

ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



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PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

Ownership: Curriculum Committee

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Pupils in St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School are happy, confident and very proud of their school. They clearly understand their mission statement, 'Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him.' They can quote scripture to give examples of how they do their best to follow Jesus every day. Pupils explain that if they ever feel worried about something they are confident that adults will help them in a discreet and caring way. They are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the more vulnerable members of society and can reference Catholic social teaching when discussing their work with the local foodbank.

Catholic Schools Inspectorate October 2024

Pupils enjoy school. They respond well to the high expectations of staff. Pupils strive to do their best and achieve well. Pupils are extremely kind and caring. They frequently give up their free time to help each other. Lessons are free from disruption and lunchtimes are a buzz of happy and harmonious play.

Ofsted May 2024

At St Margaret Clitherow School we are committed to Safeguarding Children

Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him

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.)

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 (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).

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.

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.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Prayer is an integral part of the day at St. Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School and is not separated from the rest of school life; therefore pupils will share in this important aspect of our daily experience.

‘For prayer, worship and liturgy to be real educational experiences and for them to contribute successfully to the development of faith in each individual in the community, participation in the preparation and the action of these events is of prime importance.’
(Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School)

With this in mind, children are involved at every opportunity—in key ministries such as reading and singing and in the preparation of the worship space. We believe that children have a natural aptitude and openness to prayer. Are actively encouraged to ‘take the lead in prayer’

The Daily Worship Pattern

Morning, lunchtime and end of day prayers punctuate the day.

Some possible prayers are available in Appendix1; however the aim is to ensure a mixture of the traditional with the modern and for variety so that prayers are not said by rote, but prayed from the heart.

The pattern for these is fluid, responding to children’s needs and the age and stage of the children.

Whole School Assembly

Whole school assembly takes place every Thursday afternoon. It is usually led by the Headteacher or in her absence by an Assistant Headteacher. It usually reflects the readings of the forthcoming weekend where appropriate and helps to strengthen the links between the school, Sunday Mass and the Gospel theme for the week. Pupils participate by responding to the Gospel, making links to our School Values, reflecting on their weekly mission, joining in prayers and singing appropriate hymns. There is always a prayer focus in front of the Altar and a display on the big screen to capture and hold attention. The pupils make a commitment to living out the Gospel message in the classroom, on the playground and at home.

Key Stage Assembly

Key Stage assembly takes place on alternate Mondays. It is led by the class teachers and is an opportunity to have a greater level of interaction with the pupils. A timetable with the themes for each week is set at the start of the year. Themes can include our School Values, British Values, Catholic Social Teaching or specific events taking place.

Pupil Planned & Led Worship

In class, the pupils will lead their own worship based on the Gospel theme for that week. The worship can include quite private prayer, meditation or singing.

Special Times in the Year

As a school we recognize that there are special times within our Catholic tradition that we focus on specific prayers. During May and October, Our Lady and the Rosary are a special focus. The liturgical year is marked with Masses on Holydays of obligation wherever possible. Other key points in the liturgical year are marked through special liturgical celebrations and prayer services. The opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation takes place during Advent and Lent.

Spontaneous Prayer

In addition to the morning, lunch and evening prayers, we also value spontaneous prayer. Each classroom has a special prayer space that reflects the current topic and the liturgical season. The prayer areas are intended to support pupils in their communication with God and allow them to initiate their own prayers whilst providing a thought provoking and attractive focus.

Traditional Prayers of the Church

Knowing prayers by heart is a gift for life so staff also plan opportunities for pupils to learn formal prayers. These are introduced early in a child's school journey so that they gradually become familiar with their words and meaning. These prayers are introduced at key points and are integral to the planned RE curriculum.

Reflection Opportunities

We have created a prayer garden and a Mary Garden which are an ideal area for reflection. The prayer garden is an ideal setting for RE lessons and provides a tranquil area for meditation. It can be used for group or class acts of collective worship. Similarly, special areas within school have been developed to assist and focus prayer.

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.

8. Review

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

Appendix 1

Examples of school prayers which may be used. These are not exclusive and are only suggestions. Variety is important.

School Prayer

Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world.
Jesus is our guide: let us follow Him.

Morning Prayer

Oh my God you love me
You're with me night and day.
I want to love You always,
In all I do and say.
I'll try to please You Father,
Bless me through the day.

Grace before lunch differs for each class according to teacher preference and is said in the classroom at the end of the morning session

Evening Prayer (at hometime)

God our Father
We come to say,
Thank You for Your love today.
Thank You for my family,
And all the friends You give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night,
And in the morning send Your light.