



## **Collective Worship Policy**

St Mary's Church of England Primary School promotes the safeguarding and welfare of all students in its care: all policies support the "Safeguarding Policy", are fully consistent with the "Every Child Matters" agenda, and fully support the principles of equal opportunities for all.

**Subject Leader: Claire Higgins**

### **Vision and values:**

Our aim at St. Mary's is to be a truly inclusive school where children's academic achievement and personal development are equally important. As a Church of England Primary School we have a strong Christian ethos which underpins this vision. To help us achieve this vision the children were asked to think about our school motto 'Living, loving, in God's care' and to choose Christian values which are important to them.

### **Mission Statement:**

O Lord, teach me how you want me to live! Psalm 86:11

We have three core values which support our vision:

**Love**

**Hope**

**Wisdom**

Threading through these three core values we will have

**Gratitude** - knowing that we are more fortunate than many other people around the world and appreciating what we have.

**Thoughtfulness** - being able to think of others and making wise choices.

**Forgiveness** - knowing that everyone can make a mistake and that saying sorry is the first step to putting things right; as well as being tolerant and understanding of others.

**Kindness** - we are all part of one school family and know that looking out for one another is important.

**Perseverance** - when something is difficult we don't give, we try again and work with others to find a solution.

**Courage**- life is full of challenges and it is important to be brave so that we can try new things.

**Respect and Reverence** – a child initiated value to show how we live the best way we can live. Our links to British Values and how God taught us to behave.

\*Links are made between school values and British Values i.e. tolerance.

- a) **THE LAW** The legal basis for worship in a Church school is the school's Trust Deed, which requires worship to be "consistent with the principles and practices of the Church of England". It is a daily requirement, and the responsibility of the governing body in consultation with the Headteacher.

The legal right of withdrawal of pupils at the request of parents and for staff is secure.

Collective Worship is organised in whole school or class groups:

School Worship is collective rather than corporate, in that not all participants will be united in membership of any faith community.

Church schools have every right to keep their collective acts of worship wholly within the boundaries of Christian character and belief, but will wish to consider the aptitudes, interests and background of the pupils in their school in the way they present these acts of Collective Worship in the educational setting of the school.

Although the 1988 Education Reform Act states that in County Schools Collective Worship should not be distinctive of any particular denomination, in Church Schools, Anglican worship should be explored and affirmed.

#### **b) WHAT IS WORSHIP?**

Worship is one important way of exploring the spiritual, and a gateway to religious experience. It is an activity of response, inner response to the transcendent, to God.

Church Schools are sharing Christian worship with their children and inviting children to participate in that shared awareness and shared response. They may expect some outward conformity to rituals (as all schools do), but must always acknowledge the inner individuality of the children, not assuming them to be believers, not expecting a unified response, but acknowledging a wide range of response, from observer to active participant, from the threshold of worship to worship itself. In this way the child's integrity and growing autonomy is not offended; rather in a secure environment s/he can safely explore those experiences which for others are worshipful and may/may not become so for the child. Children are learners in school. They will explore worship and learn about rituals, symbols, festivals and beliefs in an open atmosphere and share collectively in worshipful experiences of awe, wonder, stillness, silence, mystery, questioning, celebration, suffering, dedication, thanksgiving. They will recognise that the school affirms the truth claims of Christianity as an alternative view to the secularism they are growing up into in society.

#### **c) AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN CHURCH SCHOOLS**

Collective Worship should be God-centred

- It should provide a breathing space in the busy whirl of school activity, a time to gather, to be still and to reflect in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility, a time to refresh the spirit.

- It should be a special time with a distinctively spiritual atmosphere, conducive to worship and to an awareness of God's presence. The use of appropriate background music will help to create such an ambience and the setting should be made as attractive as possible. Often it will help if something is set up to act as a visual focus for those present.
- Pupils attending Collective Worship should feel calm, relaxed and secure. Above all they should be comfortable. Consideration should also be given to the manner in which pupils enter and leave.
- It should nourish the spiritual through a variety of words, music and images, and should sensitize children to the spiritual dimension of life. Material from the Christian tradition will ensure the Christian character of most Collective Worship.
- It should provide opportunities for pupils to participate in a variety of spiritual activities such as ritual, singing, dancing, drama, sharing of food and drink, prayer, quiet contemplation and meditation.
- It should encourage reflection, individual response and participation.

