



St. Martin's CE Primary & Nursery School

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Introduction

At St. Martin's CE Primary & Nursery School, we are a Church school and we believe that Collective Worship plays a very important role in the life of our school. It is an opportunity to celebrate all aspects of school life to support our curriculum and to provide an opportunity for stillness and reflection in what is often a very busy, active day for our children.

Rationale

The Education Reform Act 1988 states:

"The educational curriculum should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the pupils and of society"

A daily act of collective worship is an important means of developing the spiritual and moral aspects of school life. The daily act of worship will be Christian in nature, aiming to provide pupils with an opportunity to worship Christ, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs. It should promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.

The Education Reform Act 1988 requires that every maintained school include provision for a daily act of worship at the school. As St. Martin's CE Primary & Nursery School is a Voluntary Aided school, the arrangements for a daily act of worship are the responsibility of the Governors in consultation with the headteacher.

The rights of parents to withdraw their children from the act of collective worship is an integral part of the Education Act (1988). Any parent who wishes to exercise this right may do so in consultation with the headteacher. Staff employed by the school may also withdraw from acts of collective worship.

Collective worship should reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to God. School worship is different in character to worship amongst groups with beliefs in common, hence the use of the word "collective" rather than "corporate".

Ideally, the act of worship should encompass all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that all who take part may feel involved. It both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the school. In particular it develops a feeling of belonging to a community, which is essential for personal development and physical growth.

Aims

Through the daily act of collective worship we aim to:

- Provide an opportunity for thought, prayer, reflection and celebration in a caring atmosphere; through this children learn about and are nurtured in the Christian faith;
- Create a sense of school identity and of belonging to a school community which shares common experiences;
- Encompass all aspects of school life, all curriculum areas and reflect the school's ethos;
- Show children that we are members of a wider community, both local and global;
- Encourage a care and concern for others in society and the natural world;
- Help children think about a wide variety of ideas and dimensions of life, including the spiritual, ritual, wonderful, joyful, tragic, sorrowful, solemn and humorous.

Approaches

In acts of worship we should ensure that:

- The purpose of the act of worship is clear to all present;
- Themes are developed effectively on a weekly basis;
- Artefacts, visual aids or other foci of interest are used where appropriate;
- Opportunities are given for prayer, song, reflection and quiet;
- The occasion engenders an atmosphere conducive to worship;
- Children are actively involved as much as possible;
- Subject matter is appropriate to the age and experience of children;
- Visitors, governors and parents are welcome to attend on a variety of occasions;
- We will work to establish and build links with Cornerstone Church in Cranbrook;
- Children and adults take away something to think about and take into their daily life within school and the community.

Guidelines

The governing body endorses the following comments from “*Open the Door*”: *Guidelines for Worship and the Inspection of Worship in Voluntary and Grant Maintained Church Schools, National Society/Oxford Diocesan Education Service.*

- (a) **Belief in God as Creator.** God is the fount, the maker and sustainer of all that is. Therefore the universe is intrinsically good. Therefore in school worship should encourage a sense of awe and wonder, and foster a respect for the world and its peoples.

- (b) **Belief in Jesus.** Christians believe that Jesus was both human and divine; he encompasses both divinity and humanity. His life, especially his birth, death and resurrection, lie at the heart of a Christian understanding of the strength and power of God's love. Jesus is the ultimate and complete revelation of God's love for creation. Jesus is the only Saviour.

This may be approached through the major Christian festivals of Christmas, when worship will focus on Jesus' incarnation and birth; and Easter when the focus is on his death and resurrection. The liturgical cycle of the Christian year provides opportunities for reflecting on the deep significance of Jesus' life and the life of the Church. Stories from the gospels will provide opportunities for insight into Christian spiritual and moral teacher.

- (c) **Belief in the Holy Spirit.** The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, sustains and energises the lives of individual Christians and the corporate life of the church. The power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians is proof of the outpouring of God's love for creation and lies at the heart of the Christian experiences of renewal, reconciliation, trust and forgiveness.

In worship this may be approached through stories of individual people and organisations who have acknowledged the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. These may be figures on the world stage or people who live within the locality of the school. The commitment of the Church to the poor and oppressed of the world is regarded as an activity of the Holy Spirit, a powerful celebration of its sense of mission.

- (d) **The Trinity.** God as three Persons is a distinctive belief of Christianity as set out in the historic creeds. There is one God, but three Persons.

Christians often end prayers with a statement of Trinitarian belief and any school wishing to emphasise the distinctiveness of the Christian religion needs to represent this in its worship. This could, however, compromise the integrity of pupils, especially Jewish and Muslim pupils, and great care should be taken to approach the situation with sensitivity.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not easy for schools to explore in terms of worship, but the use of Trinitarian prayers (including those from the Celtic tradition) can help pupils towards an understanding of its importance. One way to encourage reflection on the Trinity is through an exploration of the school itself as a community, in terms of the relationships both within and outside the school.

- (e) **The Bible.** The Bible has unique authority as God's Word for Christians and its use is central in Christian worship and life.

Using the wealth of biblical material there are two methods of approach which may run concurrently. One is to use the drama and story contained in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, for reflection and deeper understanding of issues relevant to human concerns. The other is to develop an awareness of how Christians use the Bible for study, for personal insight and for public reading and reflection. The Anglican Church, in common with other Churches, follows a liturgical calendar in which specific passages are read at particular times of the year.

Planning and Implementation

The organisation of collective worship may vary from time to time, but its current basic pattern is shown below:

Monday	Whole school worship led by the Minister for Cranbrook, the Headteacher or visitor to school
Tuesday	Class assembly led by class teacher
Wednesday	Christian reflection and prayer.
Thursday	Class assembly led by class teacher, Hymn practice
Friday	Celebration of Learning

The Headteacher, in conjunction with the Minister for Cranbrook, creates the school's own Collective Worship.

Collective worship takes place in school, but for a small number of festivals and special occasions, it takes place elsewhere.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of this policy is the joint responsibility of the headteacher and governors who should monitor and evaluate the success of acts of collective worship through:

- Regular discussions with staff and children as to the relevance and impact of acts of worship;
- Regular observation of and participation in acts of worship to assess children's involvement and response and appropriateness of content and presentation;
- Identification of any relevant training needs amongst staff;
- Regular monitoring and development of resources;
- Checking that appropriate opportunities to raise multicultural, equal opportunities and gender issues are created and taken;
- Ensuring that the legal requirements for collective worship are being met.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

Conclusion

By the time the children leave the school they will have had:

- (a) successive opportunities to become spiritually aware;
- (b) an awareness of the three aspects of the Trinity, the use of the Bible and Christian festivals;
- (c) a sensitivity towards others in relationships and to the whole of creation;

(d) an appreciation that they individually are special and unique to God.

REVIEW TERM - 2 YEARS

Policy reviewed: June 2012, January 2014, January 2016

Next review date: January 2018

Dates policy amended: 17th January 2017 – to amend Minister for Cranbrook references