**St. Paul’s Catholic Primary School**

**Part of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust**



**Growing in God’s Love to Be the Best We Can Be**

**PRAYER & LITURGY POLICY**



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| **Approved by:** | Governors | **Date:** October 2023 |
| **Last reviewed on:** | January 2025  |
| **Next review due by:** | September 2025 |

**Introduction**

**Understanding Prayer and Liturgy** *(From the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory, September 2022)*

*In all schools there will be a range of prayer and liturgy: classroom prayer, meditation, assemblies, devotions, special services for times in the school year, celebrations of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each form of prayer and liturgy will have its own character dependent on the circumstances, size and age of the group, the place of celebration and its content.*

***Definition of Terms***

*Prayer, Liturgical Prayer, and Liturgy form a continuum with silent meditation at one end*

*and a celebration of Mass on a Solemnity of the Church (e.g., Ascension of the Lord) at the*

*other. Of course, there are areas of overlap between the categories.*

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| **Prayer** | **Liturgical Prayer** | **Liturgy** |
| Simple structure | Structured (often 4 part) | Taken from official books |
| One or two elements | Elements drawn from liturgy | Complex structure |
| Balance of familiarity & creativity | Places of Scripture | Many elements |
|  | Contrasts and creativity | Range of ministry |

 *In Catholic terminology ‘worship’ is not generally used to name and describe a distinct type of prayer or event. Worship is about living our lives in a way that recognises that everything we have is a gift from God and that everything we do gives glory to God. That, of course, does include prayer but the scope is broader. With that understanding of worship it will be seen that that the purpose of education in a Catholic school is to know and love Christ and to open the vision and imagination of all pupils to the wonder of living in God’s world, and the responsibilities that follow from this.*

Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 there is a statutory duty to inspect and report on denominal education (that is religious education) and collective worship in schools designated as having a religious character. For this reason, the term ‘Collective Worship’ has been kept as the headline judgement by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate but throughout the framework it is referred to as prayer and liturgy. This policy addresses the shift in vocabulary and is an interim response to the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory. When the Directory is published it will contain a model policy which the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle will adapt for schools.

**St. Paul’s Prayer and Liturgy Policy**

**Mission Statement**:

St. Paul’s Catholic Primary School is a vibrant Christian community at the heart of which is a love for God. It respects the uniqueness of the individual made in God’s image and loved by him and this is immersed in our core values of faith, respect, resilience and happiness.

We aim to deliver a high standard of education which challenges all, based on the understanding that the whole person is celebrated and inspired to contribute.

We aim for excellence in the daily life of our school, where together we live, love, learn and celebrate.

In working outwardly, our partnership with parents, our parishes, other schools and the wider community, will benefit.

We will endeavour to provide open and supportive communication which fosters effective, caring relationships between all.

*“****Growing in God’s Love to Be the Best We Can Be”***



**The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy**

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.

‘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.’[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Legal Requirements**

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily ‘act of worship’ offered 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. Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Prayer, liturgical prayer and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between 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. Responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from ‘Collective Worship’. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will 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 that those which are specifically structured, within Come and See RE curriculum.

**The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St. Paul’s Catholic Primary School**

Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

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.

**The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy**

Prayer and liturgy in St. Paul’s Catholic Primary 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. Paul’s Catholic Primary 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 life of the Church.[[2]](#footnote-2) Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

**Planning, content and celebration**

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial 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. A weekly whole school liturgical prayer is held on a Monday morning, focusing on the Sunday gospel. Statements to live by prayer sessions are shared with staff and children. Staff are invited to meet in prayer three times a week before the beginning of the school day. Other opportunities include a day of staff prayer and reflection, whole school community spirituality days, planned prayer walks for different seasons such as Advent, Lent and the crowning of Mary.

The Timetable of Prayer and Liturgy is as below:

A new school year begins with a day of prayer and liturgy exploring how we can follow St. Paul’s path to grow in God’s love to be the best we can be.

Whole School liturgical prayer takes place every Monday from 8.50-9.20am. This focuses on the gospel from Sunday. It is led by the Headteacher (deputy leads once per month) and children from different classes are involved in the planning and delivery.

Class liturgical prayer takes place at least once a week for 30 minutes. This will be planned and delivered by children (depending on the age/stage of children) Evidence will be collated in class floor books.

Each class share Mass with the parish in St. Paul’s Church in which they prepare prayers.

