St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

THE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Learning and growing together in God's love



September 2026

Review date: September 2027

St Francis of Assisi Prayer & Liturgy Policy

The family of St. Francis of Assisi is a school community following in the footsteps of Christ and built on the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.

Mission – ***'Learning & Growing Together in God's Love'***
Inspired by the life of Christ we seek to provide an exceptional education which enables our children:

- to fully embrace all possibilities
- to flourish
- to develop their faith
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and therefore to choose a path that enables them to be a positive influence upon our world.

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.)

Pupils at St Francis are pre-dominantly Catholic (86%) with 5% other Christian and 8% no religion. We currently have on roll one Jewish child and one Hindu. Pupils are both local and come from further afield, some travelling in excess of 30 miles daily. The willingness of parents to commit to long travelling distances evidences their desire to have their children educated within the Catholic tradition. The school is also in the highest national social deprivation area category, 50% of pupils have English as an additional language and the number of pupils on SEND support is well above the national trend. These additional challenges inform the planning and content of Prayer & Liturgy at St Francis. 12% of teaching staff are Catholic and 38% of Support Staff.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of the school
Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of our school life and central to the Catholic tradition.
It 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.

Aims
Prayer and liturgy in St Francis of Assisi School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using 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.'

Principles
All acts of prayer in St Francis of Assisi School will:
• Give glory and honour to God;
• Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
• Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead prayer times;
• Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical

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)).

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

The governors, 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(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator). During 2026-2027 this will be the responsibility of Ellie Mather, RE Lead.
- 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

The 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(s) 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

When Prayer & Liturgy Takes Place
Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day.
Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.
A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

The Pattern of Prayer & Liturgy
At St Francis of Assisi, prayer is understood as communicating with God and daily opportunities are provided for both formal and informal prayers, both individually and collectively.

- **Formal Prayers** are taught throughout the school and progress in complexity of language and conceptual understanding. All children are encouraged to learn, unprompted, the prayers which are considered suitable for their age.
- **Informal Prayer,** both silent and open, is encouraged throughout the school. Opportunities are given during most prayer sessions for an individual response, privately or publicly, and all respect this practice.
- **Individual Prayer** is encouraged through the provision of a spiritual focus in each classroom and the two Reflection areas, one in the school entrance and one in the Spiritual Garden. These are available to staff and children, during break and lunchtimes and allows for private or shared reflection. Pupils each have their own Prayer Journal that travels with them throughout their time at school. Within their Prayer Journal there are opportunities for Spiritual Journaling and personal responses to Scripture.
- **Collective Prayer** encompasses both formal and informal praying and usually includes sung prayer in the form of a hymn or psalm appropriate to the liturgical year. This may include:

  - Daily class prayers at the beginning and end of each day. – children are often encouraged to offer their prayers out loud or are given time for silent reflection
  - There are Thanksgiving prayers before lunch each day.
  - During assemblies and at the end of the school day children are encouraged to examine their conscience and say sorry for things they have done wrong.
  - Weekly Sung Worship links to the upcoming Mass/Service or Feast-day celebration, or to extend pupils' experience of sung responses.
  - Each week a whole school Gospel assembly is led by the Headteacher. The theme is usually based on the Sunday Gospel and is attended by all staff and visitors in the school.
  - Pupils are encouraged to say the Rosary during October and May, with Rosary Club members and Adult and Junior Chaplains leading all classes.
  - Staff Meetings and Parent Meetings always begin with prayer.

Mass & Reconciliation
The Eucharist celebration is the prime acknowledgement by the school of its membership of the Church and is therefore its central worship. It is essential that the children are included in the celebration in a meaningful way and begin to develop an understanding of the Mass.

- Regular Masses in school, prepared by Junior Chaplains & Servers and led by one of the KS2 year classes.
- Termly attendance at the St John the Baptist Cathedral Parish Masses.
- Adult Chaplains prepare baptised Catholics to read at Mass, so that pupils can fulfil their baptismal promise to be 'Servant, priest & King'.
- All EYFS, KS1 pupils and those pupils in KS2 who have not celebrated their First Holy Communion invited to receive a Blessing.

• The Mass dates and times are included on the school website and the weekly school newsletter so all parents are invited to attend.

In the season of Lent all pupils take part in a Stations of the Cross service within school, led by the Adult Chaplains. Children in KS2 are given the opportunity to go to confession during Lent and Advent within school, following a Reconciliation reflection.

Special Liturgies
From time to time, the school, Year groups or classes may prepare and celebrate a Liturgy. Parents are always encouraged to attend.

Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual RE budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The annual budget for RE will at least match the annual budget allocation for English and Maths. 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 from the overall RE budget 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. In the first instance, this will be done as part of the St Francis of Assisi school new staff induction process. 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. CPD opportunities are detailed on the school CPD schedule for the year. The school's Adult Chaplaincy Team will be available to provide additional advice and formation to staff as and when needed, supported by the school Chaplain Fr Martin. School staff will be given opportunities for training and formation through the Trust, the Diocese and beyond, for example completing the DCCRS or CCRS.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, and at least annually, and involve all key stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. There is an annual RE Monitoring Schedule. Areas for development will be identified on monitoring Feedback Forms, RE Action Plans and the School Improvement and Development Plan and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

Review

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

This prayer and liturgy policy has been written by the Headteacher (Felicity Hope), the RE Coordinator (Ellie Mather) and in collaboration with our school Chaplain, the school's RE Governor , the school's Adult Chaplaincy Team and with input from the Junior Chaplains.