

St William of York Catholic **Primary School**



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Head Teacher

Date: 19th November 2025

Review date: November 2026

Policy for Prayer and Liturgy

“Together Everyone Achieves More”.

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.)

Our Aims

We work towards developing a celebration which includes;

- Enabling and encouraging a sense of belonging to a community with a common ethos and shared values
- Opportunities for individual reflection and silent prayer
- Exploring personal beliefs and worshipping God
- Responding to and celebrating life by taking time out to ‘wonder’
- Contemplating something of the mystery of God
- Enriching the religious experience of all members of the school community
- Promoting the values and ethos of the school and reinforcing positive attitudes
- Reflecting on spiritual and moral issues
- Building a firm foundation for prayer, presented in a Gather, Listen, Respond and Go Forth format.

Statement of requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils (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).

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)). 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

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

(c) 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 feedback 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 Liturgy in St. William of York is given high priority with all members of the school community and all are encouraged to participate actively. Prayer and Liturgy, whilst respecting the diversity of belief and commitment, reflects the tradition of the Church and is Christian in character. Prayer is addressed to the Father, through the Son, in the Power of the Spirit.

The act of prayer and Liturgy is intended to be appropriate for all pupils attending St. William of York in terms of content to the age, ability and background of the pupils involved. The school will make every effort to provide the resources and accommodation that are appropriate in its content, form, organisation, presentation and leadership. The timing of this is specific to each class and age group. Generally it is recommended that children spend at least one minute for each year of their life engaging in a form of collective worship each day.

Normally the collective act of prayer and liturgy will take place on the school premises but there will be occasions when the school community will gather in church for special celebrations. These specific occasions will be undertaken with the approval of the governing body.

All teachers in the school have the responsibility of planning and leading high quality prayer and liturgy sessions which occur in a variety of ways- whole school, key stage and class celebration of the word. They encourage child participation and active response through involvement, listening to, and joining in the celebration offered.

Foundation Stage

Celebration of the Word takes place daily within the classroom and consists of saying hello to everybody including God, prayers, songs and quiet reflection as well as more formal acts of Worship.

Key Stage One and Two

KS1 and KS2 get one whole school and one key stage Celebration of the Word in the hall per week. This is planned and led by the Headteacher and local chaplain. On other days, it takes place in individual classrooms at appropriate and meaningful points of the day (see class timetables).

Through participating and observing good quality prayer, staff are developing skills in the children that enable them to prepare, organise and lead their own celebrations. All children are encouraged to join in with and help to plan for and deliver prayer and liturgy at a level appropriate to their age and ability.

From year one to six, there are two Worship Leaders in each class. These children attend a Worship club led by the RE Coordinator and plan, lead and evaluate prayer for the following week. They resource and deliver the worship themselves.

As a whole school, we aim to celebrate Mass once per term across the academic year. Typically, these occasions will be to celebrate Feasts, Holy Days of Obligation and the liturgical seasons of the Church. Opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation are also offered (where appropriate) at least once a year. Special Liturgies are provided for school celebrations such as celebrating the Sacrament of First Holy Communion for our communicants in Year Four, Five and Six.

Links to Curriculum Areas

At St. William of York, we use the *To Know You More Clearly* and *Come and See* Religious Education Programmes and *Journey in Love* for RSE. Embedded into these programmes are opportunities for collective prayer and reflection. Prayer and liturgy may also be used to promote equality and diversity through promoting Jesus' teaching to 'Love one another, as I have loved you.' Staff recognise the distinctive nature of prayer and liturgy, however, where appropriate links are made with other curriculum areas.

Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to our understanding of St William of York as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout our 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.

Record of Prayer and Liturgy

Teachers at St. William of York follow a Celebration of the Word planner with the theme for the week planned for on a weekly basis by one member of staff. This is done on a rotational basis whereby themes are delivered through prayer, stories, songs, silent reflection, dialogue, debates and interviews, poems, artefacts, ritual, movement, sayings, sharing food and drama. Leaders and children may share individual experiences to deepen understanding of the week's theme.

The purpose of this is:

- To ensure that a variety of themes are explored throughout the year
- To avoid repetition
- To assist in monitoring of Collective Worship
- To record evidence of Collective Worship

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.

Safeguarding Procedures

The school has procedures to deal with any sensitive issues that may arise during times of collective worship or children throughout to be vulnerable. Staff will pass on any concerns of this nature to the designated child protection officer in school.

Review

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