St. John's C. of E.

Blackpool's First Free School 1817

Collective Worship Policy

'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.'
Matthew 7:12

Be Kind Be Forgiving Be a Good Friend Be Honest Love One Another

Be part of our St John's family!

Last updated: September 2024 Next review due: September 2026

Introduction

At St. John's C.E. Primary School our Religious Education and Collective Worship includes a daily act of worship and regular services in St. John's Church, all of which follow the rites, practice and doctrine of the Church of England.

It is the duty of the Governing Board to secure that, subject to the legal requirements which apply to Voluntary Aided schools e.g. The Education Reform Act 1988, section 6, all pupils at St. John's school shall take part in the daily act of collective worship as required by the Act in accordance with the Trust deed and traditions of our school and the demands of Diocesan Policy.

Collective Worship clearly plays a major part in promoting the Christian aims, values and ethos of the school as expressed in our mission statement:

"Everyone matters in God's world."

and in line with the Golden Rule from Matthew's gospel-

'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.'

Collective Worship is at the heart of our school life and Governors see it as an essential part of all the pupils' education. As such we are concerned to resource it properly and to ensure that it is of the highest standard. The worship and prayer life of the school is not limited to legal daily acts of worship; opportunities will be taken to use prayer and meditation exercises in the curriculum generally at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Worship or Assembly?

Schools have traditionally often referred to "assembly" rather than "collective worship". We believe the two do not have to be distinct; "assembly" being the gathering together to share a common purpose e.g. a celebration of achievement, "worship" being a time to acknowledge, reflect on and respond to God. We believe that our achievements should be seen within the setting of our Christian beliefs and values and as a realisation of our God given gifts and talents. Collective worship is also the place where we acknowledge the infinitely larger world we live in and are touched by its mystery and wonder. We do recognise that there are times when we assemble together for purposes other than worship e.g. simple notices or announcements – such times are legally distinct from worship and hence withdrawal rights do not apply.

Forms of worship within the Church of England do differ and these differences enable us to provide a varied range of approaches to worship whilst remaining true to our Trust deed. As well as drawing on our denominational heritage, we also expect to draw on the rich tapestry of practice in the world wide Christian church. Stories and other material from another faith may be used from time to time where these might effectively illustrate Christian values and support the development of respect for self and other people.

Whatever the approaches and material used, we expect that pupils will be introduced to the following key beliefs and aspects of our Christian faith and helped to explore them:

- The nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Jesus as the Son of God who, through His life, death and resurrection, broke the power of evil and restored humanity's relationship with God

- The nature of human beings as children of God, part of His creation and destined for eternal life
- The central values of forgiveness, selfless love, redemption, goodness, compassion and charity
- The central place of the bible as a source of knowledge about God and Jesus and as a source of inspiration and guidance.
- The importance of prayer
- The central symbols of Christianity notably the cross
- The cycle of the Church year.

Our school policy sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. It should be read in conjunction with the long-term school plan, which sets out what the children will be taught throughout their time at St John's.

This document is designed for all teaching staff, all staff with classroom responsibilities, school governors, inspection teams and LA adviser/inspectors. Electronic copies are available for all teachers and teaching support staff via Google Drive. Copies can be made available, on request, to supply / trainee teachers, governors and parents. Policies can also be found on our website and paper copies are available in the Policy folder held in the main office.

Responsibility for this policy

Responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing board in consultation with the Head. Governors should:

- Contribute to and then agree the school policy for collective worship
- Receive reports on school worship along with reports for all other curriculum areas
- Ensure that there is a co-ordinator for collective worship
- Ensure that funding is identified for resourcing collective worship
- Agree those occasions when collective worship will be held in Church
- Attend collective worship in school or Church when possible
- Ensure that collective worship has a place in the School Development Plan
- Agree when and how collective worship is reviewed
- Agree wording about worship in the school prospectus.

This policy was approved by the Governing Board after consultation with staff, R.E.Co-ordinator, the clergy of St. John's Church, CSA and Diocesan representatives.
Mrs Galloway is responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of this policy.

Aims

Within the context of a Church School, collective worship should support both the children and adults taking part in developing their own beliefs, values and attitudes through an exploration of shared human experience with an emphasis on Anglican beliefs and practices as is appropriate to the school situation.

Collective worship is an integral part of the ethos of the school as expressed in our mission statement. Pupils are given a sound foundation in knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith as appropriate for their age and abilities. Through knowledge, discussion and thought, pupils are helped to explore and define their faith.

Therefore the aims of collective worship at St. John's School are to enable all pupils to:

- Experience and participate in a caring Christian community.
- Develop their own beliefs, values and attitudes.
- Develop self-confidence and a positive self-esteem.
- Gain in their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith as appropriate to their age and abilities.
- Begin to understand the nature of God as revealed in Jesus.
- Celebrate the major festivals and selected Saints' days of the church year.
- Learn about the place and significance of the bible.
- Develop an understanding of and confidence in Anglican beliefs and practices.
- Learn the Lords Prayer, the Grace and other appropriate prayers and responses.
- Develop the ability to be still and reflective.
- Understand what worship is and begin to develop their own relationship with God.
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder at creation and the gift of life.
- Explore important questions about life and creation, including areas such as love, truth, loss, suffering etc.
- Share the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the school community in the presence of God.
- Develop performance skills and participate confidently in group preparation and performance.
- Explore, but not share, the beliefs of others through story and discussion.

