

# **St Mary's C of E School**

## **Collective Worship policy**



**Date agreed:**

**March 2017**

**Signed: HJTYreman**

**Headteacher**

**Signed: J Davis**

**Chair of governors:**

**Date for review:**

**March 2020**



## Collective Worship Policy

Collective worship plays a very important part in the life of all at St Mary's C of E School. We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. It involves the school community coming together and participating in a daily assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in the assembly.

### 1. Rationale:

Collective Worship is central to the life and purposes of our school, in accordance with our Anglican foundation. As a Christian community, we promote a growing appreciation of the Christian way of life and of religious belief. We recognise that in our school we have children from a variety of faith traditions, including those who have no faith background at all. Great care and sensitivity is taken to ensure that all our children feel included, valued and special.

The 1988 Education Reform Act states that collective worship must be on a daily basis for all registered pupils. The religious foundation of St Mary's is Church of England and the daily act of Collective Worship is delivered in accordance with the principles and practice of the Church of England.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we base our assemblies on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

Parents and carers do have the right to withdraw their child from these acts of worship.

At St Mary's it is our Mission to:

- Stimulate in every child a sense of curiosity and excitement about the world and to encourage them to search for truth, meaning and purpose in life.
- Educate pupils intellectually, socially, morally, aesthetically, physically and spiritually within a school based on the example of Jesus in the gospels.
- Show pastoral care, encouraging in pupils a sense of commitment, self-reliance, respect for others and a healthy self-esteem.
- Make prayer and worship real educational experiences.

Collective Worship is an important way that we can achieve our mission.

### 2. Aims and Purposes of Collective Worship:

Collective Worship at St Mary's is well planned and a central activity in the life of our school. The aims of Collective Worship at St Mary's are to develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- The work of the world wide church
- The Christian faith within our own community
- The School's ethos and expected standards of behaviour
- Tolerance of the beliefs and religions of others
- The Cultural diversity of our world
- The person of God and Jesus Christ, as others who worship see them.

### **Purpose of Collective Worship:**

- To contribute to a sense of unity and community for the school as a whole
- To promote spiritual, cultural and moral development
- To develop an understanding of Christian values/virtues and how these are lived out in our community

In this way, Collective Worship plays an important role in educating children for Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity in line with The Church of England Vision for Education 2016.

### **Opportunities provided in Collective Worship:**

Collective Worship provides an opportunity for the staff and children at St Mary's to come together to:

- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar

### **3. Responsibilities:**

The Collective Worship co-ordinator, Nicola Bonell, plans the assembly rota together with Rev Sian Yates and head teacher, Hilary Tyreman, every half term.

Each act of worship is planned to include a high level of pupil participation. The evaluation and comments of each daily assembly by the children are always taken into account when planning future acts of worship.

Year 6 children are appointed as worship leaders every year. Their role is to help with preparing the hall for worship every morning, helping decided on how to set up the space, setting up and running the IT and also helping to organise and/or attend some church events.

### **4. Procedures and practise:**

Collective Worship is planned on a three year rolling programme which is based on the "Values for Life" pack from the Gloucester Diocese Resource Centre together with the "Roots and Fruits" book from Imaginor.

The act of Collective Worship is crucial in focusing the whole school on an aspect of the particular Christian value chosen for that half term. The eighteen values that form the themes for each half term are Creativity, Trust, Courage, Forgiveness, Humility, Wisdom, Thankfulness, Compassion, Hope, Justice, Friendships, Truthfulness, Generosity, Peace, Perseverance, Responsibility, Service, Respect and Reverence. These values have been planned to link in with special times in the Christian calendar (see separate plan).

The three core values that have been identified as underpinning our school ethos are Hope, Creativity and Perseverance. One core value is explored every year.

It is acknowledged that for the majority of our pupils this daily act of worship is probably the only collective religious experience they will have. It is essential to make it as interesting, stimulating and thought provoking as possible and make it an experience to be enjoyed.

