

Policy for Collective Worship

What is Collective Worship?

It is the time set aside each day to provide an opportunity for children and staff to meet together to worship God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to explore their own beliefs and to consider spiritual and moral issues.

Worship in our school is wholly Christian, and usually takes place in the context of whole school, key-stage or class assemblies. Material from other faiths may be used in assemblies where appropriate, and elements which different faiths hold in common are often used.

Christian worship is concerned with bringing praise, thanksgiving and adoration to God through Jesus. It is the Christian's loving response, in work and action to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with Him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Worship is fundamental to the life of our school and the focus of our worship is God. It is not an occasion for evangelism, but neither will it compromise the headship of Christ.

We recognise that, although our school has a Christian foundation, our children come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including children from other faith, communities and those who do not share in any particular belief. Whilst the focus of our worship is Christian, we aim to be sensitive to the needs of all our children, and provide opportunities for all to share in worship in a way which makes sense to them and is appropriate to their stage of development.

As we are an Aided school, arrangements for collective worship is the responsibility of the governors in consultation with the Headteacher. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring requirements are met. Foundation Governors have particular responsibility for seeing, so far as is practicable, that the character of the school is reflected in worship.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of collective worship. Appropriate supervision will be provided for children who are withdrawn. The right of withdrawal does not apply to assemblies. Those wishing to exercise this right are requested to discuss arrangements with the Headteacher.

Our Aims in the providing a daily act worship are that all children will have opportunities to

- worship God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- take part and respond actively
- provide time and space to celebrate wonder, mystery, imagination, power and achievement
- develop compassion, forgiveness empathy with others in joy and sadness
- respond with care and concern for the created world
- learn to take responsibility for themselves and others

The structure of Collective Worship

We meet as a whole school for worship three times a week; on one day each week children meet as a key stage; on the remaining day, worship is in class groups. The vicar leads worship on one day a week.

On the last Friday in each month in term time we hold whole school worship in Church. In addition to this we special acts of worship in church to celebrate Christmas, Easter and the end of summer leavers' service.

The Content of Collective worship in our School

Acts of Worship are planned around a theme which may have a moral or spiritual focus. Stories from the Old and New Testament are used regularly but not exclusively as sources for teaching on spiritual, moral and social issues.

Assemblies include sharing of special achievements or work. Children are also encouraged to bring news of particular achievements to share with everybody in assemblies.

The beginning of our act of worship is usually signified by the lighting of a candle on a table which also contains a cross, and any other material relevant to the theme.

The main focus of the act of worship is introduced through stories, songs, drama, questioning or occasionally through dance. Worship may include a short quiet time for reflection.

Prayer is always used as part of worship, though children of other faiths are not expected to say Christian prayers, and we are most concerned to allow all children to retain the integrity of their own beliefs without compromise.

The act of worship usually finishes with prayer and often includes a song of praise or thanksgiving. Children are invited to include themselves in the prayer by saying Amen at the end if they wish.

Planning and Evaluating Collective Worship

Whole School acts of Worship are planned by the Head and Deputy Head. The Headteacher liaises with the Vicar and any other ministers who may work within the theme or plan their own theme

When planning around a theme we try to incorporate materials from other faiths where appropriate, together with common elements from other faiths.

Other Christian groups in the community come in to lead acts for worship from time to time.

Major Christian festivals are celebrated within our Worship. Major festivals from other faiths are included in assemblies arranged for that purpose at key-points during the year. Members of other faith communities are invited into school to lead assemblies from time to time, focusing on other faiths, but worship does not take place in this context.

Evaluation of worship is a natural element of the planning process and plans are often modified as a result of this. Before beginning to plan a new theme we find it useful to reflect on previous successes or weaknesses.