



OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL
AND
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

With delegated responsibility from the
Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust

**PRAYER AND LITURGY
POLICY**

APPROVED BY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY	July 2024
SCRUTINISED BY ETHOS AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE	June 2024
DATE LAST REVIEWED	June 2024
MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE	Headteacher
STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY	Non-Statutory



Community

Unity



Opportunity

This Prayer and Liturgy Policy framework has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body in July 2024 and will be reviewed every three years or sooner if directed by the Trust

1.0 The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

- 1.1 'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers¹ 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.)
- 1.2 Oaklands Catholic school was established by the Sisters of Christ in 1966 following the merger of The Convent of The Cross and the Portsmouth Catholic Grammar, St Teresa's. By 1971 the sisters had reordered the school to provide non-fee-paying provision for Catholic boys and girls in the Portsmouth and Havant area. At that point Oaklands became a voluntary-aided mixed comprehensive school.

2.0 Charism

- 2.1 Within schools established by religious orders the word 'charism' is used with regularity. It is used to describe their spiritual orientation and anything specific about their particular order's mission.
- 2.2 The Charism of the Sisters of Christ is 'to bear witness to Jesus Christ, source and maker of unity, and thus lead us into the heart of the Father's plan.' Today, at Oaklands, we articulate this charism as 'United by the Cross to love and serve our brothers and sisters.'
- 2.3 The responsibility for the maintenance of the charism of the Sisters of Christ remains with the whole school community and since 1990s has been in the hands of a completely lay teaching staff.

3.0 Ethos

- 3.1 Every school whether Catholic or non-Catholic tends to have its own 'ethos'; a prevalent character or spirit that pervades the habits and actions of those people who are part of the school. What is distinctive about Oaklands 'Catholic ethos' is that it aims to educate the whole person, our school Mission Statement supports this.
- 3.2 At Oaklands, education is not solely about academic success. It is also about following in the mission of the Church, especially in concern for the marginalised or the preferential option for the poor. This was central to the Sisters of Christ when they started Oaklands and remains a significant part of the ethos of our school, providing a line of sight between the work we do now and the Charism of the Sisters of Christ.

¹ To Love You More Dearly; The Prayer & Liturgy Directory for Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales 2023 draws a distinction between prayer and liturgy. Section 3.1 provides guidance. In summary, liturgy is a term used to describe prayer and worship taken from 'official' books and celebrations that have sacramental base. In school this is likely to be Mass or reconciliation.

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, for example when students gather to pray together in assembly.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 2019. Paragraph 2590 defines prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God."

Prayer occurs as part of a liturgy or within celebrations of the word.

3.3 The mission statement of Oaklands captures the essence of our ethos perfectly:

Community: No one gets left behind.

Unity: United by the Cross

Opportunity: Potential for greatness

3.4 Our school community is a mixture of Catholics, other Christian traditions, other faith traditions and people of good will. How we pray and worship reflects the diverse nature of our community, without losing our Catholic identity.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Gal 3:28

4.0 Statement of Requirement

4.1 The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, including those in the sixth form (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*).

4.2 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)). Sixth-form pupils can choose to withdraw themselves from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1B)).

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

5.0 Responsibility

5.1 Trustees

ESCAT Trustees are ultimately responsible for the Catholic life and mission of schools in ESCAT. This responsibility is delegated to local governing bodies (LGBs). Trustees will evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of Trust schools’ policy on prayer and liturgy, they will do this through

- CEO reports
- Minutes of local governing body meetings
- Analysis of the resource provided to support prayer and liturgy.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

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 Advisory Service (CASO) and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

6.0 Overview of Prayer and Liturgy Provision

6.1 Celebration of Mass

- Whole School Mass is celebrated at the start of the autumn term, (school's Feast Day) then again at the end of the autumn and summer terms.
- Each Year Group has at least one year Mass per year. This is celebrated by one of our priest chaplains and takes place in the Hall on the morning of the day allocated.

