



St. Mary's Primary School Collective Worship Policy

Worship Statement

Worship at St. Mary's Primary School is to enable the spiritual development of all members of the school community. Through it we aim to affirm and celebrating ideals and values held to be of central importance to the school family.

Aims of Collective Worship

- Collective worship at our school is invitational, inclusive, inspiring and impacts on the lives of our children and staff.
- To understand about God, faith and spirituality
- To begin to communicate and develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery
- To provide a time of peace and tranquillity, to gather, be still and to reflect
- To promote the appreciation that silence can be a means of communication
- To increase a sense of self-worth and the worth and needs of others through celebrating achievements
- To develop a sense of community - its demands, values, rituals and celebrations
- To share the joys and sorrows of life
- To develop understanding of the Churches calendar and liturgy
- Within a Christian framework, allow children to build relations with God, each other, the world and God's creation.

Legal Requirements - 1988 Education Act

All pupils shall on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship. Provision is made for children to be withdrawn if their parents so wish. Collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. Although they may take place as part of the same gathering, the difference between the two should be clear. Collective worship is, nevertheless, related to the day to day life, aspirations and concerns of the school. It is a time when we reflect together.

Despite being in an Academy we still inherited the status of a Voluntary Aided school and the Governing Body is responsible for the arrangement

of Collective Worship after consultation with the Headteacher. The character of the worship is in accordance with the principles of the Church of England, thereby being "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" as determined by the trust deed."

Format of Collective Worship

Collective Worship takes place on a daily basis in the school hall and is led by members of the senior leadership team, the RE leaders and other teachers following agreed themes.

Wednesday assemblies are led by members of our three supporting churches: St. Mary's, St. Paul's and St. George's. Themes are discussed with clergy and reflect the Christian calendar as well as Christian themes. Whilst RE and Collective Worship are two distinct aspects of our school, since the introduction of Understanding Christianity as a means to teach the RE syllabus, more apparent links have been made between Collective Worship and RE (where appropriate) to give pupils and staff more time to reflect on these concepts and develop their understanding further. The majority of these gatherings are attended by staff who join in the act of worship to demonstrate the school as a worshipping community.

At St. Mary's Primary School we also use our Collective Worship sessions to celebrate key Christian festivals e.g. Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, and other national annual events such as Armistice Day or Mother's Day to demonstrate British Values. Parents, governors and friends of the school are invited to join us at many of these gatherings. We conclude our Autumn Term with a Nativity, led by our Foundation Stage children at St. Mary's Church. A termly Mass is held to celebrate All Saints' Day, Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day.

We also welcome occasional visitors from other organisations to lead our collective worship. We are fortunate in the town centre of Barnsley to have a flourishing Methodist Church and the local minister often leads Collective Worship sessions in school.

The format of our collective worship usually follows a similar pattern. A candle is lit to signify the beginning of the gathering and a prayer is said. A story or short talk is given, followed by a hymn. We have a time for reflection and then the collective worship usually concludes with prayers. Although this is the usual pattern, leaders of the worship bring their own style and approach.

We attempt to involve children in our collective worship and try to make the content as varied as possible including - story telling, poetry, sharing personal experiences, periods of reflection, discussions, drama, mime, role play, video and audio media. We also make use of a wide variety of visual aids e.g. pictures, posters, objects and religious artefacts. Music also plays a large part in the preparation for worship as well as worship itself.

Other opportunities taken for worship

Prayers are said before lunch in the classes to give thanks to God for the food we are about to enjoy together, for those who have prepared it for us and for those who across the world are less fortunate than ourselves.

Prayers are also said at the end of the day. In KS2 and the older KS1 classes these are written by the children at the beginning of each term. Within each classroom there is a quiet corner set up to enable the pupils and staff to have opportunity to reflect. Each corner is set up to best meet the understanding of the pupils. School also gives pupils opportunities to write individual prayers and add them to either a private prayer box or display these on the prayer tree.

We have a Collective Worship Group; made up of staff, Foundation Governors and members of our churches. This meets Termly to discuss the content of our collective worship gatherings. We follow the church calendar and develop themes which relate to issues that are relevant in school at the time. This group aims to ensure that collective worship sessions help to develop the children's understanding of Anglican tradition and practice. Where possible we strive to develop the children's awareness of the global aspects of the Christian faith.

Inclusion

Worship should be an activity and experience to which, in principle, all can contribute and from which all can gain, no matter what their personal commitment or life style. Pupil integrity should not be compromised.

It should provide experiences in which those who wish to worship can do so, whilst enabling those whose commitment is different or less to learn about worship and what it means to those who take an active part.

Parents do have a right to withdraw pupils from collective worship. This needs to be done in writing to the Headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body.

Education

The educational value of worship is developed by fostering a sense of community, identity and self-esteem. It is an occasion when the school family can meet together. It provides a time to celebrate special occasions or achievements, to reflect on common values and to provide an opportunity for using gifts and talents.

The overall pattern of worship should be part of the whole school curriculum, even if occasionally unique within it. It may be an intentional learning experience, requiring careful planning, preparation, execution, evaluation and resources, or it may be a focus or a launching pad for what goes on elsewhere in the school.

Special Occasion

Collective worship should foster a sense of special occasion. Positive preparation and effective organisation, using a wide variety of resources and approaches, should create the appropriate atmosphere and environment.

It is an opportunity to develop not only values and beliefs that are part of the broad traditions of Christian belief, but also those widely held by society at large which foster British Values. It should focus on concepts which are central to Christian belief and which are shared across Christian traditions.

Last reviewed on March 2024

Next Review due by March 2024

