

Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Updated: Spring 2024
Agreed by Governors:
To be reviewed: Spring 2026

St Augustine's Mission Statement

Our Catholic school is united in God's love, enabling everyone to grow in love for one another and to develop in faith. We strive for all children to achieve their best by becoming active and confident learners in a nurturing and caring environment. We guide everyone to shine in their own unique way.

'Unique and United in God's love. We let our light shine'

Aims

- ❑ To ensure that Christ is the centre of all we do in school
- ❑ To provide the opportunity for pupils to be brought closer to God through reflection and prayer.
- ❑ To contemplate something of the mystery of God.
- ❑ To consider moral issues and to explore their own beliefs.
- ❑ To encourage participation and response, either through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening and watching.
- ❑ To celebrate and affirm the values and ethos of our school: Everyone should feel included, valued, listened to and able to contribute with confidence. To develop a sense of belonging to the school and parish community.
- ❑ To encourage pupils to become world citizens who are aware of the universal principles of right and wrong, justice, peace and fairness and to be concerned for others and the world.
- ❑ To mark special occasions in the liturgical, school and other faith's year as well as national and international events.
- ❑ To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to'.

The 1988 Religious Education Act states that "there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils".

Context

In our daily lives we are conscious that worship in school takes the following into consideration:

- There is a daily act of worship in which every pupil can participate.
- The Worship and Prayer takes account of the child's age, personality, social and religious development and faith.
- An act of worship commences with an item which gathers/draws the community together, followed by something which focuses more deeply into the theme, giving time for reflection and conclude with a sense of renewed and deepened relationship with God. It will include a reading from scripture.
- Any form of Worship and Prayer with the children lasts about one minute for each year of the child's life ie. a maximum of five minutes for Reception and a

- maximum of ten minutes for year six children. (No Prayer and Liturgy is less than four minutes long).
- Our celebrations incorporate and make use of the various cultures which are present in the school community. They are also sensitive to the perspective and needs of those of other faith traditions.
 - Sharing worship with children is an opportunity to help the child to understand and take part in the adult worship of the Parish, but at their own level.
 - All worship is open to all faiths represented in our school. (Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Worship and Prayer. However, given the importance of it in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents need to 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 celebration can address the emotions and feelings of the child's experience, reflect thanksgivings, special days or feast days. It gives the opportunity to reflect silently on the word of God.
 - Sharing worship with children is also an opportunity to recognise and respect the individuality of children and adults from other Faiths and other Christian communities

Organisation

Worship in schools creates a real sense of belonging for all involved and is an occasion to be open to families and parishioners. Every opportunity is taken to extend a warm and genuine welcome to priests (and other faith leaders), parents, parishioners and the local community to take part in the school worship.

Pupils are introduced to a diversity of experiences of worship:

- Whole school masses regularly take place in the school. Where a whole school mass is taking place, the parishioners and parents are invited.
- Chaplain led and Teacher led departmental assemblies – following the liturgical year themes and using Tenten resources to support spiritual development.
- Class Prayer and Liturgy including weekly use of the Mission 10 resources.
- Values assemblies
- Non-Eucharistic services, especially for Ash Wednesday and Ascension Thursday
- Friday lunchtime prayers during Advent, Lent and Ramadan
- Lunchtime prayers before and after lunch
- Morning and Evening prayer
- Where appropriate celebration of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Themes

Worship in school is planned around the following themes:

Autumn Term 1: 'What a wonderful world'

Values: manners, responsibility

Autumn/Change/Colour

Growth/Harvest

Gifts/Thankfulness

Creator God/Caring/Stewardship

Praise/Thanksgiving

United Nations Day (Oct 24th)

Blessed Virgin Mary (Sept 8th)

St Matthew (Sept 21st)

Jewish New Year

St Michael (Sep 29th)

St Luke (Oct 18th)

Autumn Term 2: 'Light and Dark'

