

COCKERHAM PAROCHIAL C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

'Where a love of learning grows'

Growing in knowledge
Growing in faith
Growing in God's love

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me
Philippians 4.13

Staff and Governors were consulted about this policy February 2020
Review date February 2022

COCKERHAM PAROCHIAL C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

1. Fundamentals

a) Christian emphasis.

In this Church of England Voluntary Aided School, Collective Worship is in conformity with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England as laid down in the Trust Deed.

b) Collective Worship contributes to our Mission Statement and the aims and ethos of the school and therefore to the Christian Education we provide. It also contributes to the celebration and exploration of the values of our school, our Christian Values for Life, and our British Values.

c) Collective Worship is at the heart of our school life and the Governors see it as an essential part of all pupils' education. As such we are concerned to resource it properly and ensure that it is of the highest standard. The worship and prayer life of the school is not limited to the legally required daily acts of worship. Opportunities will be taken to use prayer and meditation exercises in the curriculum generally and at the end of each afternoon session as well as graces before lunch.

d) The Church of England Heritage.

Forms of worship within our denomination differ and those differences enable us to provide a varied range of approaches to worship whilst remaining true to our Trust Deeds. As well as drawing on our denominational heritage, we also occasionally expect to draw on the rich tapestry of practice in the world-wide Christian Church.

Whatever the approaches, we expect that pupils will be introduced to the key beliefs and aspects of the Christian faith and helped to explore them. These would include:-

- The nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- The nature of human beings as children of God, part of his creation and, though sinful, destined for eternal life
- 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
- The central place of the Bible as a source of knowledge about God and Jesus and as a source of inspiration and guidance
- The importance of prayer
- The central symbols of Christianity
- The cycle of the Church year

e) Worship is a divine activity.

Worship is not simply about us talking (praising, interceding, confessing, etc.) to God. It is also the breaking through of the divine into human life. Worship is not just a human activity; it is a vehicle for God's action. It is one of the points in life when we open ourselves up to God. An imperfect analogy might be with a radio station and its listeners. The broadcast is made constantly but we can only receive when we switch on.

Worship is voluntary.

Worship is always an "open" voluntary activity. We cannot force children to worship and even if we tried, they would only find ways of misleading us into thinking they were worshipping. But what we can do is (in the words of the well worn phrase) to attempt to bring children to the "threshold" of worship and provide a setting in which they might worship. We want them to be free to respond or not to our clearly articulated principles and beliefs, and to be able to accept the invitation to worship or decide not to. But we can hope that at least some will pass over that threshold and worship God, and we might properly expect them to. Whether they do or not will depend on many factors. It will depend on their level of spiritual development, on their outlook on life and faith, on the influences of home and on how well we stimulate their interest. Perhaps most importantly it will depend on what we have done to create an atmosphere which encourages worship, on the quality of the encounters they have with Christian staff and Church congregation and, not least, on the Holy Spirit.

Worship and the quality of school life.

Worship is not something which can be separate from the rest of the life of the Church school. Worship is fed and nurtured, or corrupted and rendered meaningless, by the general atmosphere, ethos and quality of life of the school. For instance, if relationships are strained or forgiveness is not practiced, then affirmations of love and forgiveness in worship can sound hollow.

The relationship between worship and the general life of the school is two way. Worship must flow out of the life of the school and be a celebration of the life and concerns of the school. This is why, as well as the explicit Christian content, almost anything that happens in the life of the school and the life of its members can be offered to God and be a fit subject for the worship theme.

But worship is not simply a response to the school ethos; it is the stimulus for the whole life of the school. By the values and beliefs proclaimed in hymns, prayer and story, and by the atmosphere created, worship should stimulate and reinforce the Christian values which the school upholds, inform its whole curriculum and set the tone of its pastoral relationships.

