

Bathwick St. Mary Church School

'Achieving excellence through the pursuit of good'



Collective Worship Policy

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Our School Policies should be understood as part of the overall strategy of the School, and put into practice within the context of our Vision, Mission and Christian Values (**Love, Joyfulness, Respect, Forgiveness, Perseverance, Fairness**) as a Church School, with a particular focus on the promotion of equality.

Introduction

The Church of England vision for education is for all children to, 'Have life, life in all its fullness.' [John 10:10]. Bathwick St. Mary Church School's ethos is built upon our Christian Values, which support our all children, all staff and wider school community to experience and enjoy life in all its fullness. Bathwick St. Mary Church School has long held core inclusive Christian values at the heart of what we do. For a full explanation of our Vision, Mission and Christian Values, please review the relevant document on our website: <http://bathwickstmary.org/vision-and-values/>

Rationale

The daily act of worship is a very important part of the whole life of the school. Its policy and practice reflects and reinforces our school ethos and aims and is based on the belief that each child is unique and created by God. As a Church school we demonstrate the special character through Collective Worship. Collective Worship is directly linked to the curriculum, central to the life of the school and a stimulus for it. As a Church school we will foster close connections with the local worshipping communities and enjoy the support and encouragement of the parish churches.

Acts of Collective Worship are planned to be inclusive. They will, in line with the School's Trust Deed, recommendations of the Diocesan Education Board and our Church of England Foundation, be distinctively Christian in character and incorporate elements of the Anglican faith and practice. All our children are included in the daily act of Collective Worship. All staff regardless of role in the school, as well as Governors are invited to attend Collective Worship. Parents and the wider community are also invited to attend particular times throughout the school year.

Aims

Through Collective Worship at Bathwick St. Mary Church School we aim to enable pupils to reflect on our Christian Values and other values and beliefs, encouraging all to:

- **love** others, ourselves and God
- **respect** others and the world around us

- *forgive* others and ourselves
- *persevere* and aspire to be our best using our unique gifts
- seek *fairness* in everything
- celebrate the gift of *joy* in each day

In practice, we will:

- provide opportunities for all to grow spiritually through worship, reverence, thanksgiving, celebration, reflection and prayer
- lead children to an awareness of God revealed in the person of Jesus and help them understand his life and ministry
- develop children's awareness and understanding of the Trinity
- help convey the sense of value and worth Jesus gave to everyone and to reflect that in the ethos of the school
- introduce, make use of and teach reverence and respect for some of the elements, symbols and traditions of the Christian Faith e.g. the Cross, the Bible, the Lord's Prayer, candles, The Vicar, The Church and its many parts.
- provide a worthwhile inspirational educational and spiritual experience, which takes account of pupils' age, aptitude and family background, relating, where possible, to other curriculum areas
- provide a worship experience that does not offend the integrity of the non-religious and those of different faiths who may be participating
- provide a variety of worship experiences that will enable children to respond in different ways
- fulfil all statutory requirements

Collective Worship is designed to:

- contribute to pupils' **spiritual development** by providing opportunities to:
 - reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things
 - experience times of quiet inactivity to counterbalance the activity which generally marks the rest of the day
 - hear inspiring stories and words from religious and other literature
 - experience awe and wonder at the beauty, mystery and power of the world
 - develop an awareness of the presence of God in everyday life
 - provide a special time with a distinct atmosphere
 - provide the opportunity to make explicit things of worth and those Christian Values which are at the heart of our community
- contribute to the pupils' **moral development** by providing opportunities to:
 - reflect on matters concerning right and wrong
 - hear about incidents in which, and people in whom, goodness or right are exemplified
 - learn about religion and other teaching concerning right and wrong – especially the example of Jesus
- contribute to pupils' **social development** by providing opportunities to:
 - gather with others for a common purpose and to celebrate shared values of the school community
 - enable staff, pupils and members of the wider community to contribute to the life of the school
 - reflect upon human feelings and experiences, both positive and negative such as love, joy, hope, friendship, acceptance, fear, forgiveness
 - learn how to behave appropriately within a specific social setting
 - develop self-confidence by participating in Collective Worship
- contribute to pupils' **cultural development** by providing opportunities to:
 - hear and play inspiring music from a range of times, places and cultures
 - reflect upon ideas concerning beauty and that which is pleasing to the senses
 - appreciate the range of talents and gifts found in the school community and beyond
- contribute to pupils' **intellectual development** by providing opportunities for

- open ended questioning
- learning to engage with their minds
- thinking about something more than the obvious

Legal requirements

In line with the 1996 Education Act there will be a daily act of worship which will include all the children (except those withdrawn by Parental Request). As a Church School the Collective Worship provided will reflect our foundation and be distinctively Christian with particular reference to the Anglican Faith. The traditions of Christian belief, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the special status accorded to Him will form the major focus of our worship.

Through staff meetings (and for visitors a meeting with the Headteacher) the requirements concerning traditions and practice will be explained to everyone involved in the planning and delivery of acts of worship.

A specific time each day is set aside for Collective Worship. Although known as “Assembly” care is taken to separate this worship from other school assemblies used to impart information. This is done either by arranging a separate meeting time for notices or by ending the act of worship and after a brief pause and time for reflection giving any information.

All teaching staff will be invited to contribute regularly to acts of worship. Care will be taken when recruiting staff to emphasise our Church School Status and to ask applicants to be fully supportive of, and be in sympathy with, the Christian ethos of this Church School.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship. Teachers have the same rights (although through recruitment, it is expected that all teachers will be fully supportive of and in sympathy with the Christian ethos of the school). If a parent/teacher so wishes he/she must inform the Headteacher. If, after consultation the parent/ teacher still wishes to exercise this right alternative arrangements will be made for the child and adequate supervision will be provided.