Values: care, respect

Symbols of good and evil

Diwali

Feelings

Saying Sorry/Putting things right

Advent - preparation/waiting

Christmas - Jesus light of the World - Nativity story

All Saints (Nov 1st)

Remembrance Sunday

St Andrew (Nov 30th)

Spring Term 1: 'New Year's resolutions'

Values: honesty, friendship

Our hopes/aspirations

Making plans to change/seeking guidance

Epiphany

Jesus Christ - a person of hope and change

Famous Christians with a vision of the future

Life of Mohammad

Epiphany

Conversion of St Paul

Holocaust Memorial Day

Spring Term 2: 'Spring Cleaning'

Values: honesty, friendship

Prayer/fasting

Lent /Ramadan

Mothering Sunday

Baptism/belonging to the church family

Birth/Death

Easter

Reward/Celebration

St Valentine's Day (Feb 14th)

St Patrick's Day (March 17th)

Feast of St Joseph (March 19th)

Jewish Passover

Summer Term 1: 'Making God's love plain'

Values: patience, happiness, thoughtfulness

Service to others/Justice

Showing determination/courage

Friendship/real love

Responsibilities/action

People who live out God's love

Pentecost

St Georges Day (April 23rd)

St Philip and St James (May 1st)

World Red Cross Day (May 8th)

Summer Term 2: 'Rules to live by'

Values: forgiveness, empathy

Schools rules

10 Commandments

The Five Pillars

The Kalsa Sikhs

Loving your neighbour

Sacrifice/Obedience

Lives of saints - ancient and modern

St. Augustine of Canterbury (May 27th)

Ascension Day

St Barnabus (June 11th)

Trinity Sunday

Fathers' Day

Corpus Christi

St John the Baptist (June 24th)

Sts Peter and Paul (June 29th)

St Swithin (Jul 15th)

We also use the Diocesan theme booklets for the term to support Worship.

Planning

All pupils are encouraged to participate as much as possible in at an age and ability appropriate level:

- Teacher lead Prayer and Liturgy (to model good practice)
- Younger pupils can choose basic elements that they wish to include from the list below
- Older pupils are encouraged to plan their Prayer and Liturgy, in groups, on the school's planning format, which gets them to choose elements from the list below
- Worship leaders are also supported by the schools chaplain in planning and delivering meaningful liturgies.
- Pupils need to be encouraged to evaluate their practice and improve elements if needed next time in order to maximise the impact of the Worship on others.

The children have an active involvement in worship, including choosing from the following:

Arrangement:

- seating, focus area (outside worship if appropriate)

Gathering:

- How the worship should start (eg silence, bells ringing, music, etc.)

Focus: (think about the significance – all objects used should have a link to the worship)

- artefacts, pictures, candles, covering (trying to link in with the colours of the liturgical year), natural, sayings/quotes, senses - smell/taste/touch/hearing/sight, PowerPoint

Music:

- reflective, singing

Reflection:

- own thinking time, answering questions (how?)

Reading:

- from the Bible; Old Testament, New Testament; from the Qur'an; moral story or poem

Prayer:

- traditional, class, own, published

Role play

- story drama, moralistic drama

Anything else that would help prayer and reflection

We actively encourage the pupils not to copy the more organised format of assemblies when planning their own worship but try to make the time more reflective and worshipful.

School Assemblies

School assembly is a key point in the school life and will on certain occasions be an experience of worship in its own right.

Caution is observed to ensure that both teachers and children do not become more concerned with performance than with the sharing of thoughts, feelings and experiences.

It was felt by staff and governors that assembly times were often used for matters relating to school routine, discipline etc. If this was the case aspects of worship should not be combined with administrative matters.

Due to this cause of concern there is at least a twice weekly Worship Assembly in each department purely concentrating on worship. Also, to make sure the children are aware that the assembly is an act of worship. These assemblies focus on our current monthly worship theme or relate to the Sunday Mass readings always trying to re-enforce the traditional prayers.