- For Year 11 and Year 13 in addition we celebrate a leavers mass, held respectively in the Hall. Both of these occasions are very much a joint venture between pupils, Heads of Year, Chaplain and RE staff to ensure a respectful yet memorable experience for the pupils who are leaving.
- Each Year 7 tutor group in the autumn term celebrates a “Teaching Mass” for, in order to develop and deepen students’ understanding and participation in the Mass. These Masses are prepared with the chaplain and the Priest in liaison with the Head of Year for Year 7 and the RE staff.
- In Year 7 form groups experience the celebration of Mass together, they also celebrate mass for our Year 7 Romero days, the Year 7 Pilgrimage.
- On Holy days of obligation, we either celebrate Mass in school or we take students to local parishes depending on the availability of clergy.
- Once a month we celebrate early morning Mass for staff in the chapel staff briefing is suspended to provide an opportunity for all staff to attend. Once a term this Mass is opened up to the wider community.
- Masses are celebrated by local Priests from neighbouring parishes, these co-ordinate with the other three primary schools across the pastoral area.
- Occasionally, we are unable to secure a priest to celebrate mass on Holy days of obligation due to the demands in parishes and across other school. On these occasions the school will come together for prayer and worship marking the important feast.

6.2 **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

- During Lent the Chaplain organises a whole school programme, prepared at a different level for each year, to enable all students to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, for those that are not Catholic there is an opportunity to talk with the priest.
- A Penitential Prayer Service is held for each year group which helps to prepare students to receive the sacrament and/or reflect on the relevant themes covered.
- The Sacrament of reconciliation is voluntary and the success of this relies on the involvement of a large number of priests.
- Reconciliation is also available to students on a monthly basis prior to voluntary Mass during lunchtime.

6.3 **Year Group Prayer, worship and celebration of The Word**

- Each Year Group assembles once per week for prayer and worship either in the Hall or the Chapel.
- The prayer and worship may be led by SLT, the Year Head, Assistant Head of Year, one of the Form Tutors or the Form Group under the leadership of the Form Tutor (this is done on a rotational basis), or the School Chaplain. When students are involved, they take a lead in authoring the content, selecting the scripture, writing prayers and selecting the music.
- The themes for prayer and worship is guided by the Sunday scripture, reading of the day or other scripture relevant for an occasion in school.
- Once a year each House group gathers for Prayer and Worship. This provides an opportunity for students to focus on an aspect of the life of their saint which is relevant for prayer and reflection.

6.4 **Prayer and Worship and celebration of The Word during registration time**

- One of the important aspects of Form based worship is that it enables the Tutor Group to come together and to pray together and to share together.
- Form prayer and worship forms part of the Daily Collective Act of Worship, but in smaller groups, namely the Tutor Group, throughout the school.

- Except on the day when the Year is in the Hall, the worship takes place in the Form Base, facilitated by the Form Tutor. For these four days, the Form Tutor organises a short Form worship-based on the guidance offered by the Chaplain and the Prayer and Liturgy coordinator. One day the group will reflect on the Sunday Gospel, (prepared by the Chaplain), on another, they group will reflect on an aspect of Catholic Social Teaching and mission statement (we call this The Oaklands Way). On another day, the students will prepare and lead their peers in prayer and on the final day, the tutor will prepare a reflection for their tutor group. These are based on the *lectio divina* and may reference topical issues of the day, but always with scripture and reflection at the heart of the worship. The Gospel reflection and The Oaklands Way are made electronically for the use of tutors. Tutors are also provided with support and resources to ensure that the students author their own prayer and worship, in the form time as well as when the tutor group is leading the rest of their year team in a worship assembly.
- On rota-basis, tutor groups also visit the Chapel during registration for Morning Worship, facilitated and led by the School Chaplain. This worship takes its form from the Liturgy of the Hours to introduce students to the Prayer of the Church. This includes Scripture, Praise and Worship, intercessory prayer and a short period of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

6.5 Prayer during Lessons

- Each lesson starts with the Sign of the Cross, this may occur at the start of the lesson or once students have settled. In addition to reminding them of the presence of Christ in all they do. It connects the students back to the charism of the founding order
- The subject teacher for lesson 5 is tasked to finish with a short prayer following the completion of the afternoon register. Some staff may select their own material or use traditional well-known prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be To The Father etc.) whereas others may simply finish with the Sign of the Cross. Some Departments have put together prayer resources specific to their subjects.

