



Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Signed by:

Summer 2024

Headteacher

Date:

Chair of governors

Date:

Summer 2024

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been prepared by the governors and Headteacher with assistance from the teacher/s co-ordinating Collective Worship and the Incumbent. The Diocesan Adviser for Religious Education has also been involved and consulted to write this policy. (This policy is based on the model Diocese of Chester Collective Worship).

THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

The parents' legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship is clearly laid out in the school 'Welcome Pack' where it states "...Parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship, and should inform the Headteacher by letter if this is their wish..." If there are any children whose parents 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 & OBJECTIVES *(as detailed in the Diocesan guideline)*

At Overleigh St Mary's C.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 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 take opportunities to reflect and contemplate, (in other words, reach the 'Threshold of Worship').

Our central aims of collective worship *(as adapted from the Diocesan guidelines)* 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 reflect and contemplate different forms and types 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, stilling, reflection, contemplation, meditation, prayer, song, symbols and imagery as vehicles for worship and spiritual growth.
- provide opportunities for the whole school community to address God; directly acknowledging his presence, reflecting upon his character and giving Him praise and honour (including an understanding of the role of Jesus and an age appropriate understanding of the Holy Spirit).
- use a vocabulary of worship that encourages the whole school community to attend, participate 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, global citizenship and community endeavours.
- reaffirm, strengthen and practice our key Christian values (e.g. agape [Christian love], hope, respect, integrity, service and stewardship, and thankfulness) and celebrate each unique individual member of the school community.
- 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, (e.g. local churches and local organisations) 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 (both locally and globally).

LEGAL / STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

(from School Standards and Framework Act 1998, section 70 and schedule 20)

- Collective worship in a Church of England School should be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words the law on collective worship in a community school, that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character does not apply in a church school, where it should be clearly Christian.
- The school must provide an act of collective worship for all children every day.
- The act of collective worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class unit.

PROCESSES IMPLEMENTED IN SCHOOL

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

- for children to worship God;
- to celebrate all that is good and beautiful and express thankfulness for the joy of being alive;
- for children to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the darker side of life (at an age-appropriate level);
- ensure that the experiences provided are relevant to the age, aptitude and family background of the children;
- to have silent reflection and exploration of inner space;
- to illustrate forms of worship that others have found helpful in their spiritual development, e.g. silent contemplation, dance, singing;
- for 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;
- by ensuring they take place in an environment that is conducive to worship, which is professionally coordinated and properly resourced;
- to always invite, 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.

(Taken from: *National Society Website 2007*)

RESPONSIBILITIES

AS A GOVERNOR

It is the ultimate responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to ensure that a daily Act of Collective Worship takes place. The day to day responsibility for this is delegated to the Collective Worship Co-ordinator/s.

AS THE HEADTEACHER

Alongside the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Worship Co-ordinator/s, it is the Headteacher's responsibility to monitor collective worship and ensure that acts of worship are generally compatible with the requirements of the policy.

AS THE CO-ORDINATOR

It is the responsibility of the Worship Co-ordinator/s to oversee the acts of Collective Worship. They plan the themes for each Act of Collective Worship, and also invite and liaise with visiting speakers. They oversee the content of each Act of Collective Worship.

AS A TEACHER / TEACHING ASSISTANT / MEMBER OF STAFF

It is the responsibility of the teacher and the teaching assistant to attend every Act of Worship that starts the week and as many other Acts of Worship within the week as it is feasible to do so, always attending alongside their children.

If Worship is being led by a visitor to the school then all teachers and teaching assistants are expected to attend (as appropriate).

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure all children in his / her care attend every Act of Worship that starts the week and any Act of Worship led by a visitor to the school.

All members of staff [including Office; Site Maintenance, Canteen] will be invited to attend one Act of Worship every half term.

(1) MONITORING

Monitoring of Collective Worship will be carried out jointly by the Headteacher, the Worship Co-ordinator/s, staff, pupils and governors (where appropriate). 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 overview sheet.
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Feedback will be brought to staff meetings which will review collective worship which will be held regularly. In Overleigh St. Mary's CE Primary School this will occur regularly on a termly cycle.

(2) EVALUATION

The information gathered via one or more of the strategies listed above will be analysed carefully in order to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the collective worship. The Worship Co-ordinator, the Headteacher and Foundation Governor(s) will be the main evaluators. Formal evaluation of Collective Worship will take place at least annually as detailed in the school improvement plan and collective worship action plan.

(3) REVIEW

The Headteacher, Governors and staff will review this policy every three years. A termly worship overview and record sheet is referred to 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 reviews 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.

REPORTING TO GOVERNORS

Material changes to practice and policy will be shared through the School Improvement Committee. There will also be an Annual Report to the Governors every Autumn Term.

INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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

CONCLUSION

At Overleigh St Mary's 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 Overleigh St Mary's primary school we seek to specifically ensure that the Act of Collective Worship is a learning experience as well as a spiritual and celebratory encounter.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The school has a formal complaints procedure, details of which can be found in the complaints policy, available upon request from the school office.