

St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

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| Date Agreed: | December 2023 | Review Date: | As required |
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| Headteacher: | Mrs E Poulteney | Chair of Local Governing Body: | Ms H Taylor |
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SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT



**At St Thomas' we are learning to follow Jesus,
showing respect and consideration for ourselves
and others.**

**We all have the opportunity to learn and work to
the best of our ability in a safe and loving
environment.**

School Aims

At St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, we aim to create and sustain a stimulating Christ centred environment, where everybody involved, children, staff and parents, may grow in their faith and their love of God, developing respect for themselves and an awareness of the needs and gifts of others.

We aim to create an environment where children will be happy, independent and will be able to achieve their full potential, spiritually, academically, morally, emotionally, socially and physically.

We aim to provide children with the experiences, knowledge and skills necessary:

- To deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- To read fluently and accurately.
- To write clearly, fluently and accurately for a variety of purposes.
- To communicate clearly and confidently in speech.
- To listen attentively to others.
- To develop mathematical concepts and skills and apply these to real life situations.
- To develop scientific knowledge and skills.
- To develop the ability to plan and organise their own learning using a range of resources and skills.
- To become observant and curious of the world around them and develop a respect for their environment.
- To develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence to express their thoughts and feelings creatively.
- To develop agility and physical coordination and to encourage team skills.
- To learn to recognise, respect and value the cultural, racial and sexual differences in our society.
- To learn to work and play harmoniously and tolerantly with others.
- To develop self-discipline, self-reliance and self-esteem.
- To develop an understanding of the need for personal safety.
- To stay safe, be healthy, achieve and enjoy, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well being

We aim to celebrate and share successes and achievements, both individually and collectively.

The school undertakes to work to complement the home and church environment by setting before the children the ideal of Christian life.

1. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

Our school is proud to be part of the Roman Catholic community in the Parish of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Grays. Our school has a distinctive character, because everything we do is based on the values of the Gospels. The purpose of our community is to recognise the worth and dignity of all and to fully develop the talents of each person.

At St Thomas' we believe that prayer and liturgy in our school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. We believe that at the heart of our faith is the belief in a God who communicates with people, calling every human person into a loving relationship. As with every relationship, our relationship with God can only grow through communication. Prayer is the way in which we engage in communication with God. '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.)

At St Thomas' 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 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'.

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) Teacher

At St Thomas' 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 of prayer.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Prayer 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.

Provision of celebrations of the word and Liturgy

- Daily Prayers are said at the start/ end of the day and grace before lunch.
- Weekly Hymn Practices for KS1/LKS2/ UKS2
- Weekly Assemblies KS1/KS2 linked to the Sunday Gospel. This assembly also incorporates an achievement assembly; an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. The head teacher, along with all members of the teaching staff together with the children are responsible for planning and delivering assemblies and other forms of celebrations of the word.
- Masses (Year 2 – 6) are held at the beginning and end of term and on Holy Days. All year groups, the Faith Council, staff and governors take a leading role. In addition to this, there are year group Masses held at the church.
- Class and Teacher led celebrations of the word are held on a weekly rota basis. We take the themes from the traditions of the Christian faith, the liturgical season and the Church's mission. We reflect on the festivals and events of the Christian calendar.
- All the children in EYFS are involved in a Nativity performance, in KS1 a Nativity play, in UKS2 children perform a Carol Service and LKS2 children present the Easter Story.
- Liturgy - Sacraments. During Advent and Lent there are Reconciliation services for KS2 children.

- Children in KS1 will lead an Advent service at the church and in EYFS a service will take place in the summer term.

We invite parents to class-led celebrations of the word and all liturgy. We encourage them to attend, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way our school and home work in partnership together to support the achievements of all pupils.

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.