Children of other faiths

With respect to the children of other faiths who attend St. Augustine's, care is always taken to respect these faiths and to maintain good relationships between the different cultures. Children in the school have the opportunity to celebrate the Catholic Feast Days as well as the Feast Days of the Muslim, Hindu and Jewish faiths. All these celebrations are open to all the children who wish to partake in them.

Parents' Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the worship activities carried out in school. They are made aware of this before their child starts school; the information being in the school brochure. In order to withdraw their child from Prayer and Liturgy activities in school parents must arrange a meeting with the headteacher.

Staff in school do try to encourage full participation as much as possible. Any child whose parents are uncomfortable with them celebrating mass in school are invited as observers and are not expected to formally take part. It is seen to be important for them to attend as the mass is often referred to as part of RE lessons.

Focus Areas

These are set up in each classroom and in the school's entrance and are changed regularly to reflect changing topics/ liturgical times of year. The children should be involved in the design and content of the Class Focal Area and are encouraged to make use of the area throughout the day. Room is left for the children to bring in items from home to add to the display and they can be reminded to place questions or captions on the display if they wish. The area should take up a prominent place within the classroom and be easily accessible.

Useful items for an attractive display include:

Brightly coloured fabrics,

Artefacts,

Pictures

Statues

Photographs

Candles

Book stands

Bibles

Class prayer books/Books for intentions etc.

(These resources are constantly being added to and updated.)

Health and Safety

Teachers must give due consideration to the safe use of resources and artefacts that they use to support Worship and Prayer

Any broken, damaged or dangerous resources should be brought to the attention of the RE Subject Leader.

Candles – When lit:

Candles must be supervised by an adult and never be left unattended.

They should be placed on/in a suitable container and placed on a steady, hard surface.

Children must be kept at a suitable, safe distance.

Staff Training and Future Development

The headteacher, RE Subject Leader, and other members of the teaching staff attend training on worship. The school chaplain also provides spiritual guidance in the development of Worship Leaders across the school and also supports staff in their delivery of prayer and liturgy at class level and is a valuable resource at key stage level in weekly acts of worship. The school's chaplain also carries out Prayer and Liturgy observations in all classes once a year and gives formal and informal feedback to staff, including pointers for improvement as necessary.

Resources available in School

There are Prayer and Liturgy resources available in each class, 'the well' and the Garden Room. An audit of age appropriate resources has been carried out by the school chaplain across all classes.

Policy Monitoring and Review

In this Catholic Academy, it is the overall responsibility of the MAT alongside governors and the head teacher to ensure that the legal requirements of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory are being met and opportunities for quality Prayer and Liturgy are being delivered in accordance with the prayer and liturgy directory. Those responsible will ensure that acts of worship are in accordance with the school's trust deed and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

This policy is monitored by the RE Subject Leader and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff every two years.

A report is written by the RE Subject Leader and delivered to the Governor's Working Party. The Subject Leader also meets with the RE link Governor termly for feedback – this information is then discussed at Full Governors. These includes feedback on the attainment and progress towards the targets for each class.

The following will be monitored:

- time set aside for Prayer and Liturgy
- whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy
- pupil participation and engagement
- whether Prayer and Liturgy is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc
- staff development on Prayer and Liturgy and its impact
- prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing pupils into prayer
- impact on pupils and members of the school community
- opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access worship and prayer
- the school's termly themes for worship are followed.

Observation and monitoring records are kept and form part of the self-review process and staff performance management.

Outcomes of monitoring will be communicated to staff and governors with recommendations for the future.

APPENDIX 1

Progression of Prayer

Throughout their time at St Augustine's School, there is an expectation that pupils will become familiar with a variety of scripture and that every opportunity will be given for the children to express themselves through a variety of forms of prayer.

