

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

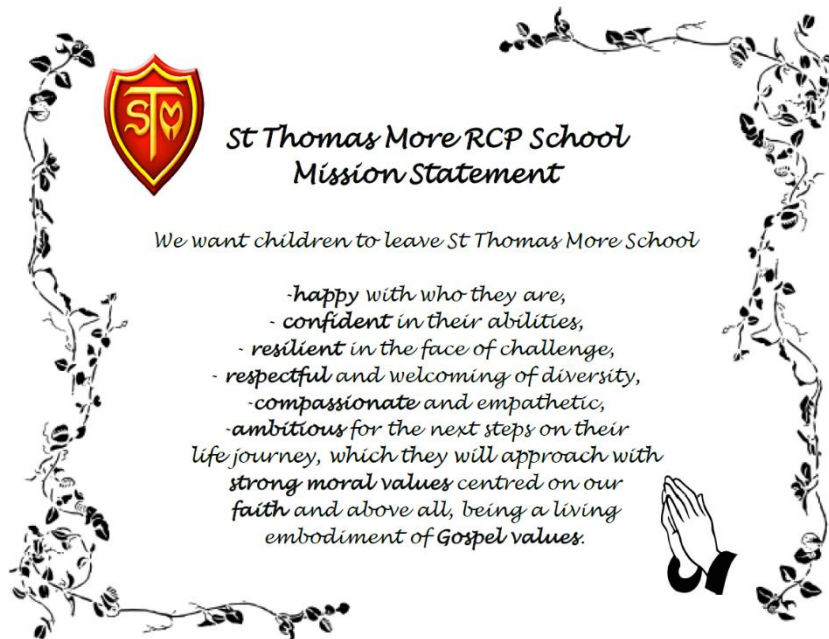
Prayer & Liturgy Policy

‘Love one another as I have loved you.’

Intent

Our intent and vision at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is to embed and enable happy confident, resilient, respectful, compassionate and ambitious learners inspired by Gospel values to become Christ like citizens.

*Through him, with him and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour is yours,
for ever and ever.
Amen.*

The graphic features a central shield with a gold border and a red background, containing the letters 'ST' in gold. To the right of the shield is the text 'St Thomas More RCP School' and 'Mission Statement'. Below this is the text 'We want children to leave St Thomas More School' followed by a list of values: '-happy with who they are,', '- confident in their abilities,', '- resilient in the face of challenge,', '- respectful and welcoming of diversity,', '-compassionate and empathetic,', and '-ambitious for the next steps on their life journey, which they will approach with strong moral values centred on our faith and above all, being a living embodiment of Gospel values.' To the right of the text is an illustration of a hand in prayer. The entire graphic is framed by a decorative vine border.

Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Jesus Christ remains central to every aspect of school life. We aim to be a living, loving and sacramental community which is inspired by the life of Christ and the teachings of the Church, rooted in Gospel values. We hope that from the minute you enter our school you clearly see and feel that we are a Catholic community. Acts of worship may take place at any time during the day. It may take the form of a single act of worship with the whole school community or separate acts of worship in school/class groups. Prayer and Liturgy in our school is an integral part of our ethos, aims and relationships, as

Christian values permeate all aspects of school life and all relationships. It is a way of deepening our relationship with God together and individually.

Prayer and liturgy in St Thomas More 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 Thomas More 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. Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

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 will enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and develop a spiritual life.

Liturgy "Liturgy" literally means, "work of the people", and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action. Liturgy involves word and gesture, silence and stillness.

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 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 than those which are specifically structured, within the RE curriculum.

Implementation

To support the implementation of our policy we use the **Prayer and Liturgy Directory 'Love You more dearly'**. It is important to know the definitions of terms taken from https://catholiceducation.org.uk/images/PLD_FINAL.pdf

Prayer, celebrations of the word, 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.

Prayer - Has been traditionally described as 'lifting up of the hearts and minds to God', which means it involves our whole person – our head as well as our heart. This definition expresses a fundamental understanding that God is concerned and interested about what goes on in our lives; is due our expression of thanksgiving and gratitude; and responds to us when we express our needs. This basic dynamic of recognition, thanksgiving, and intercession forms the core of all prayer and liturgy. It is wholly appropriate that communal prayer forms an essential dimension of life in a Catholic school. Staff and pupils are invited to recognise God's action in their lives and the life of the school, and in response to express together their needs and those of the whole human family, and to offer thanks for all that is good. Communal prayer takes place, for example, at the beginning or end of the school day, in the classroom, or at a staff meeting.

