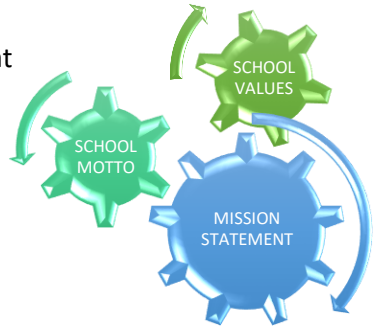
PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

2026-2028

Our English Martyrs' School community aims to follow the example of Christ in welcoming, recognising, fostering and developing each individual as a unique and special gift of GOD with value and dignity

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic character and ethos of the school is central to everything we do at English Martyrs' Primary School. Our school curriculum is therefore driven by the concepts and beliefs as outlined in our school's **Mission Statement**, the **School Values** and the **School Motto**:



MISSION STATEMENT

Our English Martyrs' School community aims to follow the example of Christ, in welcoming, recognising, fostering and developing each individual, as a unique and special gift from God with value and dignity.

SCHOOL VALUES

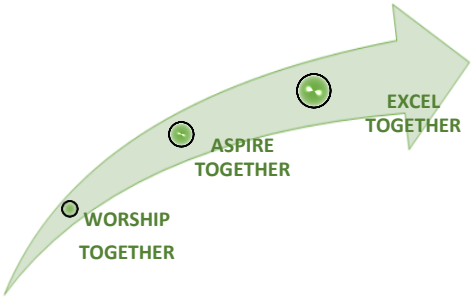
Our six **school values** are a vital part of our ethos and underpin our vision and the way we work together as a school community.



TERM	RELATED VIRTUES and FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT
AUTUMN 1 (Sept – Oct)	FAITH (Theological Virtue) HOPE (Theological Virtue); CHARITY (Theological Virtue); FAITHFULNESS; HUMILITY;
AUTUMN 2 (Nov – Dec)	CHARITY/LOVE (Theological Virtue); PATIENCE; GENTLENESS; PEACE
SPRING 1 (Jan – Feb)	PRUDENCE (Cardinal Virtue); PERSEVERANCE/RESILIENCE; TEMPERANCE (Cardinal Virtue);
SPRING 2 (Feb – March)	JUSTICE (Cardinal Virtue); FORTITUDE (Cardinal Virtue); GENEROSITY
SUMMER 1 (April – May)	CHARITY/LOVE (Theological Virtue); MERCY; KINDNESS; GENTLENESS; FORGIVENESS
SUMMER 2 (June – July)	PRUDENCE (Cardinal Virtue); TEMPERANCE (Cardinal Virtue); HONESTY; SELF-CONTROL;

SCHOOL MOTTO

Our Motto embodies and explains what we aim to achieve as a school community. School leaders, all members of the school staff and parents strive to and are driven by their commitment to **Aspire together**, **Achieve together** and as a Christian community **Worship together**.



Understanding Prayer and Liturgy

(From the Prayer and Liturgy Directory)

> *In any school 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.

Prayer **Liturgical Prayer** **Liturgy**

Christian meditation Service of the Word Sacraments:

Prayer before meals Assembly Liturgy of Hours Mass

Penance

Devotions Benediction

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.

ENGLISH MARTYRS' PRIMARY SCHOOL
Prayer and Liturgy Policy

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]

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 English Martyrs' 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 English Martyrs' 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

[1] Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

- 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 English Martyrs' 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] 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, 'The Way, The Truth and the Life' programme, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. The Feast of the English Martyrs, CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial Day etc.
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 Timetable of Prayer and Liturgy is as below:

DAY	***WORSHIP***	***LED BY***
Monday	*Whole school Liturgy and worship Buildings 1 and 2*	*Headteacher and school worship leaders*
Tuesday	*Collective worship in class*	*Class teacher and pupils*
Wednesday	*Collective worship in class*	*Class teacher and pupils*
Thursday	*Worship as part of Good News assembly*	*SLT members and worship leaders*
Friday	*Collective worship in class or part of Class led assemblies*	*Class teacher and pupils Parents invited*

At key points in the Church's Liturgical year there are special liturgies to help the school community focus more clearly on the meaning of the particular liturgical season eg Advent, Lent service and the Passion of Christ.

Leading Prayer and Liturgy
As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead prayer and liturgy. In the absence of the Headteacher, prayer and liturgy will be led by the Deputy Headteacher of Assistant Headteacher. The class teacher will lead class prayer and liturgy. Children are taught to plan and lead prayer times according to their age.

[2] Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Recording
Prayer and liturgy are recorded by saving PowerPoint Presentations on the Schools W-Drive. Teachers can follow up on the first whole school collective worship (held every Monday in both buildings) when leading Collective worship in class on the other days of the week.

Collective worship is also recorded on the main school's Year Planner.

Monitoring and Evaluation
The Headteacher and RE Lead normally monitors prayer and liturgy across the school when attending Good News assemblies on Thursdays or Class Led assemblies on Fridays and occasional class based collective worship.

Prayer and liturgy is monitored using prayer and liturgy monitoring form.

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

Resources
The resources for collective worship include a variety of Bibles, stories with a biblical theme, Prayer books, posters, artefacts, ideas for services and assemblies. These are stored in Building one (first floor). The Headteacher and RE Subject Leader are always willing to help teachers select suitable resources. A range of resources are available in the Romero room.

In each classroom there should be:

- A focus for prayer/class assembles /worship.
- A copy of the Bible
- A crucifix
- A selection of religious books – including for example, The school's prayer book, God's Story, The Church's Story, books on the lives of Saints etc.
- Copies of the Wednesday Word

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]
Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' programme topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Eucharist
The Eucharist is the focus and source of Christian life. At the beginning and end of a term and Holy days of obligation the school community celebrates the Eucharist with parishioners in the parish church.

Our aim is to lead all the children to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations especially the Holy Mass. Every effort is made to increase the children's participation and make it an intense experience.

[3] Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to the complete text of the Church's Lectionary, the ***'Directory for Masses with Children'*** or similar publications as a basis for our practice.

The Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

The Headteacher is the lead for Prayer and Liturgy at English Martyrs' Primary School supported by other SLT members and the RE Lead.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher as 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

[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group, which might include, the coordinator, the headteacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the coordinator to lead this group.]

Appendix 2

PROGRESSION

EYFS

Adults to plan using 'GATHER, LISTEN, RESPOND AND GO FORTH' template.

Children have opportunity to contribute to one focus area each week during prayer led by teacher

Key Stage 1

Children plan and prepare focal point for liturgy using a range of resources and artefacts supplied by teacher.

- By Year 2 pupils are able to articulate their choice of resources for focal point
- In Year 1 adults support children in selecting Bible stories for liturgy.
- In Year 2 children explore Bible stories and hymns for liturgy, with adult support.
- By Year 2 pupils have opportunity to work in groups to plan liturgy.

Lower Key Stage 2

- Year 3 to plan how they will GATHER and what they will LISTEN to during liturgy. They will be supported with planning responses.
- By Year 4 pupils will be able to plan gather, listen, response and supported with going forth.

Upper Key Stage 2

- Pupils will plan GATHER, LISTEN, RESPONSE AND GO FORTH using a range of resources.
- They will use prayer, songs, actions, word, etc within the liturgy.
- By Year 6 they will be able to give reasons for their choices.
- Individual evaluation following class discussion. Monitoring and Evaluation

At least once every 2 years, the school's provision of prayer and liturgy will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Subject Leader for Prayer and Liturgy and is to be evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every 2 years.