Organisation and Delivery

In order to achieve the aims outlined previously, collective worship at St John's School is organised into either whole school, key stage and class specific groupings. Worship takes place at different times each day in either the main school hall, classrooms or in the Arts area for KS1 when separate key stage worship is taking place. Worship is led by the Head, the Deputy Head, Assistant Head, Key Stage Leaders, staff and pupils. We also have invited guests leading assemblies on occasions. Members of the clergy from St. John's Church, regularly visit the school to lead worship and support the R.E. teaching.

Parents are invited to attend worship led by individual classes and on all occasions the school worships at St. John's Church. Governors are welcome to join our assemblies whenever they are able to join the school community at this time.

It is very important that we create a worshipful atmosphere for effective collective worship to take place. We worship as a whole school in the hall and we are careful to reduce any noise distraction; ensuring little movement in the school building whilst worship takes place. Children who arrive late for school are encouraged to join our worship by quietly entering the hall and joining the class nearest the door. Music is played as children enter the hall, to ensure all children are aware they are entering a "special space".

Once all the children are assembled a candle is lit to signal the start of our worship time. The Holy Trinity is remembered and worship wardens draw attention to The Bible, The cross and light a candle to represent God the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. At the close of worship the candle is blown out and once again music is played as the children leave.

We celebrate all achievements made both individually or as a school community as part of our worship time. On occasions other messages are given to the children at the end of our worship time, once the candle has been blown out but prior to the music starting for the children to lead out.

At least termly the school community worships at St John's Church; notably Harvest Festival, Christmas Service, Easter Passion Play and the end of year Leavers' Service.

Children and families are invited to the 'All Age' Services weekly.

Content and Approaches

In planning collective worship, we try to ensure a range of content and activities are used. Any worship time might include:-

- Singing
- Silence and other reflective moments
- Readings and storytelling
- Rituals and responses
- Drama
- Music
- A talk or "sermon"
- Discussion or questioning
- Interviews/role play
- Use of religious symbols
- Prayer
- Challenges/problem solving
- Recognition of achievements
- Use of visual aids

The content of our collective worship tends to follow a fourfold approach :-

1. Observance of the church year
2. Celebration of curriculum work
3. Links with Christian Values and short themes of up to half a term
4. "One off" assemblies

Within these 4 approaches content of our worship includes :-

- Sharing and taking note of common experiences
- Expressing concern for others, both those known to themselves and people from the news
- Looking at the world and our place within it
- Exploring common values, standards and rules
- Exploring specific incidents and issues
- Sharing biblical stories
- Sharing other literature, poetry or art with a Christian theme
- Sharing information about other faiths
- Celebrating and sharing achievements

A worship council is selected by Year 6 worship councillors each year based on children's applications. They meet regularly to evaluate worship and share ideas. These children are responsible for setting up worship in the class and the hall, as well as leading call and response, Bible readings, etc

Cross Curricular Links

Collective worship has clear links to the teaching of R.E. in our school, but there are also links to many other areas of the curriculum. The importance of cross curricular teaching is clear; no subject can be taught in isolation, a broader experience of learning will undoubtedly lead to a greater level of development in all areas of the child's experience – intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual.

1. English – Speaking and listening are central to taking part in collective worship. Children are encouraged to listen to Biblical and other stories, poems, experiences and opinions. They are equally encouraged to retell stories, take part in role play and explain their views, ideas and experiences. Reading and responding both to the Bible and other reference books is also a fundamental part of collective worship.
2. Science – There are of course some specific areas of linked study for example the universe and the story of creation, but in more general terms an understanding of the uniqueness of every individual adds an important dimension to children's scientific investigations about themselves.
3. Geography/History - The study of Biblical stories and events inevitably leads to an examination of the impact the environment had on those events and the shaping of beliefs. Children will be involved in contrasting Biblical societies with now, vital if faith is to be relevant to their own lives not just a story of other people from distant lands and in distant times.
4. The Arts– The arts can provide a valuable insight into both Christian and other faith practices. Music, pictures, photographs, films and artefacts all help to bring faith and worship alive and real.
5. PSHE/Citizenship – Exploring religious and moral beliefs is a major element of PSHE/Citizenship – developing an understanding of the differences between people and how to develop relationships with those who hold different beliefs to yourself. We link our school values into worship and make explicit links to the Bible. Exploring feelings and using biblical stories to explore concepts such as right/wrong and forgiveness are all vital elements of both collective worship and PSHE. Collective Worship frequently includes the celebration of achievements within our "school society" and hence provides an understanding of how citizenship works. As a Church School our PSHE/Citizenship curriculum is determined and developed within the context of our Christian faith. Nothing is taught at St. John's School that would undermine or conflict with the school's ethos and faith position.
6. Physical Education – A celebration of talents and achievements of both sporting teams and individuals is an important part of collective worship.

