



St George's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy



We are learning and growing as God's family.

We will always do our best to love and respect each other as we prepare for our future.

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

This prayer and liturgy policy has been approved and adopted by the governing body in June 2024 and will be reviewed in June 2027.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission Statement "We are learning and growing as God's family" captures perfectly our vision of a Christ-centred community which recognises that we are all God's children 'made in the image and likeness of God'. The key word of "respect" in our Mission Statement is a focus for children during their time at our school. At St George's we aim to develop children's spiritual 'thirst' and accompany them on their journey of faith in a rich, positive learning environment with Jesus' teachings and values at the core of our curriculum.

Context:

'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.)

Aims:

We aim to give our pupils a rich and wide experience of Catholic prayer and worship which is age appropriate and actively engaging for pupils.

For our children to become increasingly independent in leading and responding to collective worship.

To celebrate the Gospel messages of justice and peace.

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.

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(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.

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.

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.

Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Prayer and Worship

Children are taught and encouraged to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development. They are taught traditional prayers and are encouraged to use their own words for prayer. During liturgies and lessons there are times set aside to be still, to reflect in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying:

- Quiet reflection / meditation
- Praying together
- Writing own prayers
- Prayers through music and singing
- Learning traditional Christian / Catholic prayers

Staff are encouraged to pray with children, and to be an example for them. Through prayer, we endeavour to develop our relationship with God.

All classes have a prayer focus area. This area changes with the liturgical calendar and is prepared to reflect the appropriate liturgical colour. The pattern of prayer and class prayers are established throughout the school and each teacher uses prayers appropriate to age and ability of the class. Candles, pictures and artefacts are also used as a focus for prayer.

All families receive a St. George's Prayer Booklet so that children can learn prayers and share in prayer with their parents.

Children take part in whole school liturgies where children and staff join together to pray. Children are encouraged to pray their own prayers. Classes will have daily / weekly acts of prayer and worship including class led and pupil-led liturgy.

All liturgies are relevant to the Liturgical Cycle, foster a sense of community and shared values and relate to the children's experience and concerns. Focal points and music create an atmosphere conducive to worship.

Celebration of The Word

Collective worship in our school community provides opportunities to:

- Deepen our relationship with God
- Grow in spiritual, moral and liturgical understanding
- Grow in understanding of our living faith tradition; develop a sense of wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ
- Reflect upon our own individual faith journeys and develop the skills of prayer

Collective worship is celebrated in a variety of ways including:

- Whole school worship
- Class worship
- Worship through hymns and learning of prayers and liturgy of the Mass
- Class Mass or class liturgy
- Whole school Masses during the year, including special feast days and holy days of obligation during term time

The prayer room is regularly used as a special place for praying the rosary, and older pupils pray with the younger pupils at lunchtimes. The prayer garden is used for reflection and Collective Acts of Worship.

Child-Led Collective Worship

Pupils are encouraged to prepare and lead collective acts of worship in their classrooms and for whole school gatherings and assemblies as appropriate. The format for Child-Led Collective Worship is:

1. Gather – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)
2. The Word – every liturgy will focus on at least one piece of scripture from the Bible. The Word of God will be proclaimed from the Bible.

3. Response – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer.
4. Mission – Giving the children something to hold on to and go forth from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Whole school Masses

Mass is attended by the whole school throughout the school year, on special feast days, and on Holy Days of Obligation. In addition, year 2 – 6 attend Parish morning Mass on a rota each term.

School Masses are always planned jointly between members of school staff and our Parish Priest as per the 'Directory for Masses with Children' and Gospel of the day.

During the Mass pupils enter the Church or school hall in a quiet and reflective manner. Music provides a signal that the gathering part of the Mass has begun and students are encouraged to behave in a respectful manner. Teachers remind pupils that the Eucharist should be received in a reverent way and how to cross arms if they are receiving a blessing.

Sacraments

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide children and their families with regular opportunities to experience the Sacraments as part of school life, in coordination with our local parishes. During Lent, all students whose faith development has reached the appropriate stage are invited to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation, again facilitated by the priests of our Parish and if required, we invite priests from neighbouring Parishes to assist.

Prayer takes place at the start and end of the day, as well as before and after lunch. Pupils learn, and experience, all forms of prayer so that they can adore, give praise and thanks, express sorrow to God on their own behalf and on behalf of others, as well as offer prayers of petition and intercession. Each morning every class "Prays the Register" where children are invited to pray for their own intention and they in turn invite others to pray for their special intention.

The role of the teacher

We believe that leading pupils in prayer is a vital and essential part of Catholic education. It is expected that teachers will:

- Provide opportunities for pupils to pray
- Provide pupils with meaningful prayer experiences
- Assist pupils to develop the language of prayer
- Teach pupils the traditional prayers of the Church
- Help pupils to develop habits and patterns of prayer

The Chaplaincy Team

Monsignor Jeremy Fairhead is the school chaplain. Our pupil chaplains' team are year 6 children, who promote the Catholic Ethos of our school. They are a dedicated team, lead by the RE leader who have a vital role in enhancing the Religious and Spiritual Life of our school. Their roles include delivering class Prayer and Worship, leading prayers and reflections in liturgies and Liturgical events and supporting charities and fundraising events.

The pupil chaplain team are excellent role models for the younger pupils in our school and we are very proud of them. The process of becoming a Pupil Chaplain involves making an application and preparing for an interview with the RE Leader and Assistant Priest.

Parental Involvement

- Parents are invited to Masses in Church and to all class assemblies in school.
- The school provides a special celebration for Year 3 following their First Holy Communion.
- Parents are invited to our Nativity plays, Carol concerts, Passion play, Christmas Service, special events in each individual class and community events.

Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding its identity 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 school environment. 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.

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.

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.

Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.