



St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School, Pulborough



A Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

This policy was adopted in: April 2021

The policy will next be reviewed in: April 2024



RATIONALE

The Trust Deed and School Ethos Statement inform the policy and practice of collective worship at St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School, Pulborough.

The daily act of collective worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life. Through this, and in the general ethos of the school, we seek to promote our mission statement:

'A Christ-centred school, with a child-centred curriculum' where wisdom and love guide and influence learning and teaching for our whole community.

We treasure each child and enable them to flourish, using their God-given potential, establishing a secure foundation for them to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

It is a time where we come together to share our love of God and celebrate our achievements (and sometimes failures) together. The worship of the school is based on promoting the Christian values which permeate the ethos of our school. As such, the contributions of staff, pupils, clergy, parents and other visitors are highly valued.

AIMS

Through collective worship, we aim to:

- provide an experience of worship that will allow children and staff to respond to the presence, love and peace of God and enable the school community to consider spiritual and moral issues.
- introduce children to Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the church year.
- explore a variety of ways of praying and introduce children to well-known Christian prayers.
- strengthen and support the school community, giving expression to and reaffirming the Christian values of our school and to enable children to explore their own beliefs and encourage participation and response.
- celebrate the gifts that each child brings to the school community, recognizing the uniqueness of each individual made in the image of God.
- encourage children to reflect on the puzzling questions that life poses and to respond to the wonder and mystery of the world around them and develop a sense of identity and responsibility towards each other, the wider community and the local Church.
- foster a concern for others within the school and the wider world, an appreciation of the created world and awareness of our responsibility for it.
- to provide our children with regular opportunities for stillness, reflection and prayer.



OUR CHRISTIAN VALUES

Collective Worship at St Mary's is based on our 'Christian Values', which are drawn directly from the teachings of Jesus. Each of these values is used in turn as the theme for Collective Worship:

Autumn 1 – Love

Autumn 2 – Hope, perseverance, courage

Spring 1 – Humility, service, forgiveness,

Spring 2 – Compassion, wisdom, justice, peace,

Summer 1 – Faith, trust, truthfulness,

Summer 2 – Friendship, generosity, thankfulness.

These values are embodied in the new commandment that Jesus gave us:

"...love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples." John 13: 34-35

We also actively seek to encourage the attitudes of awe, wonder and reflection.

SHARING OUR VALUES

Our vision is a school where all children experience a diverse range of learning opportunities, facilitated by enthusiastic staff who recognise and encourage the potential in every learner and who ensure that all children develop into confident, responsible and successful members of their community, based on shared Christian values.

We therefore blend Christian teaching and values education together in order to provide opportunities for our children to become:

- Confident and independent learners who want to 'have a go' at any new challenges that come their way.
- Responsible members of the community who want to 'make a difference' to the world around them.
- Successful individuals who want to carry on learning.

ORGANISATION OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We hold a daily act of collective worship at St Mary's and this forms part of each assembly. We conduct collective worship in a dignified and respectful way, telling children that this is a special time, a period of reflection as well as a celebration. We expect children to behave in an appropriate way; we ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and to participate fully in the prayers and hymns.



All acts of collective worship begin with music playing to remind children that this is a special time. Candles are lit to remind children that Jesus is with us and we all make the sign of the cross. The worship includes a time for prayer, a reading from the scripture or other appropriate text and a hymn. The children are actively involved throughout the worship either by listening, answering questions, sharing their own ideas and thoughts, joining in with drama, reading, leading the prayers and singing. All acts of collective worship end with a prayer. The candles are then blown out before any certificates are presented or messages given. This allows us to make a clear distinction between worship and assembly. The children then lead out as music is played.

Children are encouraged to reflect on how their experiences and what they learn during collective worship can be applied to their daily lives both in school and outside.

We aim to provide a variety of worship experiences for the children. Our current schedule is as follows:

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| Monday | Whole school worship led by the Headteacher or Deputy Head.
The themes for Monday's collective worship reflect our Christian values for that particular half-term, the Church calendar, our school ethos and current events. |
| Tuesday | Songs for Worship led by the Headteacher and Mr Hancock.
Children are reminded that singing is another form of prayer. Songs and hymns are chosen to follow-on from Monday's collective worship, to prepare for forthcoming events and to develop and extend children's repertoire. Songs for Worship either involves the whole school or is divided into Key Stages. When it is divided into Key Stages arrangements are made to enable children in Reception or Year One to be accompanied by their Year Five or Year Six buddies. |
| Wednesday | Class-based Worship. These give class teachers the opportunity to develop the theme of Monday's collective worship in line with the age and needs of children in their particular class and in a more intimate setting. Children are encouraged to share their reflections in the Class Worship Book. The Parish Priest and Parish Reader also join us for Class Worship and visit a different class each week. |
| Thursday | Whole school worship. This is led by either the Parish Priest, the Parish Reader, visiting Clergy or members of the school Senior Leadership Team. |
| Friday | Whole school worship and celebration assembly.
Certificates of achievement are given out to individuals, groups or whole classes. Vine leaves are also awarded to those children who have been identified as demonstrating particular Christian values in a sustained and selfless manner. |



- Class Assemblies** These are usually held on a Friday and are an opportunity for children to share their learning with their parents and the rest of the school.
- Happy Book** Each half term we hold a Happy Book Assembly. Children's achievements across a wide range of activities and attitudes are recognized and individual certificates presented. Copies are also kept in the Happy Book.
- The Eucharist** Fr Paul celebrates the Eucharist in school approximately twice each term. Parents, friends, Governors and parishioners are encouraged to join us. Children from across the school are actively involved in this service, acting as altar servers, reading the Gospel, leading prayers or as members of the school choir. An increasing number of children, suitably instructed by Fr Paul, are able to receive their communion.
- St Mary's Church** The school holds a special Leavers' Service at St Mary's Church in July each year. This is in addition to the children playing an active part in the Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day, Easter and Christmas services at the Church.

