St. Joseph's
Catholic Primary School

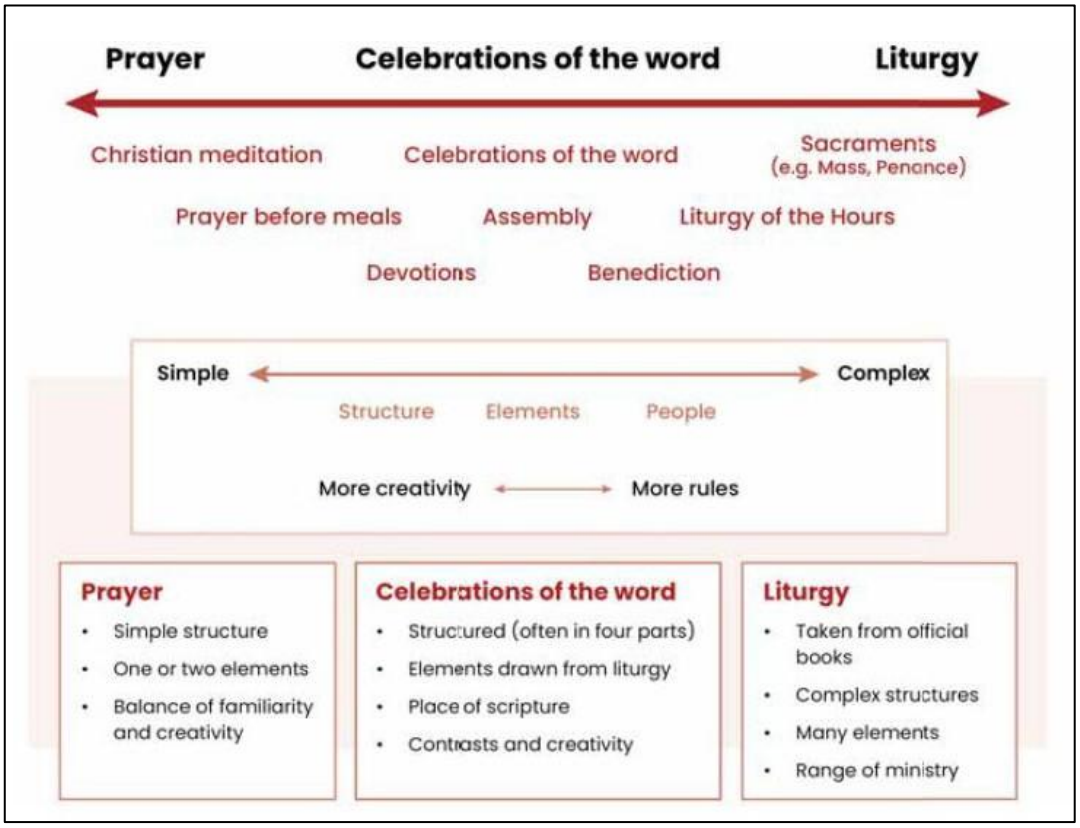
Prayer & Liturgy Policy

September 2026

Review date: September 2027

Introduction : Understanding Prayer and Liturgy (from the Prayer and Liturgy Directory)
In any school there will be a range of prayer and liturgy: classroom prayer, meditation, assemblies, devotions, special services for times in the school year, celebrations of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each form of prayer and liturgy will have its own character dependent on the circumstances, size and age of the group, the place of celebration and its content.

Definition of Terms
Prayer, Liturgical Prayer, and Liturgy form a continuum with silent meditation at one end and a celebration of Mass on a Solemnity of the Church (e.g., Ascension of the Lord) at the other. Of course, there are areas of overlap between the categories.



In Catholic terminology 'worship' is not generally used to name and describe a distinct type of prayer or event. Worship is about living our lives in a way that recognises that everything we have is a gift from God and that everything we do gives glory to God. That, of course, does include prayer but the scope is broader. With that understanding of worship it will be seen that the purpose of education in a Catholic school is to know and love Christ and to open the vision and imagination of all pupils to the wonder of living in God's world, and the responsibilities that follow from this.

Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 there is a statutory duty to inspect and report on denominal education (that is religious education) and collective worship in schools designated as having a religious character. For this reason, the term 'Collective Worship' has been kept as the headline judgement by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate but throughout the framework it is referred to as prayer and liturgy. This model policy addresses the shift in vocabulary and is an interim response to the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory.

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement

St. Joseph's family
Learn together
With love and faith in Jesus,
To become the people
God calls us to be.

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in words and actions, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.
'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.'[1]

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily 'act of worship' offered for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single 'act of worship' for all pupils, or separate 'acts of worship' in school groups. Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Prayer, liturgical prayer and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between will always be made clear.

The 'act of worship' is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. Responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from 'Collective Worship'. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Prayer and liturgy 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.

[1] Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

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.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development

- To pray using 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

All acts of prayer in St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead prayer times;
- 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.[2] Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

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 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.

Planning, content and celebration

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, RE Curriculum, feast days and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day.

Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion. An overview of prayer and liturgy across the week/term/year can be seen in Appendix 2.

Leading Prayer and Liturgy

As faith leaders of the school, the Headteacher and Deputy Head will plan and lead prayer and liturgy for whole school assemblies and services. The class teacher will lead class prayer and liturgy. Children are taught to plan and lead prayer times according to their age.

