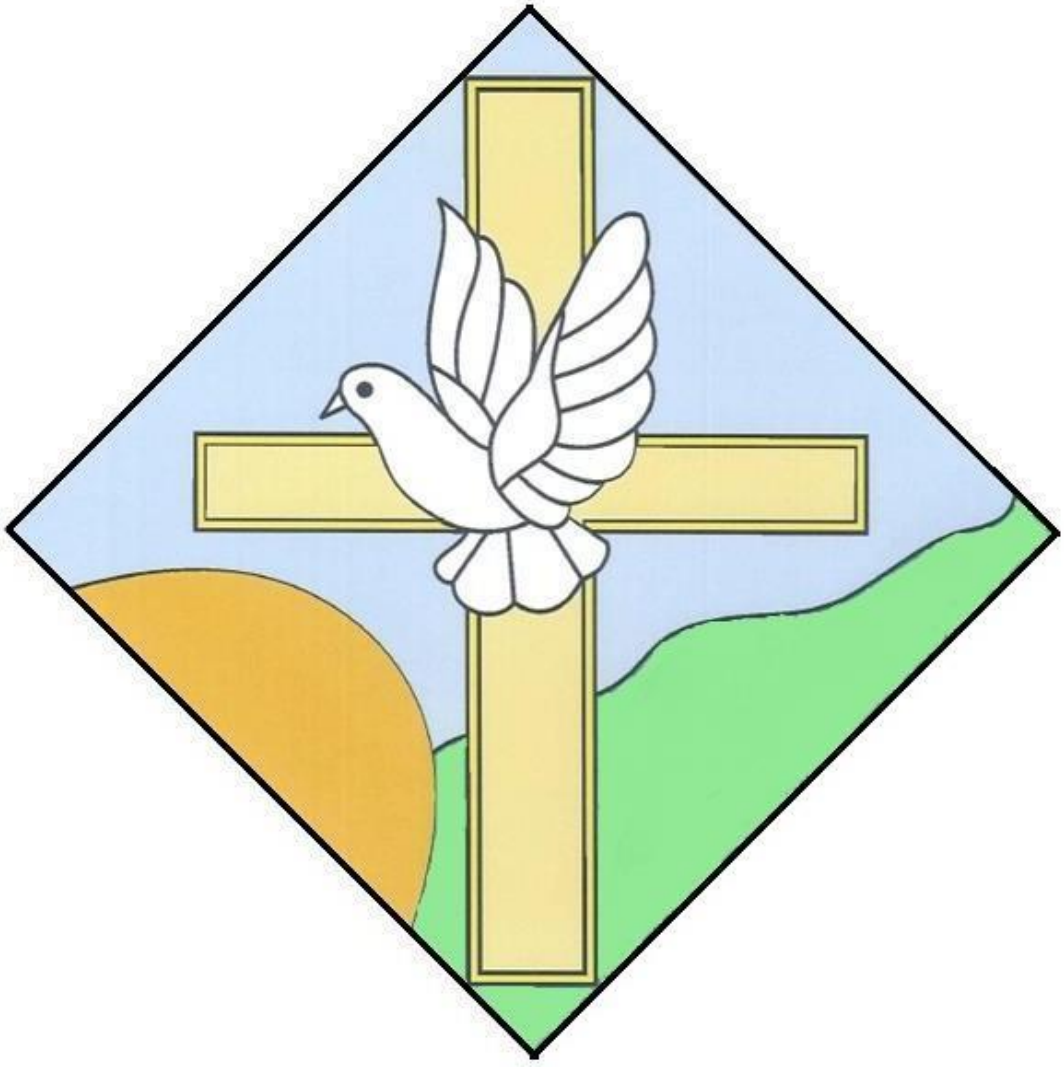
PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY 2026-2027



Approved by:	St Peter and St Paul Governing Body	**Date:** September 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2027	

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School Mission Statement

With JESUS at the heart, we learn, love and serve.

1. Introduction and Rationale

St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy is proud to be part of the Roman Catholic community within the Parish of Our Lady of the Crays. Rooted in our Catholic faith and guided by our school mission statement, “With JESUS at the heart, we learn, love and serve,” we recognise the dignity and worth of every individual as a unique child of God.

We are committed to nurturing the spiritual development of all members of our school community, recognising that each person is on their own journey of faith. Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life and mission of our school, providing opportunities for pupils and staff to encounter Christ, deepen their relationship with God and grow together as a community of faith.

We believe that prayer and worship are expressions of love, praise, thanksgiving and reverence towards God. They are our response, through word, reflection and action, to God's invitation to enter into a loving relationship with Him, through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

At St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy, Celebration of the Word is an integral part of daily school life. Rooted in Sacred Scripture and enriched by the traditions of the Catholic Church, it provides opportunities for pupils to listen to God's Word, reflect upon its meaning and consider how they can live out the Gospel values in their everyday lives.

In keeping with our mission statement, we encourage children to learn from the Word of God, love one another as Jesus taught us and serve others through their words and actions.

