

St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools Trust



'Aspire not to have more, but to be more'
(St Oscar Romero)

Prayer and Liturgy 2024

March 2024

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of Prayer and Liturgy are:

- to provide an opportunity for children to worship God;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos, with shared values, and to reinforce positive attitudes.
- to teach children how to worship.

Prayer and Liturgy

- We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Prayer and Liturgy times involve all members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in the Prayer and Liturgy.
- In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our Prayer and Liturgies on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church. However, we conduct our collective worship in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.
- While most acts of worship in our schools are Catholic, we also hold assemblies that reflect the traditions of other religions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Organisation of Prayer and Liturgy

- We hold a daily act of Collective Worship. This forms part of each morning's Prayer and Liturgy, which can be either a whole-school (although sometimes we also hold separate EYFS and infant assemblies), or a class.
- We conduct Prayer and Liturgy in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that Prayer and Liturgy time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time, and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, and sometimes candles or other objects, to focus the attention of the children.
- The Prayer and Liturgies are normally conducted by the Head of School or other members of staff, but are sometimes led by local Clergy or other representatives of local religious groups.

- We take the themes of our Prayer and Liturgy from the traditions of the Christian faith, and we observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our Prayer and Liturgies are related to topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our Prayer and Liturgies well in advance of the day they take place.
- Our Prayer and Liturgies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in the Prayer and Liturgy by showing their work to the other children, and by raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are loved and valued, and all achievements are recognised. St. Mary's Infant and Junior Schools are successful schools, and we continue to celebrate the successes of all our children at our assemblies.
- Parents and carers are invited to attend class Collective Worship and Liturgies. We encourage their attendance, as this promotes community spirit, and shows the school and the homes working together in support of the children's achievements.
- Governors' attendance at our assemblies is always welcome.

Right of withdrawal

- We expect all children to attend Prayer and Liturgy. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the Prayer and Liturgy. Parents and carers do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.
- The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.

Monitoring and review

- Monitoring the policy and practice of Prayer and Liturgy is the role of the Chair of Governors. The governor concerned liaises with the Head of School before reporting to the Governors.
- This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Date approved by Governors	March 2024
Date that this policy is active	April 2024
Date of next review by Governing Body	April 2025