Organisation of Collective Worship

The Collective Worship programme is coordinated by the Headteacher and fully involves the elected School Council who help choose key themes and share ideas for stories and topics. Children are actively involved in evaluating Collective Worship using the ‘orange folder’ which is then reviewed by those planning Collective Worship, including the Parish Priest. A significant importance is placed upon the school’s six Christian Values. Building on these, themes reflecting the school’s Christian Foundation are chosen for a fortnightly period as appropriate. Content may be selected from a faith base, shared human experience or special issues e.g. an occurrence in school or in local, national or international news. The main Christian festivals are celebrated every year.

There should be no attempt at eliciting acts of assent; Collective Worship is invitational. Children’s responses are private, conditional and may well be reflective in nature. Therefore it is important not to put pressure on children. Language should be used carefully, for example rather than “we believe...” to use the phrase “Christians believe”, “ I would like you to listen to some words which are very special to Christians”. Materials or examples from other faiths are sometimes used to illustrate a theme in assembly. When this happens care should be taken to put them into context for example “This is a prayer that Hindus use to ...”

There are many values and beliefs which are part of the broad traditions of Christian beliefs which are also held by society at large. e.g., a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world, the merits of sacrificial love, such values should be explored and celebrated in school worship in a manner which complements the way they are taught in the classroom and communicated through the ethos of the school.

Collective Worship will usually consist of:

- Opening music and lighting (or pre lit) candle as a preparation
- Introductory words, for example, 'The Peace of the Lord be with you' (*'And also with you.'*)
- Focus, for example, a table draped with a cloth and supporting a cross, candle or relevant symbol
- Reading(s) – taken from the Bible (with source of reading e.g. This morning's reading is taken from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter ... and beginning at verse ...)
- Songs: accompanied by recorder group and piano; incorporating old and new
- Short talk: which may be based on a reading from the Bible, a story or poem, drama (spontaneous or rehearsed), music or video recording, time for thinking and time for sharing
- Response:
 - a time for stillness and quiet reflection: which may include closing eyes, using objects or art as a focus, a guided story, a focused silence, a piece of music or lighting a candle
 - a prayer with words or silent reflection, accessible to all, *with appropriate rituals e.g. not always hands together eyes closed, introducing children to liturgical prayers (These will include The Lord's Prayer – Modern Language version and The Grace)*
 - A range of responses to worship will be encouraged, including: awareness of, appreciation of, respect for, preference for, commitment to, adoration of. This will ensure that children are not compelled to respond in a particular way but are offered opportunities to: reflect on the meaning and purpose of life, ponder ultimate questions, respond to challenge, experience exploration of a religious idea, celebrate learning about religion, learn from the experience of others
- Concluding sentence: 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord' (*'In the name of Christ, Amen.'*)

Pattern of Collective Worship

- There are a variety of settings for Collective Worship during the week, including Class, Key Stage and Whole School.
- All assemblies follow the prepared programme of themes for Whole School worship. Children are encouraged to lead assemblies and to contribute their own ideas.
- On Friday achievements are celebrated and time is given to reflect on our skills and talents and to think about other people.
- *Class Assemblies*
 - These are held when no other space is available or other events make it difficult to combine with other classes. They contain the same features of Whole school worship but allow for a different response and atmosphere given the age range and setting. Depending on the year groups, staff and room available, the singing element may be omitted. Whenever class assemblies are held, the leader transforms the room in such a way as to signal to all participants that Collective Worship is taking place.
- *Key Phase Assemblies*
 - These are held in the Infants and Juniors. They contain the same features of Whole school worship but allow for a different response and atmosphere given the age range and setting. Depending on the year groupings and staff available, the singing element may be omitted. Whenever Key Phase assemblies are held, the leader transforms the room in such a way as to signal to all participants that Collective Worship is taking place.
- *School Eucharist*
 - These are held three times annually for Years 4, 5 and 6. The Parish Priest prepares children for the service working briefly with staff and pupils in each class to maximize involvement and response.
- *Church and Family Assemblies*
 - Worship will be shared when appropriate with the wider church family both at the Parish

Church of St. Mary and/or St. John and at our Diocesan Cathedral in Wells. Acts of Worship celebrating Harvest, Christmas, Easter, our end of year Leavers' Service and Special church or school events such as Education Sunday, are held in St. Mary's Church with our Parish Priest. Families are invited to join in with: the acts of Worship held in the Church; celebration assemblies; KS1 and Y3 Parents' Worship, and School Eucharists held in school. Each class makes its own contribution to our celebration assembly at Harvest – and can add material to other Worship and celebration opportunities in discussion with the Collective Worship Leader.

- In addition to the Parish Priest, other members of local worshipping Christian communities, lead Collective Worship during the school year and offer prayerful support.
- Staff will also use opportunities to involve children using work from any other curriculum areas within Collective Worship as and when appropriate.

Resources and Training

The Headteacher attends Diocesan training, generally in Wells. This is then be disseminated to staff as appropriate. Resources for carrying out assemblies are held in the Headteacher's office and resource cupboard. Requests to purchase items for Collective Worship may be made to the Headteacher. The school is willing to support staff in understanding and leading acts of Collective Worship. Training is available through the Diocese. Major resources and training needs will be reviewed in line with the school development plan and consideration to the requirements will be made annually when the budget is set. The Diocesan Resource Centre offers a wealth of material for all Collective Worship and RE.