Worship is Educational

Worship in school must also contribute to children's education. It should develop knowledge and understanding about the Christian faith but also about many other areas of life. Through their participation, children should develop skills and confidence and be helped to grow spiritually and morally. Worship should reflect, celebrate and inform the curriculum and should widen children's horizons. Which is why there is a dual emphasis in these guidelines on familiarising children with the denominational heritage and also on introducing them to the variety and richness of the whole Christian tradition.

- f) As a Church school we understand ourselves to be part of a wider pattern of church life. The local Christian Community is both a support and a resource. We have close links with the Parish Church.
- g) Collective Worship and assembly.
The school meets together for Collective Worship but there will be times when we assemble together for other purposes, eg. important notices and announcements. Such "assembly" times are legally distinct from Collective Worship and parents' rights to withdraw their children do not apply.
- h) Worship in the school, while reflecting our denomination, will take into account the levels of development of pupils.
- i) The provision of Collective Worship conforms to Diocesan policy.
- j) Worship and Religious Education are closely interconnected and some elements of the syllabus will be delivered via school worship.

2. Responsibility for the Policy.

- a) The policy will be regularly reviewed by the Governing Body (Curriculum Committee). Advice on the policy will be sought from the Diocese, Incumbent, Headteacher and Staff as necessary.

The Headteacher, is responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of the policy.

3. Statement of Broad Aims

- a) To contribute to the Mission Statement and aims of the school.
- b) To create an environment which springs from the children's experience of life and connects with the life of the church, within which children and adults have the opportunity to worship.
- c) To develop knowledge & understanding of the Christian faith, eg
 - Learn about the place and significance of the Bible
 - Understand the significance of Jesus
 - Share in Church life and Christian practice
 - Celebrate the festivals and Saints days of the Church year
 - Help pupils understand the nature of God as revealed in Jesus
 - Show that God is concerned with all areas of life
- d) To develop links with the local Church and introduce pupils to the worship heritage of the Church of England, eg
 - Learn to use church service books
 - Learn important and famous prayers of Christianity and of the

Anglican Church

- Learn appropriate responses and forms of prayers
 - Gain a repertoire of prayer to take into adult life
 - Experience different forms of Christian worship and worship material
 - Develop links with the local Church.
- e) To worship God through Jesus.
- f) To contribute to the spiritual development of pupils, eg
- Develop the ability to meditate, to be still and reflective and use Silence creatively
 - Learn to pray in a variety of ways
 - Understand what worship is and what people do when they worship
 - Foster a sense of awe and wonder at creation
 - Explore mystery and the important questions about life and creation, including the dark side of life, eg suffering, loss, death and evil
 - Explore all that is of value in life - truth, love, goodness, beauty, etc.
 - Reflect on and express their hopes, concerns, joys and sorrows, etc.
 - Offer opportunities for pupils to build up their relationship with God
 - Explore the ideas of faith, calling and commitment
- g) To contribute to pupils' moral development, eg
- Explore and reflect on moral issues and concerns
 - Help them reflect on their own values, commitments and beliefs
 - Help them develop behaviour based on Christian values
 - Help them deepen their awareness of the needs of others
- h) To celebrate, take note of and build up the life of the school in the presence of God, eg
- Celebrate work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum
 - Build up the sense of community of the school
 - Develop and reflect on the values of the school
 - Share the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the School community
 - Explore what it means to put God and "the life of the spirit" at the heart of school
- i) To experience and understand the central place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church
- j) To contribute to the general development of pupils by providing opportunities for them to bring their best to God
- k) To look out to the wider world, eg
- Take note of events on the world and express joy or sorrow as appropriate
 - Celebrate and give thanks for God's world
- l) To bring children to faith, eg
- Encouraging a closer relationship with God and Jesus
 - Developing Christian responses to creation and life such as a sense of

being created and loved by God; a sense of thankfulness

- m) To witness to the Church's commitment to ecumenism, eg
 - Introducing children to prayers and aspects of worship in other denominations
 - Building links with other Christian Churches in the area
- n) To explore the beliefs of others, eg
 - Listen to stories from other faiths and learn about their significance
 - Celebrate values, attitudes and beliefs shared with members of other cultures

4. Organisation and Delivery

- a) The pattern of weekly worship is usually as follows:-

At an appropriate time during afternoon whole school - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday and Friday 2.55pm. On occasion there may be class worship in the children's own classroom.

