

ST. MATTHEW'S C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP & SPIRITUALITY POLICY

Reviewed: Summer Term 2021
By: M MACKLEY

Date of next review: May 2022

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School and Nursery
Collective Worship & Spirituality Policy

Mission Statement:

St. Matthew's C.E. Primary School and Nursery is dedicated to providing an education which enables every child to fulfil their best potential. It seeks to promote academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment, welcoming children drawn from diverse cultures.

Vision Statement:

Inspired by Jesus' words (Matthew 5: 1-12), we strive to promote academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment for all members of our school family.
We can all **'Be blessed by God, be happy and aspire to be...'**

Policy statement - our roots and foundations in Christ, with Christ and through Christ.

At St Matthew's school, collective worship is the keystone of our school day. Our worship is inclusive, invitational and inspirational and is centered on our mission statement and school Christian values.

We follow, in an accessible, relevant and inclusive manner the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England.

The school's ethos statement is:

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at St Matthew's in the Parish of The Risen Lord, in the Diocese of Blackburn.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promote Christian values through the experience we offer to all our pupils.

Christian Values and our Vision & Mission statements

Collective Worship contributes to the working out of our Mission Statement, the Christian Vision of the school which was written by the whole school family, and therefore is central to the Christian Education we provide. It also contributes to the celebration and exploration of the Christian values of our school.

The worship and prayer life of the school is not limited to the legally required daily acts of worship but permeates all areas of our school curriculum, our daily dealings with each

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other, our extracurricular life of the school, our stewardship of resources and our links with our local and global partners.

As part of our school commitment to wellbeing and spirituality, opportunities are regularly taken to use prayer and meditation exercises in the curriculum and in worship. The School Prayer is shared regularly across the whole school:

O Lord, bless our school. So that working together, and playing together, we may learn to serve you and serve other people. Amen.

Character education, Values and Christian virtues Education

Through our collective worship and our curriculum, we blend Christian teaching and values education. We create opportunities for our school family to develop physically, emotionally, personally, socially, intelligently and spiritually so that their self-esteem and well-being is sound and supported by ever growing emotional intelligence; leading to an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens. There is a shared, common language in our school based upon our Christian values of **hope, love/compassion, trust, community, thankfulness** and **respect/reverence**

Our Christian values are embedded and woven into the daily life and curriculum choices of our school. Staff purposefully plan opportunities throughout the curriculum and our resourcing choices to embed our values and the Word.

Organisation and Delivery

¹Worship within the school is varied and follows a weekly pattern of:

Monday	Christian Values	Led by Head Teacher - Whole school worship.
Tuesday	Praise & Prayer KS2	Rec & KS1 Class worship. Picture News focus Led by staff or children or the pupils' Ethos group.
Wednesday	Praise & Prayer Rec & KS1	KS2 Class worship – Picture News focus Led by staff or children or the pupils' Ethos group.
Thursday	Theme varies across the year.	Led by our Vicar/Curate or the Open the Book team from St Stephen's church.
Friday	Celebrate & Rejoice	Celebration led by Headteacher celebrating successes and our Values in Action.

¹ Whilst responding to the pandemic and 'getting back to normal' this programme may vary and the use of online 'meeting for worship' may take place as required.

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Worship in the school, while reflecting our denomination, will take into account the levels of development of pupils and also our school's diverse character.

Our school communicates with our local vicar and other church members to plan and deliver acts of worship that are invitational, reflective and engaging. In our diverse and inclusive school, there is plenty of flexibility in the provision of collective worship to enable all pupils to benefit without compromising their own faith beliefs.

Parents may withdraw their children from Collective Worship in school and, if this provision was needed, a staff member is allocated to support the children/parents during worship time.

The Worship and Religious Education provided by the school is in accordance with the Church of England Foundation. This Foundation is also reflected in the Curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England's ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and/or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate pupils from the religious life of the school.

Because of the importance placed on the worshipping life of our school, where possible **every** child, staff member and school visitor will be afforded the opportunity to share in worship and will not be withdrawn for other purposes.

Distinguishing between Collective Worship and assembly.

The school meets together for Collective Worship daily but there are times when we assemble together for other purposes, e.g. important notices, announcements and visitors. Such 'assembly' times are legally distinct from Collective Worship and parents' rights to withdraw their children do not apply. We distinguish 'worship' from notices and other 'assembly' activities through the signifying lighting and extinguishing of our worship candles OR signaled by information being given after a closing hymn or song.

Aims of collective worship at St Matthew's

Through our worship life in school, we expect that pupils will be introduced to the key beliefs and aspects of the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and help to explore them. The aim of our worship is to help our school family:

- Express praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Have opportunities to be still, pray and reflect.
- Explore the big questions of life and of faith and to respond to national/global events.
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness.
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ.
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes.

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- Share each other's joys, difficulties and challenges.
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar together.
- Feel nurtured in spirit, allowing everyone (regardless of their own faith or lack of faith belief) time to 'be' in the presence of God
- Be aware of the Holy Trinity and the nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- Know that although all unique and different **all** are children of God, part of his creation and, though sinful, through God's grace can be forgiven;
- To have opportunities to know 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 central values of forgiveness, selfless love, redemption, goodness, compassion and charity;
- To understand the importance of the Bible (and God's Big story!) as a source of knowledge about God and Jesus and as a source of inspiration and guidance;
- To understand the importance and power of prayer;
- To gain an understanding of the central symbols of Christianity; The cycle of the Church year, the symbolism of festivals
- To have opportunities to engage with Holy Communion *and to experience and understand the central place of the Eucharist/Communion in the life of the Church*
- To have the opportunity to experience and build living faith foundations and know Jesus can be their personal saviour and friend.

