

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18



'Feeding Hearts and Minds'

The peace, joy and love of Christ is at the heart of all that we do in our school. Through religious education, school policy and, primarily, our culture of prayerfulness, charity and joy, we seek to share the Gospel with our families, our parish, our community and the wider world.

Using the example of Jesus Christ, we cultivate the skills of heart and mind that allow us to develop our talents and take a shared responsibility for ourselves, each other and the world He gave us. We profess our faith proudly and recognise that we are called to a loving relationship with God through the sacraments, scripture and prayer.

Our school is animated by love and our shared faith and clear values drive our behaviour and our relationships; we are tolerant and respectful of the unique value of each person. Our individual needs and talents are recognised and nurtured in a warm, inclusive environment where we are able to use our gifts for the glory of God and in loving service of others.

We have excellent role models who empower us to believe in ourselves and provide us with an outstanding education and a wide range of opportunities – our aspirations for the future are high and we believe that through God's grace we can grow, learn and realise our full potential.

This policy was developed as part of a consultation process involving pupils, staff, parents and Governors of The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School, based on best practice advice from The Diocese of Lancaster.

'PRAYER AND LITURGY' STATEMENT OF INTENT

Our school exists to increase levels of knowledge, understanding and skill, so that those who teach, learn and work in it are empowered to proclaim the Gospel message of life and hope to their own and future generations. We seek to raise standards, develop enquiring minds, kind hearts, helping hands, and encourage everyone to follow the way of life marked out by Christ. By working in partnership to achieve these goals, the school community will be guided by the gospel values of freedom, fairness and love. As a school we expect to bring out the best in all who teach, learn and work in it.

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PRAYER AND LITURGY

THE NATURE OF PRAYER AND LITURGY

We believe that 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 word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship¹ for all pupils.² (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.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that prayer and liturgy and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

Prayer and liturgy is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including Religious Education.

The school expectation is that there is a daily act of worship/prayer and liturgy in which every pupil can participate. Worship is in addition to curriculum RE. Prayer and Liturgy takes account of the child's age, personality, social and religious development and faith therefore any form of Prayer and Liturgy should be an appropriate length for the age of the child such as 5 minutes in Reception working to a maximum of 15 minutes in year 6. An act of worship should commence with the Sign of the Cross to gather the community together, a time for reflection and concludes with a sense of renewed and deepened relationship with God. It must include scripture from the Bible this may be a quote or a longer reading. Our acts of worship follow the traditions of the Catholic Church.

¹ It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'Prayer and Liturgy' in schools. 'Collective Worship' is the term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we use readily in a Catholic context. 'Prayer' and 'Liturgy' are terms more commonly used in our context.

² Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Prayer and liturgy. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy 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 PLACE OF PRAYER AND LITURGY IN THE LIFE OF OUR SCHOOL

We endorse the belief that 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.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Prayer in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. All children take part in Prayer and Liturgy regardless of religion. Those of other faiths are encouraged to say the prayers but have the option not to make the sign of the cross.

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. 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.. We learn a range of traditional and modern hymns in a weekly singing practice. Worship in school creates a real sense of belonging for all involved. Every opportunity is taken to extend a warm and genuine welcome to priests, parents, parishioners and the local community to take part in the school worship.

THE AIMS OF PRAYER AND LITURGY

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 experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit;
- to develop a common ethos and shared values;
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development;
- to reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.

PRINCIPLES

All prayer and liturgy in this school will:

- raise our mind and heart to God;
- celebrate the presence of God in our life and school community;
- be a high quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- support learners' spiritual development;
- give learners positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds.

In order to do this, celebrations will:

- be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;

- be short and appropriately paced (childrens' attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life, that is 5-6 mins for Key Stage 1 and 7-10 mins for Key Stage 2);
- be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings;
- seek to involve pupils at all times in preparation and leadership.

ORGANISATION

Whole School Assemblies are held on a Monday. They are led by the head teacher (or another senior leader if head teacher is unavailable) and are usually based on the Sunday Gospel reading. Key Stage Prayer and Liturgy led by a phase leader based on the Prayer and Liturgy focus of the week. Key Stage Celebration assemblies are held on a Friday. Parents are invited to attend these assemblies of celebration and thanks. They are led by a member of the Senior leadership team. Key stage Singing: we learn a range of traditional and modern hymns. It is led by the Key Stage leader. Non-Eucharistic take place services when appropriate e.g. Ash Wednesday, Easter read-around.