- b) Collective Worship will be led by the headteacher, staff, pupils and the incumbent with contributions at various times from other clergy, members of the Diocese, members of the local Christian Community and other appropriate visitors.
- c) The approximate length of Collective Worship is twenty minutes. Though worship is not designated as curriculum time under current DCSF regulations, it is a major aspect of the whole curriculum provided by the school. Worship is a vehicle for exploring aspects of the National Curriculum and Religious Education and frequently involves teaching and learning activities such as discussion and question and answer. Pupils may be read to or instructed or they may be asked to listen to readings or to think about and respond to a stimulus such as a work of art.

Worship is also concerned with the celebration of the curriculum, with pupils displaying or recounting details of what they have learnt. Pupils may be involved in leading worship or performing through dance, drama or music.

When any such activities occur, they may be counted as teaching time even though they take place within worship. It is appropriate that, in a Church school, worship and learning is seen as a seamless whole even though, for the purposes of recording teaching time, we distinguish between the two.

- d) Parents, family and governors are welcome to attend the Collective Worship.
- e) A welcoming atmosphere will be created and sustained by the use of music, silence, candles, visual focus, etc.
- f) Worship will be distinguished from other "assembly" activities by the use of music to indicate the end of worship, and any notices will be given after the closing music.

- g) Possible arrangements for withdrawal from worship - a member of staff would supervise any child withdrawn from worship. This would be done on a rota basis.
- h) Because of the importance placed on the worshipping life of the school, children will not be withdrawn from worship for extra tuition, music lessons, etc.

5. **Content and Approaches**

a. Content for Collective Worship

1) General Content.

Worship can be based on almost any theme or subject but focuses on our Christian Values for Life. In a school year opportunities will occur for many if not all of the following:-

- a) Sharing and taking note of common experiences - loss, death, birthdays, anger, thankfulness, sorrow, joy, fear, jealousy, beauty, good-byes, new siblings, illness, recovery, etc.
 - b) Expressing concern - for others, both in stories from school and in the news.
 - c) Looking at the world - developing awe and wonder, experiencing mystery, pattern, order, change and renewal, thanksgiving.
 - d) Exploring common values, standards and rules - how to treat others, self-discipline, good and evil.
 - e) Topical events - continuing issues such as starvation, peace and conflict.
 - f) Celebrating the curriculum - Primary schools generally do this well and use worship as a space where achievement can be celebrated and when pupils can properly "show off" their learning.
 - g) Sharing and celebrating pupil achievement - in sports, hobbies, relationships and behaviour in and out of school.
 - h) Stories - which illustrate faith themes; which evoke a sense of awe and wonder; which portray love and compassion; or which present truth in story form. Examples might be myths and legends, literature and children's literature which explore metaphor and biographies.
 - i) Information about other faiths including key personalities and stories - but not "other faith" worship.
 - j) Music - from a variety of sources; recorded or performed by pupils.
- 2) Distinctive Christian Content for Collective Worship. All the above are only part of the worship content. Much content should be explicitly Christian, taking the opportunity to include material from the R.E. Syllabus which would not otherwise be covered. The Christian content might include some of the following:-

