



Policy Statement on Collective Worship

Reviewed: January 2019

Next Review: January 2021

This policy should be implemented within the context of the vision, aims and values of our Church School.

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for collective worship at St. Peter's School. It was developed through a process of consultation with teaching staff. It was recommended for approval by the Governors' Teaching and Learning Committee and ratified by the full Governing Body.

We aim to:

- Foster a sense of wonder and awe at the beauty, mystery and power of the world through reflection on the fundamental questions of life and a deeper understanding of living life in all its fullness (John 10v10).
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship and festivals.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief.
- Provide an opportunity for celebration, thanksgiving and sharing of emotions such as love, joy, hope, sadness, fear and loss.
- Foster a concern for the needs of other people.
- Provide a time for sharing successes and failures in personal, school and community life.
- Provide an experience of being part of a caring community and foster new insights about life and empathy for others.

In order to achieve these purposes we adopt the following practices:

- Acts of Collective Worship are at the centre of children's lives and a distinctive time of day (at the end of the day) is set aside for these special occasions.
 - Collective Worship takes place in the hall on Monday and is led by the collective worship coordinator and local clergy. The theme for worship is also set for the week.
 - On Tuesday teachers lead a class worship, following with the theme of worship for the week, including elements of SEAL and any class specific PSHE issues and needs as they arise during worship.
 - On Wednesday all children engage with singing worship which encompasses songs and hymns, prayers and reflection in line with worship themes set for the half term.
 - On Thursday the children have buddy worship, led jointly by a key stage 2 teacher and a key stage one teacher. This gives opportunity for collaborative thinking around the theme for the week as well as opportunity for children to contribute their own ideas and share their thoughts with their class buddy and brings a sense of togetherness and community.
 - On alternate Thursdays we also have a team from the parish who lead an 'Open the Book' for the whole school.
 - On Friday we give opportunity for celebration, thanksgiving and sharing of achievements and successes and rounding up the theme of the week.

- At the end of the day children are invited to say a short prayer in their classroom, as well as before lunch.
- We provide a wide variety of approaches towards worship taking into account the fact that we are all different and have different preferences and needs.
- We encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to, watching and joining in worship offered.
- The collective worship coordinator offers support to teaching staff in their delivery of class-based worship, detailing weekly the aims and ideas that could be delivered to classes.
- The difficulty of eliciting responses from differing children with the ages of 4 and 11 is acknowledged and many discussions are taken up at the appropriate level in the classroom, class worship and buddy worship provide opportunity to further discuss issues and reflections as they arise.
- The importance of staff and pupils in the development of a whole-school ethos is strengthened in shared worship in which we support the promotion of Christian values. In appointing new staff the Governors seek candidates who will actively support the Christian ethos and aims of a Church School.
- Parents are made aware in the School Prospectus of the Aims of the School (Mission Statement) and that as a Church School we regularly share worship together. All children are encouraged to attend certain Acts of Worship but are also informed of their legal right to withdraw their children.
- Whilst most of worship is non-denominational, we wish our pupils to be mindful of our distinctiveness and to value our own traditions. We broadly follow the Christian calendar and encourage the children to participate in and reflect upon major events in the life of Christ and the main religious festivals.
- We make plans and keep records of acts of worship but allow time for the considerable number of topics which arise spontaneously and which must be considered immediately.
- The collective worship coordinator has the responsibility for and undertakes organising a pattern of meaningful worship. They work closely with Staff and Governors to ensure that all necessary discussion, training and liaison is carried out in order to implement this Policy.
- We learn from and about Christianity and learn something of other faiths and views represented in Britain. We teach pupils to respect people of other faiths, beliefs and views through RE, collective worship sessions and our broad and balanced curriculum, as well as in the school's ethos and vision. (This is also reflected RE Policy)

Monitoring

Monitoring takes place as part of the school's monitoring cycle. The collective worship leader and RE and Worship governor regularly monitor worship. Governor visits take place half termly and regular church and school community meetings take place to review and reflect on the development of worship in the school.

Opting out of Collective Worship

Under the Education Act of 1944, parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship, including special events such as carol services. Parents seeking to withdraw their children from collective worship should first speak to the *headteacher/RE & Collective Worship Co-ordinator* who will seek to establish with the parent:

- the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- the practical implications of withdrawal (i.e. where the child would be and what they would be doing if they were not attending worship)
- whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and, if so, how much.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the schools' policy review schedule. The head teacher is responsible for reporting to the governors' Teaching and Learning committee about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.