
- ❖ to experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- ❖ to develop a common ethos and shared values
- ❖ to grow in liturgical understanding and development
- ❖ to take time out ‘to wonder at’, ‘to come to terms with’ and ‘to give worth to’

1.d. Statement of Requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily prayer and liturgy (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, that is in accordance with the rights, practises, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; 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).

Our school’s provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil a 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.

2. Implementation

“For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.” Matthew 18:20.

Prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school and form part of routine gatherings for pupils and staff. We offer a variety of different types of prayer and liturgy at St Mary’s including: Prayer; Celebrations of the Word; Liturgies; Christian Meditation; Assemblies; Sacraments; Lectio Divina, Devotions and Benediction. Pupils participate in them by, for example, reflecting in silence, joining community prayer with confidence and singing readily.

Prayer naturally punctuates the school day through our Morning, Lunchtime and Evening prayers (see *St Mary’s Prayers*). Staff meetings always start with a time of prayer and reflection, and all those present are invited to share in whatever way they feel comfortable.

2.a. Timetable

A daily pattern of prayer and liturgy we offer at St Mary’s:

Morning	Before Lunch	After Lunch	2.50pm	End of Day
Morning Prayer	Lunchtime Prayer	Meditation	Prayer and Liturgy	End of day Prayer

A weekly pattern of prayer and liturgy we offer at St Mary’s:

	Type	Place	Time	Leader	Evaluation
Mon	Whole School Celebration of the Word (Sunday’s Gospel)	Hall	2.50pm	HT/DHT	Pupils: using evaluation station
Tue	Pupil-led Celebration of the Word	Classrooms	2.50pm	Pupils on rota	Pupils: in class
Wed	Key Stage Celebration of the Word	Hall	2.50pm	Chaplaincy Team	Pupils: using evaluation station
Thur	Choral Singing	Hall	2.50pm	Music Teacher	
Fri	Celebration Assembly	Hall	2.50pm	HT	

An addition to the routine prayer and liturgy offered at St Mary’s, we provide further opportunities for enrichment throughout the year which follow the liturgical calendar.

For example:

- ❖ Stations of the Cross
- ❖ Retreat Days
- ❖ CAFOD National Assemblies
- ❖ Rosary Club
- ❖ Advent and Lent Prayer Club
- ❖ Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- ❖ Reconciliation

For this year's Annual Planning and Provision, see *Prayer and Liturgy APOP*.

2.b. Planning

At St Mary's, prayer and liturgy is thoughtfully planned by both staff and pupils, depending on the type of worship taking place.

Prayer and liturgy is planned:

- ❖ with scripture as its focus
- ❖ using 'let us pray' resources where suitable
- ❖ with reference to the Church's liturgical calendar
- ❖ linked to the RE 'Religious Education Directory' Curriculum where appropriate
- ❖ to include something to see, hear, think about and do, to ensure that it is inclusive and engaging
- ❖ to promote the ethos and mission of the school
- ❖ to develop pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship with increasing independence (see Pupil Progression Document)

2.c. Delivering

Prayer and liturgy always begin and end with the Sign of the Cross. At Saint Mary's, when we light the candle, we are reminded that Christ is at the centre of our faith and our Christian community. Prayer and Liturgy is delivered with reverence and respect for the spiritual and liturgical content and, if appropriate, for the sacred spaces in which they are celebrated.

A record of prayer and liturgy is maintained through:

- ❖ A Prayer and Liturgy folder which includes evidence of planning, leading and evaluating worships
- ❖ Displays and prayer areas around the school

2.d. Evaluating

Pupils, staff and families are regularly invited to evaluate prayer and liturgy at St Mary's. Evaluations remind us that it's important to pause and reflect on our current practice, and they support us in further developing our planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy.

Pupils evaluate whole school and classed-based prayer and liturgy with increasing independence, appropriate for their age and ability. This can take the form of:

- ❖ Verbal feedback as a whole class
- ❖ Written feedback on templates

Staff regularly evaluate whole school acts of worship, which are then used to inform future planning and delivery of whole school worships. Families are invited to evaluate masses and liturgies when they attend. This can be verbally or with a written comment.

2.e. Liturgical Calendar

At St Mary's, our opportunities for prayer and liturgy reflect the liturgical seasons. Pupils follow the liturgical calendar closely and use this to inform the themes when planning their own Celebrations of the Word. Prayer and liturgy is planned to recognise relevant themes and significant events in the church calendar.

An example of these might include:

- ❖ Month of Mary: Rosary club, Crowning of Mary, Mary themed prayer spaces, Lectio Divina.
- ❖ Harvest: CAFOD liturgy, missionary discipleship work
- ❖ Lent: Lenten Prayer Club, Stations of the Cross, 'Our Father' study
- ❖ Advent: Advent Prayer Club, Advent liturgies, Travelling Crib

2.f. Mass

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers". (Acts 2:42)

We recognise and revere the most Holy Sacrament of the celebration of the Eucharist. We believe it is central to our roles as being members of the Body of Christ and the redeeming life graces and blessings it provides.

We firmly believe in the importance of celebrating the Mass by:

- ❖ Providing opportunities for school and parish masses throughout the academic year
- ❖ Celebrating Mass at the key times of the school year to highlight special occasions
- ❖ Attending and celebrating Holy Days of Obligation with the parish

2.g. Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy Team is made up of a group of children from across the school who volunteer to assist in supporting the prayer, liturgy and Catholic life of the school. The Chaplaincy team is led by our School Lay Chaplains.

The Chaplaincy Team have responsibilities within their classes, including assisting in planning, leading Celebrations of the Word and organising evaluations. They are also involved in planning and leading whole school Celebrations of the Word regularly throughout the school year, supported by our School Lay Chaplains.

3. Impact

3.a. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy takes place regularly, completed by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator alongside pupils, staff, parents, the clergy and governors. Monitoring activities include but are not limited to: observations; pupil interviews; staff questionnaires; prayer area monitoring and prayer and liturgy folder monitoring. Successes are celebrated and developmental areas are addressed as appropriate.

3.b. Policy Monitoring

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator and designated governor. It is also evaluated and reviewed by staff and governors every two years.

3.c. Responsibility

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 who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school.
- 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.

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 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 school.

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 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 head teacher 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.

3.d. Training and Formation

All new staff are 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 are identified and addressed through training and formation CPD. Additionally, there are opportunities 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.

3.d. The Right of Withdrawal

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 open brackets (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A)). The Headteacher will maintain a record of all children who withdraw from Prayer and liturgy.

Supporting Documents

- ❖ Pupil Progression Document
- ❖ St Mary's Prayers
- ❖ Prayer and Liturgy Annual Planning and Provision (APOP)