- a) Christian Faith and History
 - Understanding the nature of the Bible
 - Old Testament stories
 - Stories about and the teaching of Jesus
 - Church Seasons and Festivals
 - Church History
 - Stories of saints and famous Christians or of people who exemplify Christian virtues. These should be chosen from the past, the present or from a range of cultural backgrounds.
 - Christian beliefs
 - Church Life and Worship, eg. Holy Communion/Eucharist, daily offices, baptism, marriage.
 - Christian values, eg. forgiveness, reconciliation, mercy, self sacrifice, compassion and love.
- b) Prayer and God - exploring ideas about the nature of God as Father, Son and Spirit; and exploring ideas about prayer as well as practising the habit of prayer to God.
- c) Hymns and songs from the Christian Tradition - from a variety of sources. These should include hymns and songs used in Church/Sunday School and from the wider Church, eg. Taize, Mission Praise, What no music
- d) Variety in Prayer - Using different forms of prayer, eg. thanksgiving, praise, intercession, silence, meditation, contemplation, responses, the Lord's Prayer, ASB Collects, prayers from other Christian traditions, eg. Celtic, Orthodox, famous prayers, pupils' own prayers, (either prepared or spontaneous). Prayer should include acknowledgement of failings and wrong doings, confession, forgiveness and reconciliation as well as thanksgiving, praise and petition.

As well as reflecting the breadth of Christianity the prayers chosen can make a significant contribution to introducing children to the Anglican heritage. The use of collects, of responsive greetings and prayers and of canticles (either in whole or part) can introduce children to church of England worship.

- e) We shall use a fourfold approach in organising the content of worship consisting of: the observance of the Church Year, the celebration of curriculum work, weekly (or longer) themes, and acts of worship which stand alone.
- f) A range of approaches will be used including:- adult and pupil led, story telling, music and movement, drama, visual aids etc.

6. Resources

- a) The Headteacher and Incumbent liaise to agree on the purchasing of new resources. All staff are encouraged to recommend new resources.

- b) We have a range of materials including storybooks, "Assembly" books pictures, artefacts, candles, etc. which are, at present, kept in the Hall.

7. Consultation, Management, Recording and Review

- a) The Collective Worship Co-ordinator shall:-
Assist/co-ordinate the planning of worship
keep a record of worship themes and hymns/songs
attend in-service on worship
look for curriculum links
occasionally consult with pupils
keep up-to-date with resources
be responsible for outside visitors taking part in worship
evaluate the quality of worship
- b) Termly planning meetings will be held to plan and co-ordinate worship. Staff and the Incumbent will be asked to contribute to worship planning.
- c) Records of Acts of Worship will be kept in the form as suggested in WOW into Worship.
- d) (i) At the termly planning meeting, children and staff (The Worship Group) will evaluate the quality and content of collective worship . Feedback from staff and pupils will be encouraged and will be used as a basis for future planning.
The following areas will be monitored to see if:-
 - there has been a variety of styles of worship
 - there has been a balance in the leadership between staff, pupils, visitors, clergy
 - there has been a variety of pupil response
- (ii) The Headteacher will inform the governing body about worship in the school through the Headteacher's report.
- (iii) The Worship policy will be reviewed every two years.

8. The Legal Requirement for Collective Worship In Our School

- a) Legal Basis
Collective Worship in Church Schools is governed by both the 1944 and 1988 Education Acts as well as by the Trust Deed of the School. The Collective Worship provided by the school must be in accordance with the Trust Deed, or in accordance with the tradition before we became an Aided School.
- b) Daily Worship
Daily Collective Worship has to be provided for every pupil. The worship may take place as the whole school or separate Key Stage groups, mixed year groups

or classes, but not faith groups. Worship may take place at any point in the school day.

c) Worship in Church Aided Schools

Worship should normally take place on the school premises, but may take place in Church on special occasions. Children and their families are encouraged to participate in the public worship at the Parish Church. There is a regular pattern of family services where the children are invited to contribute.

d) Parental Rights of Withdrawal.

Parents may wish to withdraw their children from Collective Worship and this provision and its limitations are indicated in school Brochure.

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 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.

e) Complaints About the Provision of Collective Worship.

It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Headteacher, 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 come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese.