Collective Worship should be as Inclusive as possible

- It should be related to the pupils' own experience and concerns.
- It should foster a spirit of community within each school.
- It should acknowledge diversity and encourage mutual respect; including a respect for the religious/secular beliefs of our children and their families whilst remaining distinctively Anglican.

Collective Worship should Affirm Christian Beliefs

- in Father, Son and Holy Spirit and reflect Christian teachings relating to Creation, the Fall, the Incarnation, Salvation and the Kingdom of God. The resulting Christian ethic provides a framework for exploring moral issues, e.g. ecology, pollution, stewardship of the Earth's resources, the human capacity for prejudice, cruelty, war and intolerance.

Collective Worship in a Church of England School must honour the Church Foundation of the School

- Pupils must have access to a significant amount of explicit worship of a Christian kind; at St. Mary’s, our worship makes reference to Anglican traditions in line with our local church.

- A Church School does have some responsibility for enabling pupils to make a link between collective worship in the school and the corporate life of the local Church. The individual journey of faith needs to be complemented by the use of the Church’s calendar, so that the corporate and the individual dynamics of Christian faith are seen in relationship to one another.

- Pupils in Aided Church schools should engage with the celebration of the Eucharist, at the school’s discretion and direction. We consider Valuing All God’s Children and Church of England Vision for Education 2016 in our drive to ensure good practice and embed these themes within our teaching and learning.

**d) GOOD PRACTICE IN COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

1. Collective worship is linked to the liturgical year and follow are Christian values.

These values are represented by six toy lambs (linking to the idea of Jesus as the Good Shepherd).

Pupils from Class 4 or across the school, are chosen to be Worship Leaders for each half-term and they lead the school liturgy – this changes each half-term and is linked to the value & makes reference to the church calendar.

The Worship Leaders prepare the hall for worship: laying the altar cloth, placing the Bible & lighting the candle on the worship table.

Quiet, reflective music is played to create a calm atmosphere conducive to worship & marking a clear distinction from the busy life of the classroom.

Children who model our school values can be rewarded with stickers and could be awarded a lamb to ‘visit’ them in the classroom – this can be celebrated in Class or collective worship.

2. At St Mary’s in the pattern for each week will be:

Monday	Open the book team – sharing Biblical stories.
Tuesday	Song and Praise with Meg and Mrs Higgins
Wednesday	Rev Sara - The Word – sharing a Biblical story which links to the value for the half-term

Thursday	Response –Picture news linked to Biblical scripture. Mrs Mannering or staff rota.
Friday	Celebration worship

3. Hoped-for responses may include:

- understanding how the everyday can become holy
- awareness of beauty and goodness
- sense of awe
- sense of responsibility
- thankfulness
- sense of community
- empathy
- thinking about others
- values affirmed
- reflection
- engagement with issues beyond the school i.e. major events in the news
- sense of spirituality
- sense of God
- affirmation of faith
- faith development

4. Content:

Collective worship is broadly inspired by the Church of England 'Roots & Fruits' resources. The RE coordinator writes the school liturgy and provides a list of Bible stories which link to each value. Children are encouraged to play a key role in collective worship i.e. by leading prayer, responding to Bible stories, discussing why school values are important, writing prayers/thoughts for the prayer tree etc.

5. Evaluation of Worship:

Collective worship is evaluated by the RE Leader, Foundation Governors i.e. the Rector of the local benefice and by the Diocesan Advisor, to ensure quality. Class worship is also monitored by the RE Leader. Further evaluation is made during RE lessons when

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children respond to themes from collective worship i.e. key festivals in the church calendar and prayer. Pupil voice also contributes to evaluation – the response of children is key.