



## Collective Worship Policy

Updated: October 2016

## Mission Statement

Based on our Christian ethos and values of kindness, caring, forgiveness, compassion and cooperation, we actively support the spiritual and moral development of our children and wider community. Additionally, we are committed to high quality independent and academic learning within a happy, inclusive safe and secure environment.

### Aims

- To create a happy school in which children work hard and learn well, within a Christian environment.
- To promote a Christian ethos and Christian values in all aspects of education.
- To develop in children a sense of awe and wonder at the world around them.
- To help children to become caring and responsible citizens who have positive attitudes and respect towards themselves and others.
- To respect the dignity and cultural inheritance of each child.
- To provide equal opportunities regardless of race, gender, class and ability.
- To see all children as individuals and help them to achieve their full potential.
- To create a secure, purposeful and stimulating environment for personal and academic development
- To enable children to achieve their potential and provide opportunities appropriate to each child's needs.
- To encourage, develop and extend individual self-worth and confidence through a celebration of children's personal achievements.
- To equip children to become independent learners and develop skills to make informed decisions
- To promote positive relationships between governors, staff, parents, church and the wider community
- To actively encourage parental participation in all aspects of school life

### Rationale and Statutory Duty

The 1988 Education Reform Act, modified by the Education Act (1993), requires all pupils in attendance at a maintained school "to take part in a daily act of collective worship" ERA Sections 6(1).

At St Thomas' CE Primary School a whole-school or class group assembly is held daily within which there is an act of collective worship which fulfils the requirements of this Act. Whilst ensuring that the worship is educationally appropriate, account is taken of family backgrounds, the age and aptitudes of our children.

### The Definition of School Worship Adopted by the School

Worship is regarded as a collective act or opportunity to think about and relate to God, and to consider and reflect on how belief and faith in God may affect our lives. Worship regularly incorporates prayer and reflection.

Beliefs that are common to our understanding of worship are:

- God as Trinity: One God in three persons. Expressed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- God's activity and being in creation, making and sustaining all that is.
- God's being and redemptive work in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
- God's continued presence and action for good in the world as the Holy Spirit.

Our key task of collective worship in school is to enable pupils to explore and experience these beliefs and the practices that flow from them.

### Agreed Aims of Collective Worship

- To contribute to the personal development of the individual
- To enhance spiritual and moral development
- To encourage individuals to explore and question their own beliefs and to consider the beliefs and feelings of others
- To build a community identity through which individuals feel valued
- To offer the opportunity for celebration and reflection
- To offer consideration of issues which are important in moral and religious context to the ethos of this school and the wider community.

### Key elements

- The Bible, used in worship as a source of knowledge, inspiration and prayer.
- Christian symbols used in worship as a means of expressing belief and faith
- The cycle of the Anglican year observing key festivals
- The authorised forms of Anglican worship
- Traditional responses, prayers and hymns either used regularly or occasionally

### The Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship is held in the morning at 9.25am, usually lasting about 20 minutes. The act of collective worship can vary in length.

We conduct worship in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that service time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate manner. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully in prayer and hymns.

A collective worship timetable is set and we encourage involvement from faith practitioners from outside the school. We welcome members of the Churches Together Community to lead our worship.

We invite parents to assembly when their child's achievement is being celebrated and collective worship involves their child's class. Once a term it is the responsibility of each class to produce a service. Four times a year a church service is held and led by the pupils of class five. This service also includes songs and music from the rest of the school and a contribution from the vicar. All members of the school and church community are invited to attend. This helps to promote the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children.

We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

### The Content of School Worship

Most acts of worship will be of a Christian nature, the emphasis of which will have regard for the Christian/Church calendar and so acknowledge festivals and particular occasions, and thus ensure variety and relevance.

In broad terms emphasis will be on:

- Christian beliefs and values
- World faiths
- Moral issues
- Celebration of pupils' achievements

A variety of methods will be used to conduct collective worship including:

- Music
- Exposition of an idea using a variety of methods which engage the interest of the pupils
- Stories
- Poems
- Pupil presentations
- Visitors
- Drama

We have dedicated a theme to each half term over a two-year cycle. These themes are based on Christian Values and are as follows: New Beginnings/Creation, Peace, Respect, Friendship, Hope, Fruits of the Spirit, Justice, Unity and Diversity, Courage and Community.

### Place of worship

- The principal place of worship within the school is the hall, although acts of worship will also take place in classrooms where appropriate.
- The hall will be presented during such times as an appropriate place of worship, and it should be clear that an act of worship is taking place.
- The Worship Table is a focal point during each service. The table needs to have representations of the Holy Trinity displayed at all times and must include a Bible (God), an empty cross (Jesus) and a candle (the Holy Spirit).

- The Worship Table must be dressed with the school's worship table cloth.
- At times in the school year, the church will also be used.

### Resources

There is a collection of resources available to staff. These are based in the Headteacher's office. The R.E. Co-ordinator and the internet are able to offer other resources to assist staff.

### The Contribution of Collective Worship to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

One of the key aims of collective worship is to offer pupils opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**Spiritual Development** is promoted by:

- the celebration of special achievements
- guided reflection
- consideration of a variety of beliefs, values and feelings
- appreciation of aspects of life which have special meaning and which contribute to a sense of awe and wonder

**Moral Development** is promoted by:

- consideration of moral codes found in school, in religions and in society
- consideration of relationships
- encouraging empathy by the consideration of moral issues from different perspectives

**Social Development** is promoted by:

- coming together as a school / class group
- bringing visitors into school from the community
- sharing values and matters of concern

**Cultural Development** is promoted by:

- using music, art, drama, story and artefacts from a range of cultural backgrounds
- exploring and celebrating aspects of religion and culture

### Right of Withdrawal

Parents can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents must inform the Headteacher in writing of their wish to withdraw their child from collective worship but do not have to give reasons for their request.

Staff should ensure that they have informed the Head of their decision to exercise their right of withdrawal from collective worship, but should note the requirement that they may be required to assist in the supervision of pupils in service, as necessary.