

St Mary's Church of England Primary School Collective Worship Policy

Date of Policy:	September 2023
Member of Staff Responsible:	Governing Body Policy
Review Date:	September 2024
Consultation:	This policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff and governors and the clergy at St Mary's Church

ETHOS STATEMENT

Our school is committed to bringing out the best in each other so that every member of the school community can know 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Through learning of the teachings of Jesus, we believe that our children can explore and develop their understanding of Core Christian values as markers and guides for their own lives. We aim for the school's Core Christian values to inform and influence our pupils' moral compass and allow them to enjoy 'life in all its fullness'. These values are known as the 'Sunshine 6'. They are: Forgiveness, Perseverance, Honesty, Compassion, Courage and Respect.

Our work is also informed by the UN convention on the rights of the child. Article 14 is relevant 'Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their children as they grow up.

INTRODUCTION

St Mary's School is Voluntary Aided and has a Trust Deed setting out the intentions of the Founder with regard to worship. The Foundation Governors have a duty to represent the interests of the Founder and Governors as a whole have control over the organisation of worship. The worship of St Mary's, as a Voluntary Aided School, will be in accordance with the beliefs of the Church of England.

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires all schools to organise a daily act of collective worship which is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. The Government is careful to distinguish between the corporate worship of a particular group and the collective worship envisaged in schools.

Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from the worship part of assembly. However, they must first consult the Headteacher to discuss this in more detail. The school's responsibilities as a Church of England primary school are made clear to potential new parents to minimise the chances of a withdrawal request being made.

It is recognised that it would be difficult in a school such as St Mary's to have a corporate act where everyone shares fundamental beliefs about the purpose of worship. In our collective worship we shall endeavour to:

- Bring together children from different traditions.
- Seek to worship together within the Christian tradition.
- Celebrate the life of the school, recognising its diversity and highlighting the learning activities of the children.

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION

The Education Reform Act 1988 pointed to the importance of the spiritual in children's development. Worship is central to spiritual experience and it is a valid task for the school to give children the opportunity to worship. Worship should be exploratory as well as affirming the beliefs that the children hold and helping them to understand the faith upon which the school is founded. We aim to prevent proselytising by any particular group.

Whilst it is acceptable for those leading worship to express their personal beliefs, there must be an understanding on their part that worship is invitational and they must be careful not to be seen to be attempting to convert others.

WORSHIP AT ST MARY'S SCHOOL

Our aim is to provide collective worship that is Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring and is accessible to all pupils and adults in the school community. This aspiration is based upon 'Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring' (Church of England Education Office – May 2021).

In accordance with our Foundation, we will support and encourage the teachings and practice of the Christian faith and values. Our Christian values are branded as our 'Sunshine Six' – they bring light into our daily lives. They are forgiveness, honesty, compassion, courage, perseverance and respect and underpin our whole school vision (in this policy expressed as an Ethos Statement).

Children will be given the opportunity to experience a wide range of Christian worship. This will include different methods, moods and styles of worship. We recognise that we need to build links between the worship of the school and our parish church. To do this, we will encourage people from the parish to share our worship and we will introduce the children to worship. We will encourage the people of the parish to take an interest in the worship of the School.

Children are also encouraged to take part in private worship throughout the day. This is supported through the use of the prayer garden, worship stations and lunchtime feedback boards.

The worship council meet regularly to discuss Collective Worship across the school. Children evaluate both whole-school and class worship and suggest areas for improvement.

ORGANISATION

1. Our pattern of worship is distinctly Anglican and provides the children with many opportunities to participate in worship.
2. Weekly themes are drawn up by the Collective Worship leader, in consultation with the Deputy Headteacher. Themes are focussed around the schools' sunshine 6 values; the church year; PSHE themes and other important events.
3. The Collective Worship leader will arrange a termly rota of those leading collective worship, indicating the theme for the week and, where applicable, why it was chosen. Worship is led by members of SLT, teachers, classes and visitors from the community.
4. We welcome and value the contribution of visitors to lead worship. Visitors will be informed of the suggested theme for the week they are to lead worship. They will receive this information in good time and it would be appreciated if new visitors would share their intended content, in brief, with the Head Teacher before the act of worship.
5. Staff and visitors leading worship will be asked to follow the specified pattern of worship.
6. Classes in school are placed in one of two groups in a 'vertical' organisation to ensure a range of ages participating in whole-school Collective Worship. Each group has two sessions of worship in the school hall each week. These take place from Monday to Thursday between 9.10 and 9.30am.
7. The school's Friday 'Congratulations' worship has a modified pattern but remains of a Christian character. Parents and other community members are invited to Congratulations assembly each Friday – a celebration and offering of the week's work. This is held on alternate weeks for each Collective Worship grouping. Certificates are often themed around the sunshine 6 Christian values.
8. Songs are matched carefully to the values each week. There is an equal coverage of Christian hymns and Christian value songs.

On days where Collective Worship does not take place, Class Worship is held instead:

Class-led worship is considered to be an opportunity to share and offer an aspect of learning that the particular class has appreciated. This lasts for 20 minutes in each class and can be led by class members and should be based upon the whole school theme of the week for worship. This is organised through a structured pattern of worship to allow pupils to engage with worship effectively. There is a clear process of planning worship linked to the Christian calendar; school values and significant world events. This planning involves the collective worship leader; parish incumbent; senior leadership team and the worship council.

Class worship logs show how worship is carried out in classrooms and provide the children with a mode of reflecting on their spiritual development when worship is over. Children can engage in the themes explored and share their feedback in relation to their experience during worship. Children are encouraged to talk about the impact worship has on their perceptions of the world and how worship has had an impact on their life and inner spirit.

Church Services

We usually hold six Acts of Worship in St Mary's Church each year. Each year group is assigned to one of the church services:

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| -Harvest | -Christmas | -February half term |
| -Easter | -Pentecost | -Leavers' service |

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We will acknowledge other religious festivals, so that all our children feel included in our collective act of worship, but we will not celebrate them.
- We will seek to make worship educational, enjoyable and an opportunity to reflect and develop spiritually.
- We will involve children a) in the planning of the worship by encouraging them to select music and objects to focus upon, and b) by encouraging them to participate wherever possible.
- We will remember that our worship is a collective and not a corporate act, a celebration of being together. All staff are expected to attend.
- We will celebrate the secular life of the school and what the children are doing in the classroom as an offering in worship.

PATTERN OF WORSHIP

1. Children should enter the hall quietly in preparation for worship. All children should be seated by 9.10am.
2. Music monitors will locate the chosen piece of music and display the weekly theme on the screen. Lights are turned off.
3. Children and adults sing 'O Lord Hear My Prayer' as the worship council enter the hall with items to place on the worship table
4. Worship council set table. Correct liturgical coloured cloth on table. Bible open to the relevant chapter.
5. **Worship Council call and response (chosen by children)**
6. Children's welcome.
7. **Introduction to theme.**
8. **Song / Hymn**
9. **Story / Learning**
10. **Reflection or Adult Led Prayer**
11. **Five children chosen to give thanks.**
12. School Prayer
13. Final Blessing - May the grace of the Lord...
14. **Chosen child to choose a sending out.**
15. Blow out candles.
16. There is a 'call and response' element at the end of the main segment of worship.
17. At the end of the act of worship, the designated children remove the items and cloth.
18. Any further item of information or notices will be given at this point.