



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: Summer 2024
Review: September 2026

The Nature of Prayer and liturgy

Prayer and liturgy are central to the whole of school life in St Werburgh's & St. Columba's Catholic Primary School and enables us to celebrate God's presence in our lives, 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. Our vision is that prayer life is a natural part of our children's lexicon. They become used to talking to God and while this is part of their routine it is a meaningful experience each and every time. As a Catholic school we use Christian prayers, but we recognise, accept and support other faiths within our community, acknowledging the value of all forms of prayer and spirituality.

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there must be a daily 'act of worship' offered 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.) Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Prayer, liturgical prayer 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. 4 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. Responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher. Parents have a right to withdraw their child from 'Collective Worship'. 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 within the RE (Religious Education) curriculum.

The Place of Prayer and liturgy in the Life of our School

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St Werburgh's and St. Columba's Catholic Primary School takes into account the religious and educational 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 aim to help each child recognise their own personal relationship with God and build on this daily. We understand that children need to be taught how to contemplate the wonder of God and His creation. They also need to be inspired to action, understanding their collective responsibility to look after God's creation which includes not just the physical world around them but each other and the school family and community as a whole. In ensuring they recognise this responsibility, we are teaching them to be forward-thinking global citizens who care for all elements of humanity and where possible take actions against injustices of any kind, whether locally in school or on a wider global scale.

Principles

All acts of prayer in St Werburgh's and St Columba's Catholic Primary School will aim to:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Give everyone opportunities for personal reflection;

- Be a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead prayer times;
- Give children positive liturgical experience, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church. Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Liturgical Prayer

Liturgical prayer is the term used to describe communal prayer within our school which follows liturgical patterns. Our programme of liturgical prayer at St Werburgh's and St. Columba's aims to embed daily patterns of prayer within school life and to reflect the rhythm of prayer life within the Church. It is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, RE curriculum, feast days and other significant dates. A variety of prayer styles are used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

Liturgical prayer is planned:

- To develop in pupils the skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
- To be responsive and meaningful with emphasis on active participation.
- To engage children by using a range of different liturgical styles and approaches
- With flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.
- To have scripture at its heart. The format for liturgical prayer within our school will be:
- Gather – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc).
- Listen – every liturgy will centre on at least one text from the Bible. The Word of God will be proclaimed from a Bible or lection.
- Respond – the response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (dance, music, drama, art poetry, etc). We place our needs before God (prayers of intercession).
- Going Forth/Mission – Giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives, this often in the form of a challenge to complete such as remembering to be thankful or to look for God in others etc. The parish community and parents, families and friends are invited to participate in some celebrations, and each week one class attends the regular parish mass. The regular programme of prayer and liturgy is outlined below:

Whole School Liturgy

These liturgies are held every Monday morning. They are based on the Gospel of the week, and it is the intention that, through them, the children will develop their faith and it becomes a living part of their lives. These liturgies are usually led by a member on the Senior Leadership Team.

Daily Prayer in Classes

Each class has its own focal point for prayer within the classroom. Prayers are said regularly throughout the day, including:

- Morning prayer
- Grace before meals
- Prayers at the end of the day. (This usually takes the form of the school prayer on days without a whole school gathering.)

Morning prayers and prayers before lunch take on a unique character for each class and help keep our prayer life rich and varied.

Class Liturgy

This takes place weekly. The format is similar across all Key Stages. However, as children move through the school their involvement in the planning and delivery of these sessions becomes greater. In Reception and Year 1 the sessions are very much teacher led, in Year 2 they are teacher led but children offer their own prayers and will be given the opportunity to volunteer to read the Gospel and more formal prayers. By Key Stage 2, children will progress until they can lead these gatherings.

Children can take resources

Celebration of the Eucharist

We believe that the Mass is the ultimate expression of our existence as a faith community, and it therefore takes a central part in school life. Whole school masses are held in the school hall:

- Start of school year
- Harvest
- Advent
- St. Werburgh's feast day
- Lent
- St. Columba's feast day
- Holy Communion Thanksgiving
- End of year/Year 6 leavers

Each mass is prepared by 2 classes- one from KS2 (Key Stage 2) and one from KS1/EYFS. Members of the school community are always welcome to attend. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to the '*Directory for Masses with Children*' as a basis for our practice.

In KS2, each class will celebrate a class mass to which parents and families are invited. As with class liturgy, the level of planning and involvement in the mass grows with each year group going up through the school.

In addition, In the autumn term KS2 attend a mass at St. Werburgh's Church and in the summer term, KS1 (Key Stage 1) attend a mass at St. Columba's Church.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

In Key Stage 1, children have time in class to reflect and say sorry to God. In Key Stage 2, there is a Reconciliation Service which is led by one of the parish priests and the children read etc.

Advent and Lent

During Advent and Lent, prayer bags are used to share our faith with our families. These contain an electronic tealight and a series of reflections and are intended to help children and their families to prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas during Advent, and to reflect on His Passion and Resurrection during Lent.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At least once a year the school's provision of prayer and liturgy will be formally evaluated by the Prayer and Liturgy Lead and Head to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring appropriate skills and abilities in organising and leading prayer and liturgy. The Governor with responsibility for Catholic Life and Ethos will monitor the impact of the school's provision for prayer and liturgy on a regular basis throughout the year. Any findings from these evaluations will be shared with the RE Co-ordinator and the Head Teacher, and with the Full Governing Body.

Resources

Each class has its own collection of liturgical resources. A main supply is maintained by the RE and Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinators and is always available. Both Co-ordinators and other members of the Senior Leadership Team are available to support staff in ensuring that liturgy is varied and engaging, and appropriate CPD (Continued Professional Development) opportunities are made available to all.

All RE resources are stored on the server or designated RE cupboards. Termly Prayer and Liturgy resources will be available in the staff PPA room.

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

Children are encouraged to use the 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.

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.

Appendix

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.