We acknowledge the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship for all pupils. As a Catholic school, we fulfil this responsibility through daily opportunities for prayer and worship. Celebration of the Word may take place at different times throughout the school day and may involve the whole school, individual classes, year groups or smaller groups of pupils.

We recognise that assemblies and Celebration of the Word are distinct activities. Although they may occasionally take place within the same gathering, their different purposes will always be clearly identified.

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils have meaningful opportunities to participate in, prepare and lead Celebration of the Word, according to their age, understanding and stage of spiritual development. Through these experiences, we seek to foster a lifelong love of prayer and a deeper understanding of what it means to live as followers of Jesus Christ.

2. The place of Prayer and Liturgy in the life of the school

We recognise and respect the different religious and educational experiences of all those who participate in prayer and liturgy, including:

- Those who are active members of a Catholic parish and worshipping community.
- Those for whom school may provide their first or only experience of prayer, worship and the Catholic faith.
- Those who belong to other Christian traditions or have no religious affiliation.
- Those who come from other faith backgrounds.

Guided by the Catholic Social Teaching principles of Human Dignity, Solidarity and Subsidiarity, we strive to ensure that prayer and liturgy are inclusive, meaningful and accessible to all.

We recognise that every individual has a valuable contribution to make to the prayer and worship life of our school. Through the principle of Subsidiarity, we encourage pupils to take increasing responsibility for preparing, leading and participating in Celebration of the Word, in ways appropriate to their age, understanding and spiritual development.

We believe that prayer and liturgy are shared experiences through which all members of our school community can contribute, reflect and grow spiritually, while respecting each individual's personal journey of faith.

3. The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that prayer and liturgy in our school should provide opportunities for all pupils and staff to:

- Encounter Christ and deepen their relationship with God through prayer, reflection and worship.
- Develop an understanding of the mystery of God and grow in faith.
- Listen to, reflect upon and respond to the Word of God.
- Explore their own beliefs and reflect upon spiritual and moral questions.
- Experience a sense of belonging to a loving, supportive and prayerful community.
- Develop a shared understanding of Gospel values and how these can be lived out in daily life.
- Become familiar with traditional Catholic prayers, symbols, rituals and the liturgical year.

- Develop their understanding of the different forms of Catholic prayer and worship.
- Create and offer their own prayers, both individually and with others.
- Participate actively and, where appropriate, take increasing responsibility for preparing and leading Celebration of the Word.
- Celebrate and give thanks for God's creation and the gifts of life.
- Experience moments of stillness, silence, awe and wonder.
- Find comfort, hope and strength through prayer during times of change, challenge and loss.
- Respond to God's Word through acts of love, kindness and service to others.

4. Principles of Prayer and Liturgy

All opportunities for prayer and Celebration of the Word at St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy will:

- Give glory, honour and praise to God.
- Be rooted in Scripture and reflect the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.
- Be meaningful, engaging and appropriate to the age, understanding and spiritual development of pupils.
- Provide opportunities for prayer, reflection, stillness and personal response.
- Encourage active participation and enable pupils to take increasing responsibility for preparing and leading worship.
- Reflect the seasons and celebrations of the Church's liturgical year.
- Foster a sense of community, belonging and shared responsibility, reflecting the Catholic Social Teaching principle of the Common Good.
- Help pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and confidence to participate in the prayer and liturgical life of the Church.

Celebrations of the Word will be carefully planned, appropriately paced and accessible to all pupils. They will be simple, prayerful and engaging, allowing sufficient time for reflection and response. Pupil leadership will be encouraged and developed progressively, with appropriate guidance and support from staff.

5. Organisation of Prayer and Liturgy at our school

Prayer and liturgy are woven into the daily life of St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy. A variety of opportunities are provided for pupils and staff to pray, reflect, celebrate and participate in the liturgical life of the Church.

Daily Prayer

- Daily prayers take place in every class at the beginning and end of the school day, as well as before and after lunch.
- Class Prayer Leaders support and lead these opportunities for prayer.
- Pupil-led prayer takes place every Friday morning, with children taking responsibility for planning and leading prayer appropriate to their age and understanding.

Celebration of the Word

- Whole-school Celebration of the Word takes place every Wednesday afternoon, led by the Faith Leaders and members of the Senior Leadership Team. These celebrations are generally linked to the Church's liturgical year.
- Each year group plans and leads its own Celebration of the Word, supported by the Faith Leaders and staff. Parents, carers and parishioners are invited to share in these celebrations.
- Pupils are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for preparing and leading Celebration of the Word.

Mass and Sacramental Celebrations

- Whole-school Mass is celebrated at least once per term, with pupils taking an active role in preparing and participating in the liturgy.
- Weekly Mass takes place on Wednesday mornings, celebrated by Fr Subba, with EYFS/KS1 and KS2 attending on alternate weeks.
- Children contribute to the celebration of Mass through age-appropriate roles, including readings, bidding prayers, music and other suitable forms of participation.

Whole-School Assemblies

- A whole-school celebration assembly takes place on Thursday afternoons to recognise and celebrate pupils' achievements both within and beyond school.
- Opportunities for shared prayer may form part of these gatherings, with a clear distinction maintained between assemblies and acts of worship.

