

'St Mary's Catholic Infant and Junior Academies are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.'



ST MARY'S

CATHOLIC INFANT AND JUNIOR ACADEMIES

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Designation	Name	Date Approved	Date of Renewal
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Samantha Birchall	Sept 2025	Sept 2026
Chair of Governors	Mrs Vanessa Wells	Sept 2025	Sept 2026

Mission Statement

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13

"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 as the Centre*, Catholic Truth Society, 23.)

What Prayer and liturgy is

At St Mary's Catholic Infant and Junior Academies we believe that God is present and active in all authentic human experience. We already have a graced life and worship is naming and celebrating this reality in the Christian tradition. God is reached through the world and adored within it. Creating a sacred space for worship is to create a space where the unity of God and creation is reverently symbolised and celebrated. Worship and the words and rituals we use should not sever us from the ordinary circumstances of our lives but rather unite us more closely to them.

- Worship remembers and celebrates the marvelous things God works in our lives. It celebrates God's presence in our lives. Worship should not feel like an interruption from a different world. It is a spontaneous response to life.
- Prayer and liturgy is concerned with 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.
- Worship is at the very heart of our school and reflects something special or separate from ordinary school activities.

All prayer and liturgical practice within the school is carried out in full communion with the Catholic Church and in accordance with the guidance, norms, and expectations of the Diocese. We recognise the Bishop as the chief pastor and liturgist of the Diocese, and we commit to ensuring that our provision reflects diocesan directives, supports the wider mission of Catholic education, and upholds the distinctive Catholic character of our school.

Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others may form part of an act of worship.

All liturgies involve the praise, thanksgiving and adoration of God and are, therefore, acts of worship. However, not all worship will be liturgy as it may or may not include symbol and action.

The Aims of Prayer and liturgy

We believe that Prayer and liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs
- To reflect on personal issues
- To respond to and celebrate life.
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit.
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles of Prayer and liturgy

All Acts of Prayer and liturgy in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God.
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
- Develop in pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead Prayer and liturgy rather than always participating or contributing in a taken way
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church. To do this, celebrations will:
 - Be short and appropriately paced, one minute for each year of child's age as a guideline, i.e. KS1 5-6 minutes, KS2 7-10 minutes.
 - Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Prayer and liturgy at St Mary's:

At St Mary's, there are daily opportunities for Prayer and liturgy in different forms.

Time and space are set aside to:

- wonder at
- contemplate
- mark as special.
- come to terms with
- give worth to the mystery of life – faith they have explored.
- grow in awareness of and actively respond to the spiritual dimension of life.
- develop the capacities and skills to participate in and plan worship and celebrations.

Each day opportunities are taken for prayer in all classes. This will include the use of formal and informal prayer. The Prayer and liturgy at St Mary's follow the liturgical year. The scripture used reflects that used during Mass on the previous Sunday.

Staff will plan worship based on the scripture and targeted at an appropriate level for the age of the children. Children begin to lead prayer in class and are given the necessary support to help plan for their class.

There is an opportunity for worship based on current events or relevant needs of the class.

Within Infant and Junior assemblies, time is dedicated to Prayer and liturgy in the form of prayer, song, and reflection. This allows children to engage in worship at an age-appropriate level and to celebrate with their peers.

The whole school community gathers weekly to worship and to celebrate the major festivals of Harvest, Christmas, and Holy Week. Members of the wider community are regularly invited to join us in worship and celebration.

There are regular opportunities for parents and families to join in worship. This takes place in 'stay and pray' sessions which occur throughout the year.

Refer to the Archdiocese Prayer and liturgy 'Guidance for schools', the Prayer and Liturgy Directory 'To Love You More Dearly', and 'Come and See' pages 28 – 32 for further guidance.

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.

Senior Leadership

The executive headteacher and heads of school, as the spiritual leaders of the academies as a Catholic community, 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
- 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 senior leadership 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.

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.

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.