

Saint Clare's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy



Member of staff responsible: Mr Parkinson
Date policy written: June 2026
Date approved by the full Governing body: June 2026
Date to be reviewed: June 2028

Mission Statement

St Clare's is a Christ-centred family where everyone is valued and respected. We learn and grow, whilst strengthening our relationship with God and one another. Together in His love, we can achieve our full potential.

Play, learn and grow together with Christ

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.)

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.

Responsibility

(a) Governance - 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 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 - 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 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.

Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Prayer

“Prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for God”

[Catechism of the Catholic Church 2560]

“Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.”

[Therese of Lisieux]

At the heart of the Christian faith is the belief in a God who communicates with people. God calls every human person into a loving relationship and 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. Christians believe that prayer is essential to human fulfilment for it is only in God that we can discover ourselves, our meaning and our purpose.

“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You”
[St. Augustine]

At Saint Clare’s prayer consists of:

listening - being attentive to the voice of God.

speaking - expressing our heart’s deepest longings and desires to the One who knows and understands us better than we know and understand ourselves.

reflecting - thinking about our relationship with God. Pondering on the actions of God in history and in the unfolding mystery of our lives.

resting – simply being consciously in the presence of God, knowing that we are loved.

One of the Early Fathers of the Church described prayer as “... *the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.*” These words of St John Damascene have become a classical definition of prayer and they point to the reason why, in a Catholic school, we begin and end each session of the day in prayer. Prayer can have a variety of forms and styles and express different things.

- Blessing and Adoration – the prayer which blesses God for the goodness which has been shown to humankind
- Prayers to express sorrow – the prayer which asks for forgiveness and which calls for the establishment of the Kingdom of God
- Intercession – consists in asking on behalf of another and ourselves
- Thanksgiving – acknowledging the gifts which God has given
- Praise – the prayer which praises God simply because God is

Below is a table which includes prayers that are introduced to the children whilst they are at Saint Clare’s, taking into account where texts are introduced in the RE Curriculum Directory. We use this alongside our own school prayer book to support children on their own faith journey.

<u>Age</u> <u>Phrase</u>	<u>EYFS & KS1</u>	<u>Lower KS2</u>	<u>Upper KS2</u>
Prayer	• The Sign of the Cross • The Lord’s Prayer • Hail Mary • Glory be • Grace before meals • Grace after meals • Prayer to Saint Clare	• The Apostles’ Creed • An Act of Contrition • Angel of God • Come, Holy Spirit • The Prayer of St Richard of Chichester	• Morning Offering • The Rosary • The Magnificat • Act of Faith • Act of Hope • Act of Love

Liturgy

The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows

[This is the Liturgy 10]

“Liturgy” literally means, “work of the people”, and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action. Liturgical celebration therefore should be brought all human symbols of expression - art, dance, poetry, music, gesture, stillness.

- Liturgy is the praise and worship of God.
- Liturgy is the source and summit of the Church’s life and our lives.
- It is the right and duty of all baptised, both children and adults.
- The function of the liturgy is to build up members of Christ’s body, to strengthen us in Christ.
- Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the whole person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.
- Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying.
- In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.
- The purpose of adapting liturgy for children is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy of the parish.
- Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity.

Prayer and Liturgy

God is present and active in all authentic human experience. We already have a blessed life and worship is recognising and celebrating this reality in the Christian tradition. God is reached through the world and adored within it. Creating a sacred space for worship is to create a space where the unity of God and creation is reverently symbolised and celebrated. Worship and the words and rituals we use should not sever us from the ordinary circumstances of our lives but rather unite us more closely to them.

- Worship remembers and celebrates the marvellous things God works in our lives. It celebrates God’s presence in our lives. Worship should not feel like an interruption from a different world. It is a response to life and can be spontaneous.
- Prayer and Liturgy 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 strength of the Holy Spirit.
- Worship is at the very heart of our school and will reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.
- Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others may form part of an act of worship.
- All liturgies involve the praise, thanksgiving and adoration of God and are, therefore, acts of worship. However, not all worship will be liturgy as it may or may not include symbol and action.
- An assembly is any experience of gathering/assembling in school. It may include an act of worship.

Liturgy/worship in school

In light of this and our school mission statement, we understand the prayer and worship life of our school community to be central to all we do.

Through liturgy and worship we encourage the development of a personal relationship with God. As a result of this the following occur:

- develop an understanding of what it means to belong to a community;

- provide opportunities for enhancing spiritual growth and personal development through prayer and reflection;
- provide experiences of sharing values and celebrating significant events in the lives of individuals and the community;
- develop knowledge of and experience seasons within the Church's year;
- develop knowledge and understanding of scripture;
- develop and celebrate skills of creativity.

Good worship happens when everyone is fully involved in the preparation and celebration. Time for worship is in addition to the 10% curriculum time for classroom Religious Education, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Within St. Clare's liturgy and worship provides opportunities for the community to come together to celebrate and share.

We have 'Prayer Leaders' in Year five and six who support classes across school with the planning and delivery of worship as well as leading worship themselves. The children have annual training to support them in this role and time each week, to prepare meaningful and prayerful worship.

At Key Stage 1 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies and prayer times
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites of the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word
- the occasional celebration of Eucharist
- a range of types of prayer
- a range of styles of celebration
- opportunities for pupils to take an active part in worship

At Key Stage 2 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies and prayer times
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites of the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word; or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite
- the occasional celebration of Eucharist
- a range of types of prayer
- a range of styles of celebration
- opportunities for pupils to take an active part in worship
- opportunities for pupils to take leadership roles in worship
- opportunities to plan their own worship
- opportunities to share their planned worship with other classes

Prayer Experiences

Pupils are introduced to a variety of forms and styles of prayer, which are developed in ways which are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Type	Example
Praying the psalms	'I thank you for the wonder of my being' [Psalm 139]
Traditional prayers	Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary
Repetitive prayer [mantra]	'Jesus, I love you', repeated several times,
Meditation	Scripture reflection with use of imagination
Bodily prayer	Raising hands in praise, bowing, dancing, genuflecting
Prayer of the heart	Stillness to listen to God: 'Be still and know that I am God.'

Contemplation	Looking at trees, a sunset, an icon etc.
Gestures	The sign of the cross, the sign of peace
Hymns	Traditional and modern hymns
Music	Listening to quiet, reflective music
Litanies	For all creation: Thanks be to God
Processions	Gospel procession with sung 'alleluia'
Prayer services and liturgies	Using holy water, candles, incense and other symbols
Celebrations	Prayer, song, sharing food and drink, celebrating work

Timetable of Prayer and Worship

Day	Prayer and Worship	Led by
Monday	Whole School Celebration of the Word	Mrs Wroblewski / Mr Parkinson / Mrs Clack
Tuesday	Assembly or Class Worship	KS1 & KS2 Staff
Wednesday	Hymns	Miss Barton
Thursday	Child led prayer and liturgy in classes.	Children
Friday	Full School Praise Assembly with our weekly mission	Mrs Wroblewski / Mr Parkinson / Mrs Clack

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.

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.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly 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.

Review

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