Each class prepare and lead a class prayer and liturgy often linked to RE topics or themes such as Friendship – Buddies or Remembrance. Parishioners, parents and members of the local community are invited to join in prayer.

Elected Spiritual Ambassadors work with the pastoral lead to prepare prayer stations and activities in the prayer room which can be accessed by year groups during structured and unstructured times of the school day.

Each class have the opportunity to explore prayer stations and prayer walks relating to seasons of the liturgical year such as Advent, Lent and the Rosary.

School celebrate Mass with the parish at various times of the school year, including Feast days. Children are invited to plan and lead aspects of the Mass and offer prayer in varying forms including liturgical dance and sign language.

All members of the school community are invited to take part in a day of spirituality in the Summer term. Each day has a theme such as Love, Hope etc.

St. Paul’s welcome an Open the Book Team on a monthly basis who share Bible stories from the Old and New Testament through drama.

St. Paul’s welcome visitors from the Alnwick Christian Churches together on regular occasions. They lead prayer and liturgy for the whole school, KS1 or KS2 groups.

The Children and Family worker for Alnwick Baptist Church is welcomed on a fortnightly basis. She works with small groups of children exploring scripture and prayer related to themes such as love, faith and hope.

Points of prayer permeate the day, including: - Morning Prayer, prayers before and after lunch and prayers at the end of every day.

**Leading Prayer and Liturgy**

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead prayer and liturgy. The Deputy Headteacher will lead prayer and liturgy once a month as part of succession planning. The class teacher will lead class prayer and liturgy. Children are taught to plan and lead prayer times according to their age.

**Recording**

Prayer and liturgy for the whole school is recorded in the form of PowerPoint presentations which are stored on the shared Google drive.

Prayer and liturgy for class worship is recorded on a liturgy planner which is stored in class teacher planning files. Some classes add the liturgy planner to their floor book, along with a record of the liturgical prayer.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Prayer and liturgy is monitored using prayer and liturgy monitoring form and is monitored by the Headteacher and a foundation governor on an annual basis. Drop in observations may happen more frequently, depending on individual circumstances.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school’s CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).

**Resources**

Resources for class focal areas and lessons are stored in the prayer room and prayer resource area. Resources are accessible for all.

**The learning environment**

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment' [[3]](#footnote-3)

St. Paul welcomes visitors at the main door and a further display created by the governors, staff and children invites all to follow St. Paul’s Path to grow in God’s love to be the best you can be. Further displays link each of our RESPECT values to scripture and children’s work illustrates how we can live out the Word of God.

A prayer garden and prayer room reflect the liturgical season or a chosen theme and are heavily influenced by the children.

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

**Retreats**

Staff and governors are invited to participate in a yearly retreat day. A day of prayer and reflection is planned at a venue away from school. The family of St. Paul have spent a day of prayer and reflection on the Holy Island and at St. Paul’s Church.

**Other opportunities**

Children in Year 3 are invited to ‘Experience Harvest’ through a day of prayer and reflection focusing on the fruits of the spirit, led by members of the Alnwick Christian churches.

Children in Year 4 are invited to participate in a day of prayer with Life Path at Brinkburn Priory and this is followed by Diary of a Disciple sessions in school led by Ignite.

Children in Year 6 participate in the Festival Day at YMT and are helped to prepare spiritually for their move to high school through prayer and reflection sessions led by Ignite.

The school community are invited to take part in a May Procession and lead the rosary in St. Paul’s Church.

The school community are invited to take part in parish events in both St. Michael’s and St. Paul’s Churches, including the tree festival and crib festival.

The school community is invited to join the Christian Churches Together in an annual carol service held at St. Michael’s Parish Church in Alnwick.

**Eucharist**

Classes attend Eucharistic celebrations in St. Paul’s Church.

The whole school attends Mass and are involved in planning and leading parts of the Mass on a regular basis, including feast days.

**The Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy**

Mrs E Lomax - Headteacher

**Policy Monitoring and Review**

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator 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.

**Appendix 1**

**The Role of the Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy**

* Formulating a written policy for prayer and liturgy
* Ensuring that there is a development plan for prayer and liturgy included in the school development plan
* Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith 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 prayer times
* Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer and liturgy including withdrawal from Collective Worship
* Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

**Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating**

* Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
* Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
* Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in prayer and liturgy

# Communication

* Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content 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 school chaplain
* Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

# Professional development/Ongoing formation

* Leading and organising inservice training and ongoing formation for prayer and liturgy
* Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
* 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
1. Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)