

Prayer and Liturgy Policy



ST CLARE

Catholic Multi Academy Trust



St Thomas of Canterbury School

Mission Statement: To nurture curiosity for every child, every day, within a community acting as a beacon of the Catholic faith.

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Next Review Date: December 2026

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1. 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.)

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school 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.

Prayer, worship and liturgy are at the heart of our Catholic school and are integral to the ethos, mission and distinctiveness of our Catholic school community.

We believe that prayer and worship 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.
- Prayer and worship will be an experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Themes for prayer and liturgy are organised according to:

- The Liturgical Year
- Celebrations of special events in the life of the school
- Events locally, nationally and internationally, where appropriate

2. 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; 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.

3. 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 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.

(d) Teachers

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 of prayer

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

We believe that prayer and worship 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 respond to and celebrate life
- To develop a language of prayer
- To experience a sense of belonging to a community
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To learn prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with', and 'to give worth to'.

Prayer is central to the school day and communal prayer marks key points of the day. Each day begins with our morning prayer, which is said together in classrooms in EYFS and KS1, and together as pupils line up in KS2. Lunchtime prayers are said or sung in classes at the end of morning learning to thank God for the food that we will receive. At the end of lunchtime, Key Stages pray together one of the common prayers used in school. Our day ends with our end of day prayer, thanking God for His love throughout the day.

Children also take part in an act of collective worship (prayer and liturgy) each day. Monday morning assembly invites children to reflect on Sunday's Gospel reading, and Wednesday afternoon is hymn practice, with music chosen to reflect the liturgical season. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, Celebration of the Word takes place in classrooms, with children prepared and invited to lead greater amounts of this as they progress through school, as outlined in the Celebration of the Word progression map.

Mass is celebrated each half term at Our Lady of Beauchief and St Thomas of Canterbury Church. These include Masses for special parts of the school year, and to mark Holy Days of Obligation. School Family Masses also take place each half term, during 9.15am Mass on a Sunday.

In addition, children are offered the chance for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and to take part in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Stations of the Cross during Lent.

Other special times are marked throughout the year; for example, through Advent assemblies, class assemblies and the annual Marian procession and school pilgrimage, and further details are available on the school's Annual Plan of Provision.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

Child-led prayer and liturgy will be evaluated as a class at least once per week, using the self-peer-self approach:

1. Self – One thing we did well, and one thing we would change.
2. Peer – One thing the leaders did well, and one thing the leaders could change.
3. Self – One thing we did well, and one thing we would change.

8. Parental Involvement

Parents are invited to our class assemblies, productions and celebrations. They are invited to all masses. We encourage them to attend as we believe that this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a demonstration of home and school working together to support the children. Parents are encouraged to join in with all prayers and hymns during assemblies to lead by example in their involvement.

Appendix: What Does Celebration of the Word Look Like at St Thomas of Canterbury?

We use a four-stage model for Celebration of the Word, taking the mass as a perfect example of this.

1. Gather – We welcome everyone and prepare ourselves to get closer to God.
2. Word – We experience a piece of scripture using methods such as drama, art, music, movement, silence, story, song and poetry to bring it to life.
3. Response – We consider what we have seen and heard and how it relates to us.
4. Mission – We rejoice and go forth to live out the Gospel of the Lord in our lives.

All classrooms will have:

- Let us Pray resources with examples of Gather, Response and Mission
- Interactive resources, such as stones, shells, plants and music
- Resources related to the time of Liturgical year (Rosary beads in October, wreath during Advent etc.)
- Children's Bible and/or Good News Bible

Year Group	Expectations – teacher	Expectations – children
FS1	Four-stage model of Celebration of the Word introduced. Four-stage model explicitly modelled and explained in all teacher-led sessions. Teacher to choose scripture using the Liturgical planner as a guide and openbible.info/topics to help select scripture with a particular theme.	Children supported to prepare area. Children supported to explain the purpose behind gathering together, lighting a candle, displaying the crucifix, and making the sign of the cross. All children to have the opportunity to lead a part of the Celebration of the Word over the year. All children to evaluate Celebration of the Word and be able to say what they enjoyed and found helpful, and how to improve. Children to be able to: ● recognise religious stories ● recognise religious signs and symbols used in worship ● describe some religious symbols and the steps involved in religious actions and worship
FS2	Four-stage model explicitly modelled and explained in all teacher-led sessions. Teacher to choose scripture using the Liturgical planner as a guide and openbible.info/topics to help select scripture with a particular theme.	Children supported to prepare area. Children supported to explain the purpose behind gathering together, lighting a candle, displaying the crucifix, and making the sign of the cross. All children to have the opportunity to lead a part of the Celebration of the Word over the year. All children to evaluate Celebration of the Word and be able to say what they enjoyed and found helpful, and how to improve. Children to be able to: ● recognise religious stories ● recognise religious signs and symbols used in worship ● describe some religious symbols and the steps involved in religious actions and worship
Y1	Four-stage model explicitly modelled and explained in	Children supported to prepare area.