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.

The learning environment
'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment' [3] Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference RE topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

The Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy
The Headteacher, Katie Cunliffe, leads Prayer and Liturgy at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, in collaboration with the Deputy Head/RE Coordinator, Am
A job description is included in Appendix 1.

Policy Monitoring and Review
This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

[3] Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

APPENDIX 1

The Role of the Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for prayer and liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for prayer and liturgy included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for prayer times
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer and liturgy including withdrawal from Collective Worship
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in prayer and liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of prayer and liturgy
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding prayer and liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for prayer and liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for prayer and liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently

APPENDIX 2

PRAYER & LITURGY - ANNUAL PLAN OF PROVISION

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

CLASS PRAYER & LITURGY OVERVIEW					
	DAILY PRAYERS	**COMMON PRAYERS**	**OTHER FORMS OF PRAYER** e.g. meditation, individual prayer	**CELEBRATION OF THE WORD**	**MASS RESPONSES**
CLASS 1	**Grace before meals** **Ending the day**	**Sign of the Cross** (Teach as a thank you. Focus on God, ourself and all those around us) All the above, plus… **Glory Be** **Hail Mary**	Each week: **1 x Meditation** **1 x Individual Prayer** (guided)	Each week: **2 x teacher-led** (with children learning to help as year progresses) **1 x Whole School** (Year 1) Each week: **1 x teacher-led** **1 x child led** (with teacher support) **1 x Whole School**	<u>Introductory Rites</u> **Amen** V: The Lord be with you. **R: And with your spirit.** All the above, plus… <u>Introductory Rites (Year 1)</u> V. Lord, have mercy. **R. Lord, have mercy.** V. Christ, have mercy. **R. Christ, have mercy.** V. Lord, have mercy. **R. Lord, have mercy.**
CLASS 2	**Grace before meals** **Ending the day**	All the above, plus… **Act of Contrition**	Each week: **1 x Meditation** **1 x Individual Prayer** (guided)	Each week: **1 x teacher-led** **1 x child led** (with teacher support) **1 x Whole School**	All the above, plus… <u>Liturgy of the Word</u> V: The Word of the Lord **R: Thanks be to God** V: The Lord be with you. **R: And with your spirit.** V: A reading from the holy Gospel according to … **R: Glory to you, O Lord.** (Sign of the Cross on forehead, lips, and chest) V: The Gospel of the Lord. R: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

CLASS 3	**Grace before meals** **Ending the day**	All the above, plus… **Our Father** (one phrase a week)	Each week: **1 x Meditation** **1 x Individual Prayer** (guided)	Each week: **1 x teacher-led** **1 x child led** **1 x Whole School**	All the above, plus… <u>Liturgy of the Eucharist</u> **Blessed be God for ever.** **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church**
CLASS 4	**Grace before meals** **Ending the day**	All the above, plus… **Glory Be** (revisited to reflect on past/future and trust) **Eternal Rest**	Each week: **1 x Meditation** **1 x Individual Prayer** (guided)	Each week: **1 x teacher-led** **1 x child led** **1 x Whole School**	All the above, plus… <u>The Eucharistic Prayer</u> V: The Lord be with you. R: **And with your spirit.** V: Lift up your hearts. R: **We lift them up to the Lord.** V: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. R: **It is right and just.** **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.** <u>Communion Rite</u> **When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.** **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.** **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.** **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.** **Lord, I am not worthy** **that you should enter under my roof,** **but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

WHOLE SCHOOL PRAYER & LITURGY YEARLY OVERVIEW N.B. Where Holy Days fall on a Sunday, a Celebration of the Word using the scriptures will be held for the whole school.					
	SCHOOL MASSES with Eucharist	**OTHER MASSES & HOLY DAYS**	**SACRAMENTS**	**SERVICES**	**OTHER PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES**
SEPTEMBER	**Welcome Mass** (focus on new families)				
OCTOBER	**Whole School Mass Harvest**				**Rosary**
NOVEMBER	**Whole School Mass – Remembrance**	**All Saints Day**			**Reflections on Saints** (St Joseph, St Francis, Carlo Acutis, etc.)
DECEMBER				**Advent Service** **Carol Service**	**Posada**
JANUARY					**Epiphany Celebration of the Word in School.**
FEBRUARY	**Whole School Mass**	**Sunday Family Masses** At Sacramental Preparation Sessions		**Ash Wednesday Service**	
MARCH		**Sunday Family Masses** At Sacramental Preparation Sessions	**First Reconciliation** **Y5-6 Confessions**	**Easter Passion Service**	
APRIL		**Sunday Family Masses** At Sacramental Preparation Sessions			**Stations of the Cross**
MAY	**Whole School Mass**	**Sunday Family Masses** At Sacramental Preparation Sessions **Ascension Day**	**First Holy Communion**	**Month of Mary**	**Pentecost Celebration of the Word in School.** **Body & Blood of the Lord Celebration of the Word in School.**
JUNE	**Whole School Mass**		**Year 4 Eucharist Masses**		
JULY	**Mass of Thanksgiving**		**Y6 Reconciliation Session**		**Year 6 Retreat- St. Joseph's** **Animate Retreat**