

# Collective Worship Policy

## Christian Vision of St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

Growing together through faith in Jesus Christ '**Let all you do be done in love**' (1 Corinthians 16.14).

Knowing God through Jesus in our lives let us share, experience and live happiness, laughter and joy in a welcoming, inclusive and loving Christian place.

In the eyes of God and with all your heart let us embrace opportunities to learn, achieve and celebrate success and difference.

By sharing the fruits of the spirit let us shine out for others to see that we are tolerant, respectful, wise and hopeful in this community and God's world.

In journey and love, remember '**I am with you always**' (Matthew 28.20)

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"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

### Introduction

This policy has been prepared by the governors and headteacher, who is also responsible for collective worship at St Thomas' CE Primary School. Diocesan guidelines for collective worship were used as the foundation for the development of this policy.

### The right of withdrawal.

Parents of children at St Thomas' have the legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship. If there are any children whose parents wish to exercise their right to withdraw them from worship alternative activities will be provided in consultation with the children's parents. This does not mean that the children will be in any way exempt from the Christian ethos of the school which underpins the whole of school life. Parents are made fully aware of this when they enrol their children.

### Aims and Objectives

At St Thomas' C of E Primary School we always seek to reflect in our worship the Christian foundation of the school and its care for all who work here. Children and staff are helped to understand the meaning of Christian worship and we hope that believers will be able to share in it and that others of no faith will reach the 'threshold of worship'.

Our central aims of collective worship (as detailed in the Diocesan guideline) are to:

- Enable children and staff to explore and celebrate the differences and diversity found in the variety of forms of worship in the Anglican Christian tradition.

- Lead the school community to the 'threshold of worship' in order for them to make an informed choice about their own involvement and to consider their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Seek to deepen and widen the experience of those of 'faith' and encourage those of 'no faith' so that they begin to feel for themselves something of what it means to worship.
- Use celebration, silence, reflection, contemplation, prayer, song, symbols and imagery as vehicles for worship and spiritual growth.
- Provide opportunities for the whole school community to address God directly through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit through acknowledging his presence, reflecting upon his character and giving him praise and honour.
- Use a vocabulary of worship that encourages the whole school community to attend, participate in and lead worship.
- Encourage all present to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework by learning more about the Christian faith and by encountering Christ through worship.
- Raise awareness through reflection of the ultimate questions of life relating to matters of faith.
- Reaffirm, strengthen and practise key Christian values. (eg. love, peace, compassion, forgiveness, self-giving) and celebrate each unique individual member of the school community as made in the image of God.
- Nurture and encourage respect and care for God's created world by promoting a positive attitude to environmental issues locally, nationally and globally.
- Seek to provide opportunities for spiritual, social and moral development that is characterised by feelings such as awe, wonder, being uplifted, elation, appreciation, gratitude, respect, and reverence.
- Develop a sense of community within the school, the locality, (eg. local church) and foster the sense of being part of a wider community through the celebration of achievements, festivals and special occasions.
- Foster a concern for the needs of others.

'And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' (Mark 12.30)

In summary within our daily act of collective worship, we aim to provide opportunities for children to:

- Provide an opportunity for children to worship God.
- Celebrate all that is good and beautiful and express thankfulness for the joy of being alive.
- Encourage pupils to participate in the leading of collective worship.
- Provide opportunities for children to share what is meaningful and significant to them.
- Ensure that the experiences provided are relevant to the age, aptitude and family background of the children.
- Give time for silent reflection and exploration of inner space.
- Illustrate forms of worship that others have found helpful in their spiritual development, e.g. silent contemplation, dance, singing.
- Provide a rich variety of forms of expression, e.g. art, drama, music, story and give children the opportunity to experience these at their own level rather than teachers imposing their own interpretations.
- Take place in an environment that is conducive to worship, which is professionally coordinated and properly resourced.

- Invite to worship, never coerce, remembering that children will be at different stages of spiritual development and that they should feel able to respond and participate at their own level.

'May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ'.  
(Thessalonians 3:5)

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Monitoring and evaluation are part of a whole school cycle of self review and this will be achieved over time by asking all members of the school community to reflect on school worship.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring of collective worship will be carried out jointly by the head teacher and the worship co-ordinator, if different. Useful strategies for collecting the evidence will include:

- written observations; checking that practice matches planning
- observing children's attentiveness and level of interest
- conducting occasional formal observations of collective worship and providing feedback
- seeking feedback from children, staff, parents, governors, incumbent and visitors
- observing the extent of the collective worship's influence on children's attitudes and behaviour throughout the school
- holding regular discussions with colleagues
- gathering written comments from colleagues on the worship planning sheet

Feedback will be brought to staff meetings which will review collective worship. In St Thomas' CE Primary School this will occur at least annually.

### **Evaluation**

The information gathered via one or more of the strategies listed above will be reviewed carefully in order to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the collective worship. The worship co-ordinator, the head teacher and foundation governor(s), including the incumbent, will be the main evaluators. Formal evaluation of collective worship will take place at **least annually** as detailed above and actions included in the School Improvement Plan.

### **Review**

The head teacher, governors and staff will review this policy every *three* years. A worship record sheet is kept weekly to ensure that acts of worship are generally compatible with the requirements of the policy and to inform our learning and planning for further developments. These will regularly include any formal and informal evaluations of acts of collective worship which will assist monitoring, future planning and delivery. Visitors outside the school community who are regularly involved in acts of worship are provided with a copy of the collective worship policy.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

A daily act of collective worship is held for all children regardless of their background of culture or religion. Every effort is made by the school to involve all children unless withdrawn by their parents in accordance with the law.

### **Responsibilities**

It is the ultimate responsibility of the head teacher and governing body of a school to ensure a daily act of collective worship takes place. At St Thomas' CE Primary School the responsibility to co-ordinate the acts of worship is delegated to the collective worship co-ordinator. She/he plans themes, invites and liaises with visiting speakers and keeps a record of the content of each act of

collective worship. Monitoring and evaluation is the responsibility of the collective worship co-ordinator.

### **Conclusion**

At St Thomas' CE Primary School, collective worship is highly valued and every effort is made to ensure that all children and staff take an active part in a high quality daily act of collective worship. Worship may contain many elements but at St Thomas' CE Primary School we seek to specifically ensure that the act of collective worship is a learning experience as well as a spiritual encounter.

Worship Co-ordinator: Ian Moss

Governor responsible for collective worship: Michael Ridley