CONTENT AND APPROACH

To support and enrich our collective worship we encourage staff who are planning collective worship to use a range of resources and strategies to enable all children to access and play an active part in what we see as an essential part of school life at St Mary's. We make regular use of the 'Values for Life' resource as well as the weekly service sheets from St Mary's Parish Church. Our collective worship themes are explored through stories, hymns, prayers and responses:

- Celebration of the major festivals of Christianity
- Presentation of Bible stories
- Active participation of children of all ages through mime, drama, reading, sharing opinions and thoughts, writing prayers, selecting readings etc.
- Topical matters from news or the locality
- Age-appropriate literature with implicit or explicit religious teaching
- Appreciation of the natural world and human activity
- Appreciation of the talents, achievements and work of ourselves and others
- Visitors who represent organisations and faiths which have a brief acceptable to our Christian values and the Christian ethos of our school.



- Use of music
- Use of DVDs
- Age-appropriate material through the Internet
- Appropriate focal points and artefacts.
- Prayer in different forms – formal, informal, collective, private, silent.

SINGING & MUSIC

Singing is an important part of worship and at St Mary's we use a range of traditional and contemporary music throughout the year. We encourage children throughout the school to join in with the music used in our worship. Many of our traditional hymns come from 'Hymns Old & New' (published by Kevin Mayhew), which also contains many contemporary songs. We also have an extensive range of publications by 'Out of the Ark Music' (by Mark and Helen Johnson). These contain songs for specific festivals and seasons throughout the year, such as Easter and Christmas, as well as more general songs that can be used in the Eucharist and either class or whole school assemblies.

Other resources by contemporary composers such as Matt Redman (10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)) and the Rend Collective (My Lighthouse) are also used.

We are fortunate to have 'live accompaniment' in school in the form of the organist from St Mary's Church, although we can also use backing tracks and CDs if necessary. The organist usually comes in to assist the headteacher with 'Songs for Worship' every week, although this has been prevented recently by Covid restrictions.

SHARING WITH PARENTS

We encourage the parents and friends of our pupils to join us for School Eucharists. These take place at least once a term and are linked to major Christian festivals throughout the year, such as Christmas, Easter and saints' days. Although we have been restricted to Zoom services due to the pandemic, when restrictions are lifted we will return to inviting parents and friends into the school for these services.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SEND

All children, regardless of academic ability, age, gender, ethnic origin or faith will have access to a wide range of appropriate activities to support their understanding of RE. This will include taking all reasonable steps to ensure that all acts of collective worship are accessible to every child at St. Mary's.



OTHER FAITHS

Although our collective worship reflects our Christian beliefs and values, we are committed to respecting each other's faith and culture, showing acceptance and understanding regardless of individual children's beliefs.

VISITS AND VISITORS

As part of the curriculum we ensure that appropriate visits are made available to the children in order for them to have first-hand experiences and gain a greater understanding of various places of worship. Visitors to the school are welcomed and invited to share their experiences and knowledge; their role is to educate, not to evangelise. St. Mary's Church, together with the Rector, is our most valuable and frequently used resource.

RECORD KEEPING, EVALUATION & MONITORING

A book is kept that records the details of each act of collective worship. This is handwritten/typed by the Headteacher. Each teacher also keeps a book recording Class Worship. In Key Stage One these books are maintained by the class teacher. In Key Stage Two children are more actively involved in recording their class worship.

Evaluation strategies used by staff and Governors for assessing the outcomes of collective worship include:

- Observation of the children's interest level and attentiveness
- Observation of the children's general behaviour in and around school and towards one another
- Written observations and checking that practice matches planning
- Formal observations with written and/or verbal feedback
- Seeking feedback from children, staff, parents, governors and other visitors
- Observing the extent of the collective worship's influence on children's attitudes and behaviour throughout the school
- Discussions with colleagues

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

We acknowledge the legal requirement stated in the 1988 Education Reform Act that there must be a daily act of collective worship for all pupils which takes account of their age and aptitude. Parents have the legal right to withdraw children from collective worship, either partly or wholly, and suitable arrangements will be made to accommodate these children. However, since this is a Church school, Christian worship is central to our life and work and is regarded as an essential part of our children's education. We therefore expect all



children to attend and participate in collective worship. A record is kept of children who are withdrawn from collective worship.

CONCLUSION

At St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School we offer pupils opportunities to explore and share beliefs and consider the importance of prayer, quiet reflection and silence. We encourage them to consider the relevance of ideas, beliefs and Christian values to their own lives, to think about the needs of others and what it means to be part of a Church school.