All the above happens in most schools, but at our school, St. John's C.E. School, all of the above are done clearly and explicitly in the presence of God, in a way which points to God and brings our concerns and joys before Him.

Reflective areas in classrooms

These are places where the children can reflect and pray. The areas have a cross as its focal point and will include other artefacts, key Bible verses and pictures and verses to engage the children in thought and prayer.

Resources

A variety of resources for collective worship are available through the school, some are located in individual classrooms, others are held by the Key Stage Co-ordinators, Deputy Head and Head teacher. The requirements of the Diocesan syllabus and the age and ability of the children in school leads to the use of the following types of resources:-

- The Diocesan R.E. syllabus document, Questful RE.
- Teachers' books and articles
- Audio-visual aids
- Story books, posters, artefacts and art work
- Human resources - clergy (particularly from St. John's Church), advisors, visitors.
- Questful Resources

The Head teacher has a budget for buying resources. The amount varies from year to year.

Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities at St. John's School are carried out according to our agreed Equality Policy.

All staff leading worship is responsible for ensuring that all pupils irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to worship opportunities at a level appropriate to them whilst in our school.

The monitoring of the policy for Equal Opportunities is ultimately the responsibility of the Head teacher and the Senior Leadership Team, but every member of staff is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy in terms of promoting good practice.

Recording and Reporting

Records of the Acts of Worship that take place in school are kept by the Head teacher. All records kept are straightforward, brief and understandable to those who need to use them. They serve two key purposes:

- To show the range of approaches used.
- To show the content covered (including songs used).

The Head teacher liaises with senior staff and the clergy of St. John's Church to co-ordinate and plan worship. Reporting to the Governing Board takes place in line with our procedures for reporting all areas of the curriculum.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out to enhance the collective worship within our school. Informal evaluations will be carried out at the end of each act of worship by the worship leader and an evaluation of the overall patterns and provision of worship is carried out by the co-ordinator.

Monitoring takes place in a number of ways:

- personal evaluation by the worship leader shared with the co-ordinator
- discussion with individuals or groups of children
- discussion with members of staff.

INSET/Training Provision

INSET and training at St. John's School is carried out according to our agreed Staff Development Policy.

Staff development needs in collective worship are considered and planned for by the Head teacher. These needs are identified through discussion with individual staff and the system of performance management. These needs are highlighted as part of the co-ordinators' subject development plan, which subsequently becomes part of the School and Staff Development Plans. The effectiveness of training is evaluated by individual members of staff, supported by the co-ordinator.

The Role of the Co-ordinator

Mrs N Galloway

The Worship co-ordinator is responsible for

- Determining the aims for collective worship throughout the school and, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, staff and governors, devising objectives or targets to allow the school to achieve these aims. Documenting these aims within the school policy for collective worship.
- Ensuring that the Diocesan Guidelines for RE and collective worship are known and understood by all who lead worship in our school.
- Keeping clear records of the acts of worship taking place in school.
- Monitoring the collective worship in the school thereby ensuring that worship holds its central place within the broad and balanced curriculum of our school. This will include the monitoring of resources (including books, practical equipment, ICT soft and hardware), content and approaches.
- Undertaking an annual review of collective worship in school as part of the School Development Planning process.
- Managing the budget allocation for collective worship and advising staff on resources throughout the school.
- Through personal reading and attendance at courses, keeping abreast of developments and evaluate new ideas and approaches in collective worship.
- Keeping staff informed of such developments.
- Submitting reports to the governing body as required.

Appendix

The legal requirements for Religious Education.

A. Legal requirements.

Religious Education in Church Schools is governed by the 1996 and 1998 Education Act as well as by the Trust Deed of the School.

The legislation requires Religious Education to be provided for all pupils (1996 Education Act, Section 352) The type of Religious Education provided must be in accordance with the Trust Deed.

B. Parental rights of withdrawal in a Voluntary Aided School.

All pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship unless the parent requests that he might be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school.

The worship and Religious Education provided by St. John's School is in accordance with the Church of England Foundation. Our faith position is not confined to collective worship and R.E. lessons; it is also reflected throughout the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the whole ethos of our school reflects our Christian faith, removal of pupils from Worship or R.E. (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate pupils from the religious life of our school.

There are limited arrangements for withdrawal from collective worship in school – children would be supervised by the Special Needs Department.

C. Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship.

It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Head teacher, in consultation with members of the Governing Board and possibly with advice from the Diocese. However, if the complaint is still not satisfactorily resolved, then further procedures come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese

Addendum

Sept 21

New Government guidelines have come into force Sept 21. Collective Worship can be held with no need for 'bubbles.'
For Autumn Term 1, KS2 and KS2 will worship together three times a week.
Whole school worship will be reviewed after October half term.