Prayer Spaces and Environments

- The school provides an outdoor prayer garden and an indoor prayer area where pupils can spend time in quiet prayer and reflection.
- Each classroom has a designated prayer focus, which is updated regularly to reflect the Church's liturgical year and current themes of prayer and worship.

Parish and Community Involvement

Fr. Subba and Fr. Lynch visit the school regularly to support pupils' faith formation, prayer and religious education.

- Parents, carers and parishioners are encouraged to participate in appropriate opportunities for prayer, worship and liturgical celebration, strengthening the relationship between school, home and parish.

Pupil Faith Leadership

- Faith Leaders, Luminaries and Mini Vinnies meet regularly with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to plan prayer opportunities and actions of faith.
- These groups support the Catholic life and mission of the school through prayer, service and opportunities to put faith into action.

6. Planning and Leading Celebration of the Word

Celebration of the Word is carefully planned to ensure that it is meaningful, prayerful and appropriate to the age and understanding of the children. Celebrations are rooted in Scripture and reflect the liturgical seasons and traditions of the Catholic Church.

Celebration of the Word generally follows a four-part structure:

- **We Gather:** Children come together in a prayerful atmosphere, using music, silence, symbols or a simple gathering prayer to prepare themselves for worship.
- **We Listen:** Scripture is proclaimed and children are encouraged to listen attentively and reflect upon God's message.
- **We Respond:** Children are given opportunities to respond to the Word of God through prayer, reflection, silence, music or symbolic action.
- **We Go Forth:** Children are encouraged to consider how they can live out God's Word through their words and actions in their daily lives.

Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in planning, preparing and leading Celebration of the Word, with appropriate guidance and support from staff. As children progress through the school, they are given increasing responsibility and independence in choosing suitable prayers, music, symbols and responses, while ensuring that Scripture remains central to the celebration.

Staff support pupils in developing the confidence, understanding and skills needed to lead worship reverently and meaningfully. Opportunities are provided for children to reflect upon their experiences of Celebration of the Word and consider how these experiences influence their faith and actions. Through this approach, we aim to

ensure that Celebration of the Word is a meaningful and prayerful experience in which pupils are active participants rather than simply observers.

7. The Development of Prayer through the School

At St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy, we recognise that teaching children the words and traditions of Catholic prayer provides them with the foundations to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.

We encourage children to experience prayer in a variety of forms, including formal, spontaneous, individual and communal prayer, as well as silent, spoken, sung and meditative prayer. Opportunities for stillness and reflection enable children to develop a sense of peace, deepen their spirituality and reflect upon their thoughts, feelings and actions.

As children progress through the school, they develop their knowledge of traditional Catholic prayers alongside the confidence to express their own thoughts and intentions through personal prayer.

In Early Years, children are introduced to simple prayers, gestures and moments of stillness. As they move through the school, they develop a deeper understanding of traditional Catholic prayers and become increasingly confident in expressing their own prayers and participating in different forms of worship.

Class prayer books provide opportunities for children to record their own prayers and reflections, supporting their developing prayer life. These prayers may be shared during Religious Education lessons and class Celebrations of the Word.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is an important part of our school's liturgical life and takes place at the end of the Christmas, Easter and summer terms. Led by Fr. Subba with pupils participating through appropriate serving roles, Benediction provides a special opportunity for reverence, quiet reflection and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

8. Meditation

Meditation provides opportunities for children and staff to experience stillness, deepen their spirituality and develop a closer relationship with God.

Children are introduced to different forms of Christian meditation, including guided reflection, quiet prayer, music and the use of prayer focuses. We also encourage the practice of Lectio Divina (prayerful reading and reflection upon Scripture) and Visio Divina (prayerful reflection using sacred images).

These approaches encourage children to listen attentively, reflect upon God's Word and consider its meaning in their own lives. Through prayer, silence and contemplation, children are given time to respond personally to what they have heard or experienced.

In a spirit of peace and reflection, and guided by the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Subsidiarity, children are encouraged to respond in ways appropriate to their age and understanding. This may include personal prayer, discussion, artwork, written reflection or considering how they can live out God's Word through their actions.

Through regular opportunities for meditation, we seek to nurture children's spiritual development and encourage a deeper, more personal relationship with Jesus.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality and provision of prayer and liturgy are regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure that they remain meaningful, inclusive and reflective of the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Monitoring and evaluation may include:

- Observations of Celebration of the Word and other opportunities for prayer and worship.
- Gathering pupil voice to understand children's experiences of prayer and liturgy and identify opportunities for further development.
- Reviewing pupils' participation, leadership and growing independence in planning and leading Celebration of the Word.
- Evaluating the use of prayer spaces, resources and the liturgical environment throughout the school.
- Seeking feedback from staff and, where appropriate, parents and members of the parish community.

The Senior Leadership Team, alongside those responsible for Catholic Life and Mission, will oversee the monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy. Findings will be used to celebrate strengths, identify areas for development and inform future planning.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to reflect the Catholic ethos of the school and relevant diocesan guidance.