	teacher-led session at least three times a week. Teacher to guide children to use the Let Us Pray resources to plan Celebrations of the Word. Teacher to choose scripture for all Celebrations of the Word using the Liturgical planner as a guide and openbible.info/topics to help select scripture with a particular theme. Teacher to guide children to choose religious stories that they know.	Children supported to explain the purpose behind gathering together, lighting a candle, displaying the crucifix, and making the sign of the cross. All children to have the opportunity to lead a part of the Celebration of the Word over the year. All children to contribute to planning a Celebration of the Word, including choosing and reading a religious story. All children to evaluate Celebration of the Word and be able to say what they enjoyed and found helpful, and how to improve. Children to be able to: ● recognise religious stories ● recognise religious signs and symbols used in worship ● describe some religious symbols and the steps involved in religious actions and worship ● recognise that people act in a particular way because of their beliefs ● describe some religious beliefs
Y2	Four-stage model explicitly modelled and explained in teacher-led session at least two times a week. Teacher to guide children to use the Let Us Pray resources to plan Celebrations of the Word. Teacher to choose scripture for most Celebrations of the Word using the Liturgical planner as a guide and openbible.info/topics to help select scripture with a particular theme. Teacher to guide children to choose religious stories that they know for Celebration of the Word and consider what the story means to them.	Children supported to prepare area. Children supported to explain the purpose behind gathering together, lighting a candle, displaying the crucifix, and making the sign of the cross. All children to contribute to planning a Celebration of the Word, including choosing and reading a religious story. Children generate their own way of gathering to begin the liturgy. All children to have the opportunity to lead a full Celebration of the Word over the year, planned and delivered with support and guidance from an adult. All children to evaluate Celebration of the Word and be able to say what they enjoyed and found helpful, and how to improve. Children to be able to: ● recognise religious stories ● recognise religious signs and symbols used in worship ● describe some religious symbols and the steps involved in religious actions and worship ● recognise that people act in a particular way because of their beliefs ● describe some religious beliefs
Y3	Four-stage model explicitly modelled and explained in teacher-led session at least once a week. Teacher to guide children to choose religious stories that they know for Celebration of the Word and consider what the story means to them.	All children to have the opportunity to lead a full Celebration of the Word over the year, planned with support from an adult and delivered with limited support from an adult. Children evaluate all child-led Celebrations of the Word using the self-peer-self approach. Children to be able to: ● describe, with increasing detail and accuracy those actions of believers which arise as a consequence of their beliefs ● describe, with increasing detail and accuracy, religious symbols and the steps involved in religious actions and worship

		● make links between beliefs and life, giving reasons for actions and choices
Y4	Four-stage model explicitly modelled and explained in teacher-led session at least once a half-term. Teacher to guide children to choose a theme for their Celebration of the Word and a religious story that fits that theme.	All children to have the opportunity to lead a full Celebration of the Word over the year, planned with some support from an adult and delivered independently. Children evaluate all child-led Celebrations of the Word using the self-peer-self approach. Children to be able to: ● describe, with increasing detail and accuracy those actions of believers which arise as a consequence of their beliefs ● describe, with increasing detail and accuracy, religious symbols and the steps involved in religious actions and worship ● make links between beliefs and life, giving reasons for actions and choices
Y5	Four-stage model explicitly modelled and explained in teacher-led session at least once a half-term. Teacher to guide children to choose a theme for their Celebration of the Word and a religious story that fits that theme.	All children to have the opportunity to lead a full Celebration of the Word over the year, planned with limited support from an adult and delivered independently. Children evaluate all child-led Celebrations of the Word using the self-peer-self approach. Children to be able to: ● show knowledge and understanding of a range of scripture passages that corresponds to the scripture source used ● show understanding by making links between beliefs and life ● use religious vocabulary widely, accurately and appropriately
Y6	Four-stage model explicitly modelled and explained in teacher-led session at least once a term.	All children to have the opportunity to plan and lead a full Celebration of the Word independently. Children evaluate all child-led Celebrations of the Word using the self-peer-self approach. Children to be able to: ● show knowledge and understanding of a range of scripture passages that corresponds to the scripture source used ● show understanding by making links between beliefs and life ● use religious vocabulary widely, accurately and appropriately