



St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE

St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School Prayer and Liturgy Policy

“God’s love is at the heart of our Catholic School family. We show this in our respect, kindness and love for others and by treating other people as we wish to be treated ourselves. We will encourage everyone to be the best that we can be.”

Our children have described our Mission statement as...

*“our steps to success
what inspires me
a target or goal for us all to reach
it tells us how we should be
a light to guide us in the darkness”*

This prayer and liturgy policy has been approved and adopted by the governing body in November 2025 and will be reviewed in November 2026.

Signed by the Chair of Governors

Signed by the Headteacher

1. 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.)



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2. Statement of requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils (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.

3. 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)
- 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



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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 Education Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Every meeting of staff and every school day begins and ends in prayer, focusing on the needs of the individuals, our school community, the parish and local, national or global issues as appropriate.

Weekly Acts of Collective Worship

The school gathers for whole school, Key Stage or class Collective worship, as follows:

Monday	'Monday Matters' Worship led by the Headteacher
Tuesday	KS1 & 2 Collective Worship led by Senior Leaders and class teachers
Wednesday	Whole School Gospel Worship led by the Headteacher
Thursday	Hymn Singing, praise and worship led by the Music teacher
Friday	Key Stage Celebration Worships led by the Headteacher and across the year, Class Worship, Prayer Services or class-based worship led by the children and Class staff teams



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Each Act of Worship focuses upon prayer and reflection, taking either a 'RED curriculum' branch or a current school focus, Diocesan or Parish development, local, national or world issue.

In addition, **Wednesday's** whole School Worship reflects on the Gospel of the preceding weekend.

The Celebration worships at the end of the week reflect on the week and the application of the themes from the Monday and Wednesday worships. They are also opportunities for the **children's learning and behaviour to be celebrated and rewarded with certificates of achievement.**

Liturgical Celebrations:

A programme of liturgies and Masses is drawn up with the parish priest at the beginning of the year. It reflects key days in the liturgical year and school life. 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. We take part in a variety of fund raising charities throughout the liturgical calendar.

Holy Days of Obligation:

Holy Days of Obligation are marked with a Mass or Liturgy led by different year groups. These are held within the school hall, ensuring that the entire community comes together to celebrate the faith.

Year Group Masses:

Throughout the year, year groups are invited **to visit St Pius' church to join in a Parish Mass** and are made welcome. As with Worship, classes and teachers take it in turn to prepare the liturgy.

School Parish Masses:

Every term we celebrate with a school parish mass with the community at St Pius church. The children are welcome to fully participate in the mass by singing with the choir, reading a bidding prayer or taking up the offertory procession.

Reconciliation:

Reconciliation services are offered to Years 4, 5 and 6, led by parish priests. These services provide an opportunity for individual confession. For children who have not yet received their First Holy Communion, a time for reflection and prayer is provided.



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Reflection Day:

In the final term, Year 6 students spend the day on a Retreat at Wintershall. This is an opportunity to reflect on all their joys and successes of their primary school experiences, to reflect on their faith and to reflect on their anxieties and excitements for Year 7. We also celebrate Mass together to mark the end of the Year 6s time at St Thomas and to celebrate the huge success that each one of them represents. This is followed by a Year 6 Leaver's family Pizza party and picnic where we can meet and talk and enjoy time together as a community.

Other Opportunities for Prayer

An area of each classroom is designated as a prayer corner. These provide appealing focuses for prayer and worship for the class members. These are used for collective prayer, meditation, devotion and reflection when appropriate.

When appropriate, RE lessons incorporate time of prayer and reflection. This is intended to engender in the children an appreciation of silence and deepen their experience of awe and wonder. It also introduces the value of thanksgiving, forgiveness, asking and praise. As much as possible, times of worship are child led, with the children being involved in planning and leading the worship.

A prayer room has been developed in the school. The purpose of this special area is to offer **opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection. As part of the "School Council", children from year six make up the "Liturgy Team". These children help to plan and lead Worship and have a voice in the development of the prayer and spiritual life of the school.**

Many opportunities are provided at St Thomas' for both formal and spontaneous prayer. Morning and afternoon sessions in class begin and end with prayers. The traditional prayers of the Church are learned systematically. Children are encouraged to contribute their own choice of prayer.

During important times of the year, such as November for Remembrance or during Marian months (October and May), additional prayer opportunities are provided. **Special prayers such as the Rosary, Bible stories, and praise and worship are incorporated into the school's routine.**

Our School Chaplain and Learning for Life Leader runs a prayer club on Monday lunchtimes to support children in their prayer life.

A Parents' Prayer Group meets in school each month to pray for the school.

Hymn singing and music making are most important parts of our collective worship and time is allocated to practising and rehearsing these.

5. Our school context



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Religion – Data (May 2025)

Mass:

The celebration of mass is central to the life of the school community. Preparation for the celebration of the Mass is done in collaboration with the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator, Class Teachers and with the priest celebrant. All staff are invited to attend and participate in whole school masses, including in the celebration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist if they have celebrated the Sacrament of their First Holy Communion, in prayers and music, listening to the word of God and sharing in the postures and gestures of the liturgical assembly. Those who have not received their First Holy Communion are invited to cross one or both arms across their chests and receive a blessing. For those of other faiths, respectful and internal participation is encouraged, so that what is being celebrated may engage with their own faith.

Celebration of the Gospel worship:

The Celebration of the Gospel is led by the headteacher and follows the structure of a Liturgy of the Word, centred on the proclamation of scripture and a reflective response.

Each celebration includes:

- **A greeting and welcome,**
- **A reading from Sacred Scripture,**
- **A time of reflection and response,**
- **A mission or call to action, encouraging children to “go forth” and live out** the message of the Gospel in their words, actions, and relationships during the week ahead.

Published Admission Number (PAN) of Pupils:	429
Percentage of pupils who are baptised Catholics:	71.23%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	17.17%

Percentage of pupils from other religions:	2.78%
Percentage of pupils who are non-religious:	8.82%

Children are encouraged to listen deeply and to respond thoughtfully, whether through prayer, silence, gesture, or spoken reflection. As in the Mass or other formal liturgical celebrations, gestures and postures (such as standing for the Gospel, sitting in silence, or making the Sign of the Cross) are observed to foster a sense of reverence and respect.

Music:

In accordance with Section 6.2 of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory, music is a vital part of the prayer and liturgical life of our school. All pupils are actively involved in the musical life of the school. Weekly hymn practice sessions provide an opportunity for the whole school to prepare for upcoming liturgical celebrations, learn new music and understand the meaning behind what **we sing. Music lessons also contribute to the development of pupils’ musical skills and their** appreciation of sacred music. Music is carefully selected to reflect the liturgical themes and



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structure of each celebration, supporting key parts of the liturgy such as the gathering, Gospel acclamation, offertory, communion and sending forth.

6. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. 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 separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

7. 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. 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.

8. 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. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

9. Review

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