Reception

- Sign of the Cross
- Morning Offering
- Grace at meals
- Prayer/ song of thanksgiving at the end of the day
- Sign of peace

Year 1

- As reception and
- Our Father
- Familiarity with the response to "and with your spirit"

Year 2

- As Year 1
- Glory be
- Hail Mary

Year 3/4

- As Year 2 and
- Familiarity with response to bidding prayers
- Familiarity with simple examination of conscience
- Familiarity with parts of the Gloria
- Familiarity with parts of the Eucharistic Celebration
- Simple Act of Contrition

Year 5/6

- Introduced to a variety of forms of Traditional prayer
- Prayer to the Holy spirit (Glory be)
- Familiarity with the Nicene creed
- Familiarity with more parts of the Eucharistic Celebration
- Eternal Rest

APPENDIX 2

Notes from Prayer and Liturgy INSET

What is Prayer and Liturgy?

Prayer and Liturgy is a time for:

- talking to God
- reflective prayer
- gathering together
- promoting school values
- listening to scripture
- develop moral conscience
- share ideas together
- children to develop/ deepen understanding of need for prayer

What is the purpose of Prayer and Liturgy in school?

Prayer and Liturgy gives us a chance to:

- promote the school ethos
- 'feed the soul'
- share in each other's beliefs
- develop multi-faith respect
- listen/talk to God and each other
- listen to stories from different cultures and faiths, especially Christianity
- reflect on the values and the meaning of life
- have some calm, reflective time together

How do children participate in Prayer and Liturgy?

- Setting up focus area – artefacts, pictures, candles, etc.
- Working in groups to write prayers for class use
- speaking/ listening and sharing ideas/ views
- planning and leading Prayer and Liturgys
- asking/ responding to questions

What elements might Prayer and Liturgy include?

- focus/stimulus (pictures/ artefacts)
- different seating arrangements for CW
- artists work – impressionist
- stories – religious and secular
- natural elements – leaves, shells etc.
- poems
- music – religious/ secular and for singing/ reflection
- pictures of parables/ SEAL photographs – good for emotions
- Use of Interactive Whiteboard

- Miracle Maker video
- children's paintings
- mirrors
- religious artefacts
- secular artefacts
- holding stones to speak
- memory box/ intentions box
- class prayers written by children
- use of silence
- children to write down thoughts on theme to be put on the focus area at the end
- friendship box
- prayer ribbons
- prayer bubbles
- prayer flags
- focus quotes – bible quotes and secular quotes/ sayings
- non-verbal communication – use of colours
- drama/ role play
- use of senses - smell, touch, taste as well as hearing and sight
- stained glass windows

What makes a good Prayer and Liturgy?

- length is 1 minute per year of age
- prayerful atmosphere
- respectful beginning/ ending
- meaningful focus area – children choose focus objects for a specific reason to match the theme etc.
- includes time for reflection and prayer
- everybody participates – not just talked at
- mixture of child led and adult led
- has a clear message/ focus
- responds to children's contributions
- well planned with clear structure (but changes from day to day – not just repeat of same format)
- it is a time for child to develop spirituality and their relationship with God
- is simple
- a sacred space is created (changes from the work space of a classroom) – can be in classroom, hall, prayer room, outside on grass/ gazebos/ pond area, parish house (with prior permission)
- uses music well for prayer and praise as well as reflection
- reflects the different faiths in school
- links to class work, school focuses as well as Values/ RE AT themes/ liturgical year/ school year/ world events

- allows opportunity to share good practice around the school – children to deliver a worship session to different classes
- Mixture of teacher and pupil led

Other ideas raised:

Planning:

- planning format for KS2 to include a list of possible elements
- KS1 to make a picture form of the CW elements and children to time-line them

Early Years CW to include times when carried out in Key Worker groups

Prayer and Liturgies can build on each other- especially in EYFS/ KS1 where focus is developed throughout the week

Use of the ‘Hand Prayer’



1. Thumb: Your thumb is nearest you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones.

2. Index finger: The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.

3. Middle finger: The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.

4. Ring finger: The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger; as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain.

5. Pinkie finger: And lastly comes our little finger; the smallest finger of all which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.