Celebrations of the word - As the time allotted to prayer lengthens and the number of people involved grows, there is a corresponding need for more formal structures. The term 'celebrations of the word' is used in this Directory for celebrations which are created for the school community and not directly taken from the liturgical books of the Church. These celebrations will take many forms, but the common element is the proclamation of scripture. These include assemblies, carol services, and other gatherings of all or part of the school community for special times and occasions. They may draw upon elements of the liturgy, such as its texts, symbols, and gestures, which help to reinforce their Catholic nature, but the various elements may be used with greater creative freedom than in the liturgy itself.

Liturgy - The most familiar forms of the liturgy celebrated in school are the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The liturgical books, such as the Roman Missal and the Lectionary, set out the structure to be followed, the words to be spoken, the gestures to be performed, and the symbols to be used when celebrating a liturgy. The possibility for some creativity and adaptation remains but they have to be exercised within the parameters authorised by the liturgical books.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St Thomas More 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.

Planning, content and celebration

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, The Way the Truth the Life, Life to the Full, 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.

Timetable of Prayer and Liturgy

- Daily prayers in class; morning, before and after lunch, end of day
- Monday whole school Collective Worship and Prayer
- Wednesday KS1 Assembly and Prayer
- Thursday KS2 Assembly and Prayer
- Friday Whole School Celebration Assembly including shared prayer
- Mass & Year Group Liturgy events
- Important events in the liturgical calendar e.g. Month of Mary

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary school, we come together in our key stages and as a whole school for **celebrations of the word**. Collective consists of a group of people coming together at an appropriate time, in an appropriate place, intentionally to focus upon things of worth and value for the group. This may be within the school hall or the classrooms. **Celebration of the word** gives us:

- A sense of special time
- A sense of special place
- The intention of focusing on matters of worth 'beyond the everyday'
- A sense of occasion

Celebration of the word are educational, planned learning experiences and contribute to the education of the children, facilitate spiritual growth and respect of each other's religious beliefs and their practises. This may be done by evoking the sense of beauty, awe, wonder or feelings of pride, pity, sharing or by exploring the spirituality of life and experience. It has its own place in the curriculum but it is also spontaneous. The RE Coordinators take a lead in promoting collective worship and they help other children to learn the important prayers that will follow them throughout their lives.

Day	Focus	Where	When
Each Half Term	Children and Class Teacher prepare their own Celebration of the Word for the term. Children work in groups with a focus, share their ideas for choices of readings, themes and prayers. The atmosphere will always be prayerful.	Classroom	Day 1 of each new half term
Monday	All classes attend assembly in the school hall. A key question related to one of our Christian values is explored through Bible stories and scripture and CST.	School Hall	9:05am-9:30am
Tuesday	Whole school singing worship with our music specialist and parishioner and RE Coordinators.	School Hall	1:30pm-1:50pm
Wednesday	KS1/EYFS Assembly KS2 Celebration of the Word	School Hall Classroom	
Thursday	KS2 Assembly KS1/EYFS Celebration of the Word	School Hall Classroom	
Friday	All classes attend Celebration of the Word in the school hall. The key question is revisited and children.		

During celebration of the word, children and staff will pay particular attention to creating an inspiring atmosphere conducive to prayer, reflection, worship – a sense of awe (a focal point, use music, lighting, scripture, word focus etc). Themes will help children explore the Liturgical year, our values and celebrate children’s achievements; gifts and talents. All staff will ensure that throughout the act of collective worship children:

- Act with reverence and respect
- Are inspired
- Participate enthusiastically
- Challenged to put the teaching into practice

A planning structure for Acts of Celebrations of the Word are available based on the four-part structure and our Ten:Ten resources are created in this format:

- Gather
- Read
- Respond
- Go forth

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. The review will assess its implementation and effectiveness and take into account any recent new guidelines.

Leading Prayer and Liturgy

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead prayer and liturgy. The class teacher will lead class prayer and liturgy. Children are taught to plan and lead prayer times according to their age.

Impact

Children develop a growing independence to pray through stillness. They understand the importance of spending time in God's presence and use prayer and liturgy to strive every day to bear witness to Christ and 'be the change they want to see in the world today'. They demonstrate reverence, sing joyfully and respect the need of others to pray. This nurtures the children to love themselves, love each other and love Jesus Christ.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and liturgy is monitored by the Headteacher and RE Leads. Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school's development plan.

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.

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference current topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos. The main hall boards will also reflect the children's work around Catholic Social Teaching.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, Governors and the RE 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.

Reviewed Date: November 2024

Next Review Date: November 2026