6.6 Special Services that include prayer and worship

- The school holds a number of special services and activities that bring the school and wider community together in prayer for example Christmas Carol Service and the Cultural diversity. By tradition not only are members of our immediate school community invited, but also those in the wider local community.

6.7 Voluntary Lunchtime prayer and worship and Celebration of The Word

- Stations of the Cross are also presented, with the support of the Chaplain at points during the year.
- When the Chapel is not being used for formal or organised prayer it is open and available for students to use.

6.8 Prayer Groups

- Prayer Groups take place in the Chapel.
- Staff pray together at Briefing on a Monday morning and on a voluntary basis in the Chapel on Tuesday mornings at 8.40am
- Students and staff are invited and frequently attend the chapel to pray together in times of bereavement or other occasions of need.
- A parent prayer group that meet on a Friday morning at 9.15am. This is made up of parents of Oaklands with an invitation extended to St Peter's Primary School.

6.9 Praying around School

- A number of prayer stations exist around the school site, these provide an opportunity for spontaneous prayer and are used by groups as a focus.
- Prayers are displayed prominently in the canteen providing students with a focus before a meal.

6.10 Mission Experience Retreat and Pilgrimage

- Once a year each year group engages in a mission experience. This may include, mass, adoration and external speakers. The mission experience provides an opportunity to pray often focussed on a particular theme.
- Up until 2021-22 students were provided with a residential experience this will be offered again at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 in 2024-2025.
- Year 8 and 9 have a day of reflection led by the TenTen Theatre Company in the summer term, with a particular focus on valuing self and forming loving relationships.
- Year 7 go on pilgrimage to Sacred Heart Church in June/July.

6.11 INSET Days, Staff Retreat and Meetings

- Once every 3 years an INSET Day is set aside for a staff retreat
- Twice a year time is set aside during whole school INSET for prayer and formation.
- All meetings start with prayer
- A formation prayer booklet is published for Governors.

6.12 Special Services

- Oaklands has developed a tradition of holding services as required to mark significant life events e.g. the retirement of long-serving members of staff, memorial services for members of the community who have died.

6.13 Communicating with the Wider Community

- Each edition of the Oaklands News contains a piece that references scripture or the message from the gospel
- Prayers from The Oaklands Way are shared with parents either weekly or fortnightly
- All parent forum meetings start with a prayer.

7.0 Resourcing

7.1 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.

8.0 Training and Formation

- 8.1 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. The school supports and publicises the parish Alpha programme. In recent years a number of staff and students have been received into the Catholic church.

9.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 9.1 The school has a process for the monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy that will 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. The prayer and liturgy group which includes members drawn from teaching staff, support staff, LSAs, students from all key stages have a role in the evaluation of prayer and worship in school.
- 9.2 Our evaluative process include:
- Governors visit prayer and liturgy occasions within school and feed back to the Governing Body.
 - Senior staff visit year group worship and form worship and provide feedback to staff.
 - Parents will be surveyed on the prayer life of the school and wider community.
 - Once a year Senior Leaders will survey staff on their confidence in leading prayer with their tutor group.
 - Student voice groups will be surveyed to develop an understanding of prayer and worship through the lens of a student.
 - The chaplaincy group review the success of events in school this will include receiving feedback from clergy and gathering comments from students.
 - Senior leaders will capture soft evidence, for example messages from year worship being echoed back in the classrooms, corridors and playgrounds.

10.0 Review

- 10.1 The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the Governors.