Class worship will take place on days when pupils' are not involved in other prayer and liturgy activities. - Teachers lead collective worship to model good practice - Children are involved in planning and leading worship at an age appropriate level: they might be involved in decisions about seating, artefacts, powerpoint presentations, singing, music, bible reading, role play, meditation.

The whole school take part in Masses which mark significant events in the liturgical year, for example, Christmas, Lent, Easter. At the start of the school year, each class from Y1 -6 will attend Mass. Reception classes will start to attend whole school Masses later in the year. Pupils from Year 2 upwards will attend Parish Mass as a class on a rota basis throughout the year. Pupils will be given the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (this may take place in school/church). All pupils will be given the opportunity to visit Church e.g. Stations of the Cross.

PRAYER PROGRESSION

PRAYER AND LITURGY IN EYFS

Throughout their time at The Blessed Sacrament 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. Children are also given the opportunity to worship through song.

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

PRAYER AND LITURGY IN KEY STAGE ONE

As above and:

- Hail Mary
- Familiarity with the response to "and with your spirit"
- Familiarity with response to bidding prayers
- Glory be

- Our Father

PRAYER AND LITURGY IN KEY STAGE TWO

As above and:

- Familiarity with the liturgies (parts) and prayers of the Mass
- Simple Act of Contrition
- Familiarity with a variety of forms of traditional prayer

PLANNING FOR PRAYER AND LITURGY

Each half term teachers are given a prayer and liturgy overview which details the prayer focus for each week. It also suggests hymns and resources linked to the weekly focus as well as other liturgical information for example, saint days. The prayer focuses are linked to the liturgical year, prayer cycles and other relevant faith events e.g. year of mercy, CAFOD campaigns. The Prayer and Liturgy overview is intended to give the staff, and where appropriate pupils, a basis from which to plan and lead worship in class.

RESOURCES

Resources are reviewed and updated each year in line with the School Development Plan. There is a good selection of Bibles, prayer books and other books which support lessons and collective worship in each classroom. Each class has a set of cloths in the liturgical colours most frequently used (green, purple, white) and a cross is displayed in each classroom. Art work and artefacts are available to support a more creative approach. They can be found in The Loft or by asking the RE co-ordinator. On the server, there are resources to support with meditation and reflection. Music and words for hymns are also found on the server. There are also several online collections of resources such as from CAFOD and Mission Together. For further information see the RE co-ordinator.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

The head teacher, RE co-ordinator, Faculty Lead and when appropriate other members of teaching staff attend training linked to Prayer and Liturgy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Candles – when lit. Candles must be supervised by an adult and must never be left unattended. They should be placed on/in a suitable container and placed on a steady, hard surface. Matches/lighters should be kept in a safe place away from children. Children must be kept at a suitable, safe distance from the candles. The RE co-ordinator has a set of LED tealight candles which can be used by children and might be more suitable particularly for younger pupils.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The 1988 Religious Education Act states that “there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils”. The R.E. co-ordinator and Faculty Leader are responsible for ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy takes place in school, under the direction of the Headteacher. Staff and Governors are responsible for improving parish/school links.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

At least once a year, the school’s provision of worship will be evaluated by the R.E. co-ordinator and Faculty Leader to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

INCLUSION

For children of other faiths who attend our school, care is taken at all time to respect these faiths and to maintain good relationships between different cultures. Whilst parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from the worship activities carried out in school, this is strongly discouraged and it is made clear to all parents in induction meetings that they have selected a denominational faith school for their child and what this means. In order to withdraw their child from prayer and liturgy/collective worship activities in school parents must arrange a meeting with the Headteacher so that this can be discussed fully. After the meeting, a formal letter informing the Headteacher of their decision should be made.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Subject Leader for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for Prayer and Liturgy;
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer and Liturgy which may at times form part of the school development plan;
- Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of learners;
- 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 on Children's Masses'
- Organising themes for Prayer and Liturgy
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Prayer and liturgy.

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Prayer and Liturgy
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in Prayer and Liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts 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 throughout school
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Prayer and Liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

Professional development/ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Prayer and Liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- 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



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

September 2020

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by K. Delaney (R.E. co-ordinator) in consultation with S. Aris (Faculty Lead)

This policy will be reviewed as appropriate by the FCC committee on behalf of The Governing Body.

Intended Policy Review Date – July 2022

Approved by: _____ (Headteacher)

Date: _____

Approved by: _____ (Governor)

Date: _____