Worship also affords opportunities for our school family to celebrate our curriculum and their God given gifts, with pupils displaying or recounting details of what they have learnt across subject areas.

The planning and content of worship

We provide a varied range of approaches to worship whilst remaining true to our Trust Deeds and Church of England roots. The provision of collective worship conforms to Diocesan policy. As well as drawing on our denominational heritage, we also draw on the rich tapestry of practice in the world-wide Christian Church.

A sense of worship is established through the use of modern and traditional worship hymns/songs and signed songs, built up through the use of music, silence, appropriate movement into and out of worship and through the setting (including display) and the use of our worship table, candles and altar cloths. The start of our act of worship is signaled by the lighting of three candles (reinforcing our understanding of the Trinity) and the placing of an empty chair at the front as that is there to remind us that God is with us, sitting alongside us. The seating of the children for worship varies between sitting in classes or family groups, which allows the children to worship in different dynamic groups/prayer families.

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The worship co-ordinator, plans themes/topics taking into consideration diocesan vision, Church of England festivals and also the latest resourcing to engage, inspire and make worship relevant. The half-termly plans are shared with clergy, staff, and governors.

The content of worship varies according to theme or the person leading it. Pupils can become involved in leading worship through reading, prayers, dance, drama or music.



Worship is planned with the following scaffold (see worship plan for further examples and symbols used in planning):

- i. Call to worship (through song, silence, signing)
- ii. Greeting (Trinity reference, prayer, signing and candle lighting)
- iii. Word of God
- iv. Engaging with the Word – storytelling, performance, video etc
- v. Responding to the Word – through song, prayer or thought
- vi. Sending out – how can we take what we have heard out to the life of our school, community and world?

Worship in Church

We value and appreciate the prayerful support of the small congregation of St Matthew's Church. The close links we have with the clergy provide a strong support to our worship as well as to our RE and our school life.

One of the blessings of our school is its close proximity to our church. Key festivals are often marked by whole school attendance in Church. These may include: harvest festival, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter services, and the end of school year service.

Christianity as a world faith & opportunities to explore other faiths/visits

The St Matthew's understanding of Christianity is that it is an inclusive and welcoming world faith which mirrors the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. We are blessed with a diverse school family and this is celebrated through our worship times. School family members of faith and no faith are given opportunities to voice and share their own beliefs. Within worship we explore Christianity as a world faith and also make appropriate links and opportunities with other world faiths. Through their Christian character, our acts of collective worship will:

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- recognise and celebrate the diversity of the cultures, life styles and faiths which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for every student to attend
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;
- foster active roles of pupils, parents and members of the local community – in preparation, participation and leadership.
- Support all members of our school family in their faith journey.

The wider support network for worship in our school

Our school family is closely supported by Blackburn Diocese and as part of our resourcing for worship, we opt in to their service level agreement, utilizing all it offers. This policy has been written, shared and agreed by the governing body of the school. The school is supported in our mission by our Diocesan / District Adviser, Ann Aspden and our local Vicar & Curate.

The School Governors established a Vision & Ethos Sub-Committee to consider this important aspect of the life of our school. The RE Lead and other staff are invited guests to each meeting to receive their reports of progress and also to aid the Governors in supporting the school.

School supports a range of community initiatives and seeks to support local issues and also global partners – Fairtrade, Church Food Market, Community Food Hub, Comic Relief, Children in Need etc.

Resources

Collective Worship is at the heart of our school life and thus the Governors see it as an essential part of our pupils' education. As such we are concerned to resource it properly and ensure that resourcing is of the highest standard.

Worship has its own budget. Resources and suggested online/digital resources are highlighted on the worship plan and the worship, music and RE co-ordinator have a number of resources to support worship in school.

Record Keeping, Evaluation and Monitoring

At the end of worship in the hall, two children are invited from the class of the week, to write how the worship has impacted/will impact on them on a yellow ribbon which is then tied onto the tree at the front of the hall.

Children are free during hall times to read and reflect on the comments.

Each class has a focus area in their room and class worships are, where appropriate, recorded into scrapbooks which are monitored by the RE lead.

The Vision and Ethos Committee has a developing role in monitoring the delivery and impact of Collective Worship at our school.

The legal requirements for Collective Worship in our school

Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship

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As an open, Christian school, it is hoped that any complaint would be resolved informally by the Head Teacher, in consultation with the Governors, and possibly with advice from the Diocese or District. However, if the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, then formal procedures would be followed, and the matter would be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of Blackburn.

Equal Opportunities and special needs issues

In line with our school aims and also our belief in everyone being 'precious in God's sight' all pupils, staff and visitors, regardless of age, ability, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexuality or religious beliefs have access to worship in our school.

We ensure that each individual receives an equal learning/worship experience regardless of ability, culture, disability, religion, sexuality or gender.