To support the value being explored in school there is a reflective space in the corner of the hall for Key Stage Two children. An interactive display is placed in the corner for all children to be able to respond to the Christian value being explored. Reception and Key Stage One children also have reflective spaces in their classrooms. This provides all children with the opportunity to respond to the Collective Worship in different ways.

At the end of every half term, children are asked to reflect and respond to the Christian value that has been explored back in their classrooms. This may take many different forms, for example, building a tea light holder out of "Courage" lego bricks or making a tree with "forgiveness" leaves.

Parents and carers are informed regularly on the newsletter about the current value being explored in assemblies and a home school values sheet is posted on our website so that the value can be explored at home as well as in school. When appropriate, children are encouraged to e-mail photographs of themselves depicting a particular Christian value at home. These photographs help to form a display in the hall

## **5. Planning for Collective Worship**

### **Daily Assemblies:**

Each school day has a collective act of worship held every morning. Assemblies at St. Mary's are used to create an atmosphere of sharing, discussion, reflection and celebration and set the tone for the day ahead.

At the start of the assembly, pupils enter the worship space quietly to some music. The music played covers many different genres and traditions. In this way the pupils are introduced to music they may not otherwise be familiar with. Worship leaders choose music to fit with the assembly theme if possible.

This reflective time as children begin assembly is cherished and is an important part of the worship. A peaceful time for private reflection can be a rare occurrence in a busy school day. Candles are lit and prayers are read with the help of pupils at least three times a week. After a greeting, a hymn is usually sung. Music to accompany the hymns and songs is provided by the piano or backing tracks are also available. Pupils are actively involved in choosing the music and hymns that are sung each half term. The hymn or song is followed by an activity to engage the pupils in thinking about the value being explored. Pupil participation and involvement is encouraged as much as possible. This includes children reading, saying prayers, participating in drama and leading worship sessions. A prayer and personal time for reflection always concludes the worship. Music is listened to again as the pupils leave.

This assembly time also plays an important role in developing and communicating the school ethos. The 'Golden Rules', which underpin the Behaviour and Discipline Policy, are regularly discussed. In school there is much to say thank you for, much to praise, much to hope and request and these take high priority.

*If there are concerns regarding discipline which need all the school to be brought together, then this is done at another time in the day so as not to intrude on worship.*

As well as developing the pupils' knowledge and experience of Anglican beliefs, it is also important to explore the cultural diversity of the world. Knowledge and understanding are the basis on which

mutual respect grows. On a rolling programme, at least two visitors from the local Christian community are invited in to lead an assembly every half term to help to increase such knowledge.

In addition to this, the work of individuals and agencies in the wider community and in different parts of the world are explored and celebrated. In this way tolerance of those with different beliefs and cultures is actively promoted.

The children choose a charity each year to support, this is organised by our Year 6 Charities Champion. Charities such as Christian Aid, Shelterbox, Barnardos or UNICEF are regularly supported. Closer to home, regular support is shown to the local community by raising money and donating to the Cornwall Children Hospice Precious Lives Appeal, Pengarth and Penzance Food Bank. Children often request and are encouraged to organise and run their own charity fund raising events throughout the school year.

Flexibility is an essential part of Collective Worship. Although assemblies are planned half a term in advance, there is always flexibility to respond to local, national and global events when necessary. Sometimes it may be appropriate for Reception Class or Year 6 to have separate assemblies depending on the subject matter being discussed. At other times it may be appropriate to have separate Key Stage 1 and 2 assemblies.

