

St Chad's RC Primary School



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Last reviewed on: September 2023

Next review due by: September 2024

With Christ at the heart of our school, we welcome all within our community, respecting one another and celebrating our differences. We will uphold and spread the Gospel Values so that through aiming high everyone fulfils their potential and lives life to the full, growing in faith and love.

'Love one another as I have loved you'

John 15:12

Prayer and Liturgy

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Christian worship 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 worship 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.) 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 collective worship 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.

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.

As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, "on a special occasion".

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that Collective Worship considers and considers 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.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from Worship, however this should be done in consultation with the Headteacher and with an understanding that Worship is an integral part of the life of our school.

The Aims of Collective Worship

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 enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce 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.'
- To develop our skills of 'listening' to a greater being

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.¹ 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 (children's attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life *i.e.*, 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.

¹ Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Collective Acts of Worship in School

Monday:

Whole school worship:

This is led by the Head teacher and based in the school hall.

Tuesday:

Year 1 and 2 worship, Year 3 and 4 worship, Year 5 and 6 worship

These are led by a class teacher and based in classrooms.

Wednesday:

Hymn practice:

This is led by a teacher and a member of support staff and based in the school hall.

Thursday:

School celebration and worship:

This is led by the Head teacher and based in the school hall.

Friday:

Class worship:

This is led by the class teacher and the children and based in classrooms.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- following the structure of 'gather, read, respond, pray, go forth'
- involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

Recording

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated 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.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for children to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to *“The Welcome Table. Planning Masses with Children”* which contains the complete text of the Church’s *‘Directory for Masses with Children’* as a basis for our practice.

We believe that children are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

In school, therefore, the **‘Liturgy of the Word’**, rather than the Eucharist will be the norm.

At **Key Stage 1** worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory rites in the Mass and/or The Liturgy of the Word

At **Key Stage 2** worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites in the mass or The Liturgy of the Word; or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite.

The Co-ordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

The Role of the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator

- 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 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 Worship
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator 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.

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
- 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