

## **Collective Worship Policy**

### **Philosophy**

St Mary's C of E School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. Worship is therefore an important part of the school day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a school community to reflect and deepen our spiritual understanding. It is attended by all students, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in.

### **Legal Requirements**

St. Mary's is a VC Church of England Primary School.

As such it has a Trust Deed which states that worship should be "in accordance with the principles and practises of the Church of England". All acts of worship are in accordance with this Trust Deed and reflect the Anglican status of the school. In addition to daily school worship, special celebrations take place in Church.

In accordance with legal requirements (School Standards and Framework Act 1998) an act of collective worship, taking account of the age, aptitude and background of pupils, is provided daily for all pupils except those withdrawn by parents. The school expects that withdrawal will only be made following discussions with the head teacher, followed by written confirmation of withdrawal. The school has a suitable system of supervision for those withdrawn from acts of worship.

### **Rationale**

As a Church of England School worship is an important part of the school day, where the spiritual development of learners is nurtured. The schools key Christian values are shared and promoted during this time and the school seeks to develop an atmosphere where children can reflect on and deepen their spiritual understanding. Strong links with St. Mary's Church support this aim with Christian visitors leading assemblies each week and half termly services held in church.

Because we aim for acts of worship to be inclusive of all pupils there is an expectation that all pupils will be present. Careful planning and preparation ensure that there are clear learning intentions for pupils. Collective worship is first and foremost for the educational benefit of all pupils. It is a shared activity which allows for a variety of responses, and provides an opportunity to focus and respond to stimuli giving the opportunity to explore, reflect on and understanding the meaning of the Christian Faith.

### **AIMS**

At St. Mary's School Collective Worship aims to:

- reflect the schools' Trust Deed underpinning the Christian values and ethos of the school
- reflect the Ethos Statement and/or Mission Statement of the school
- Strengthen and support the school community and celebrate each unique individual member made in the image of God;
- Provide members of the school community with the opportunity to:
  1. Praise and reach out to God;
  2. Experience stillness and quiet;

3. Respond to a Christian language and symbolism;

- offer opportunities to share worship with parents, governors and members of the local community
- Celebrate and give thanks for achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals;
- be appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of the pupils
- be inclusive and an occasion where each individual's integrity is respected
- be clearly planned and be regularly monitored and evaluated
- be an opportunity for pupils to reflect on human existence
- help children explore and develop their own spirituality
- enable children to explore and evaluate their own beliefs
- Allow reflection and response to fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings;
- Contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
- Foster and enable a concern for the needs of others;

## **STRUCTURE**

Worship is organised in the following way:

- Monday: Whole school assembly – a bible based story linked to an agreed theme (e.g. SEAL, Values for Life) for the half term with a target that all children work towards and are given the opportunity to reflect upon this may be revisited in class or end of week assembly.
- Tuesday: Singing assembly
- Wednesday: class assembly – story following up Monday's theme.
- Thursday: Vicars assembly following agreed theme
- Friday: Celebration assembly – follow up to Monday

Children in Year 5 and 6 follow the lighting the candle course. This focuses on understanding worship and teaches the children to prepare and lead aspects of worship themselves. They apply these skills by preparing and leading aspects of assemblies throughout the year. This may be in setting up the worship environment, reading a prayer or leading a reflection.

All children have the opportunity to be a part of worship in our half termly church services.

## **Planning**

We follow the Diocese publication Values for Life/Roots and Fruits for Vicars and Class Worship as this allows for structure, consistency and continuity during collective worship. As a school SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) has become a key part of our PSHE curriculum and we follow this up in whole school assemblies using the Twelve Baskets resource which links each SEAL theme to the equivalent Christian values. Opportunity for prayer and reflection is given as part of each act of worship enabling children to reflect upon the personal feelings, relationships and experiences and questions/responses to life.

Our acts of worship reflect our Anglican Heritage by:

- Using the bible as a source book for inspiration and learning;
- Reflecting upon Christian symbols and their use in worship (eg a cross or candle);
- Observing the cycle of the Church Year; Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost;
- Participating in the regularity and set order of Anglican worship;
- Using a collection of prayers/hymns/choruses which create a framework for worship within school;

- Learning traditional responses and prayers which express the essential beliefs of Christians throughout the ages;
- Providing the opportunity to discover the value of meditation and silence within the context of Christian worship;
- Experience the bond of community which encompasses gender, age, race and religious opinions;
- Linking with the broad dimensions of the curriculum.
  
- Creating an atmosphere of worship by the use of appropriate music, visual foci and symbols.
  
- Using the whole range of creative arts to appeal to the pupils imaginations.

### **Recording, Evaluation and Monitoring**

All Acts of worship are planned and recorded, with teachers having the opportunity to evaluate and feedback to the worship co-ordinator. Teachers receive half termly planning detailing themes and foci for worship which they can adapt to the needs of their class.

Children are asked for their feedback in a yearly cycle of pupil interviews/ questionnaires. In addition the co-ordinator monitors worship termly. These evaluations are used to inform future planning and as part of staff development. In addition Foundation Governors review policy as part of their yearly structure, reviewing content and methodology, suitability, resources and budget. They are invited to attend worship, especially at church services.

- **This policy was adopted by the Governing Body Autumn 2009**
- **It will be reviewed bi-annually in Autumn Term.**
- **The next date is Autumn 2015.**
- **Person Responsible: Subject Coordinator.**