#### **Weekly Plan of Assemblies:**

Monday	Christian Value core assembly. All pupils attend led by the Head teacher. This is where the theme for the week is introduced to the children based on the Christian value being explored.
Tuesday	Praise and Worship assembly. All Pupils attend. Hymns and songs are introduced and practised and their meanings discussed. They link to the season or Christian value.
Wednesday	Worship led by St Mary's incumbent, Rev Sian Yates from St Mary's Church expands upon the weekly theme, providing the children with knowledge and understanding of the Anglican Church Year and practices. All pupils and staff attend.
Thursday	Attended by all pupils, led by one of the teachers, a Christian visitor on a rota basis or led by a small group of children themselves. This involves exploring a range of stories which are used to enrich the children's understanding of the value being explored.
Friday	Celebration assembly. Attended by all pupils and staff, led by the Head teacher. Certificates are awarded for the week, house points added up, birthdays and any achievements out of school are celebrated.

Each teacher is given ideas on how the particular value could be followed up back in the classroom in class worship, PSHE and across the curriculum. Links are made to the different areas of the curriculum on the curriculum overview sheet for each year group and on the spirituality grids that are completed each term. In this way, Collective Worship at St Mary's is strongly embedded in school life, contributing to the overall ethos of the school by impacting on all areas of community life.

#### **Family Eucharist Services and Special Festival Assemblies**

Every term at St Mary's a special Festival assembly and a Children's Eucharist service is held. Rev Sian Yates leads the Eucharist services and our pupils play an active part. Children are invited to take bread and 'wine' or receive a blessing.

With our older pupils, confirmation is discussed and those interested in Year 5/6 are offered the opportunity to prepare for first communion. These special times are held in school and at St Mary's church. See Yearly plan for more information.

The children have many other opportunities to visit St Mary's Church during the school year. This encourages the children to know St Mary's as their special church and to feel that it is a part of their community. In addition, all children are encouraged to take part in a special event on a Sunday at least once every half term at St. Mary's or Penlee Cluster Churches. These services develop the children skills in leading worship. Families are invited to these events. The school works closely with Penlee Cluster and at many times of the year the worship themes of the school and church are the same. This provides good opportunities for the children contribute to Penlee Cluster's "Daily Shout" and for the school to share reflections with a wider audience.

## **6. Resources**

Any resources required for Collective Worship are bought as appropriate. Training needs/resources are reviewed annually.

## **7. Monitoring and evaluation**

All assemblies are recorded by the person who led them in a special folder kept in the school hall. Evaluation by Teachers, Visitors, Clergy and Pupils provide useful feedback to the Collective Worship Coordinator, Head teacher, Clergy and the Governors about the current Collective Worship being provided at St Mary's. Children's interest levels and attentiveness are observed whilst pupils and visitors also provide useful feedback after each assembly. These records always help to inform future planning. A questionnaire about assemblies is also given to the children every two years. These questionnaires are evaluated and points raised are also used for future planning.

## **8. Special Needs and Equal Opportunities**

The staff and Governors are committed to ensuring that every child will derive benefit from Collective Worship whatever their ability, gender, ethnicity or creed. In this way, every attempt is made to ensure that materials used are appropriate to a range of ages, abilities, aptitudes and interests. All pupils are encouraged to participate in our assemblies.

## **9. Health and Safety**

All religious artefacts and candles are handled respectfully and safely. All relevant risk assessments are carried out in line with our Health and Safety policy. Any visitors to our assemblies are given a guide to the school and our met prior to the assembly by the Head teacher.

## **10. Parental and carer involvement**

Should parents or carers wish to withdraw their child from Collective Worship we encourage them to contact the Head teacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties they may have.

Parents and carers are kept up to date with the Christian value we are focusing on through the school newsletter, topic leaflets and the website. An RE and Collective Worship questionnaire is issued to the parents every two years where opinions are given about assemblies/Eucharist services. Parents are invited regularly to share our special festival assemblies.

## **11. Governor involvement**

The Foundation Governors also visit the school regularly, paying particular attention to assemblies and children's behaviour. A meeting is held annually with the Collective Worship Co-ordinator, Head teacher and RE Governor to review the Collective Worship provision and to update the SIAMS toolkit. The pupils' opinions of collective worship are taken into account when planning each half term's assemblies and they are also discussed annually in pupil conferencing by the RE/SMSC Governor.