



Together we love to learn
and learn to love

St. Mary's CE Infant School

Collective Worship Policy

St Mary's CE Infant school is committed to inspiring every individual. We embed the Christian value of love across school life because we believe that a person who feels loved, secure and happy can flourish. We encourage everyone to achieve their potential, develop their talents, celebrate their uniqueness, and rejoice in their relationships with others.

"Do everything in love"

1 Corinthians 16:14

June 2019



Our Vision and Ethos

Our vision for St. Mary's reflects a passionate commitment to learning and recognition of the uniqueness of individual learners. It is driven by our desire to offer the best possible education for all our pupils in partnership with the church and the local community within the context of Christian belief and practices and understanding of shared values.

St. Mary's is a member of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST). ODST has a clear Church of England ethos, and its schools are inclusive and creative communities that build understanding, respect and empathy in children. Pupils, staff and parents of all religious faiths and none are welcome. Our school celebrates religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and encourage dialogue and understanding. We believe that we can all learn from each other and that collective worship is an educational entitlement for all.

In worship we create the opportunity to explore the place of faith in each of our lives, and in the community in which we live. In regular acts of collective worship, the school community has the opportunity of offering thanksgiving and praise to God through a range of liturgical patterns that reflect our Church of England heritage.

Our worship has 3 underlying principles:

1. It is inclusive and contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils
2. It is invitational and respects the dignity of all participants
3. It is inspiring and combines a range of experiences alongside

It is inclusive

Our understanding of Christianity is that it is an inclusive faith which mirrors the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. Thus, we welcome children and staff of all faiths to our worship. Through their Christian character our acts of collective worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, life styles and faiths which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for every student to attend;
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;
- foster active roles of pupils, parents and members of the local community – in preparation, participation and leadership.

It is invitational

Acts of collective worship will:

- nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in everyone by encouraging pupils to consider the needs of others through charitable service and courageous advocacy;
- nurture reflection, stillness and prayer;
- provide pupils with (age appropriate) opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives through music, images and words;
- provide a sense of occasion that is separate from the rest of the school day;
- foster an appreciation of the natural world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it;
- develop clear partnerships between worship in the school and the wider community.



It is inspiring

Our acts of collective worship provide wider opportunities to:

- promote wide ownership of our Christian vision;
- assist learners to have increased awareness and to reflect upon fundamental issues about life;
- enhance, complement and extend curricular work;
- develop learners' understanding of the Christian faith and Church (Anglican) practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content;
- encounter and explore Jesus' teachings and the trinitarian nature of Christian faith;
- identify opportunities for Christian celebration which can be associated with other school events;
- include appropriate references to and elements of other faiths and secular worldviews;
- include opportunities to celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of pupils;

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

Collective worship will:

- be acceptable to the whole community, staff and children;
- include a variety of elements at different times;
- involve the children;
- have a dedicated focus which signifies what is being reflected upon;
- provide a dedicated opportunity for pupils to reflect/respond to the input.

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Leaders, including the children, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme and the needs of the pupils. The themes of worship are chosen to both express and explore our vision and the way in which this vision is experienced in school through the associated values. Throughout their time at our school children will encounter a wide variety of activities such as drama alongside more traditional elements of worship such as prayer and song. There is also the opportunity to worship in our outdoor reflection space and during events such as BeSpace.

Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Pupils who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

Our worship is regularly reviewed through discussions with staff, parents and children and through observations and reflections. Monitoring reports feed into the planning for future worship.

Organisation

Acts of collective worship are generally led by members of staff with children's involvement being encouraged. Once a week, a representative from one of our local Church, St Mary the Virgin, Witney leads collective worship for the school. Our RE Leader and the school's Worship Committee meet frequently to plan and deliver collective worship. On occasions outside speakers are invited to take part in collective worship, for example charity workers, Fair Trade representatives, local dignitaries.



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Acts of Collective Worship generally follow the following format:

- Entrance:** Children come into the hall to music
- Welcome:** Greeting and lighting of the candle
- Sung Worship:** Christian song/hymn is selected to link with the theme of Worship
- Christian Message:** The Bible is a central part of Christian teaching, worship, and liturgy. It can be used to aid worship, to learn from and as a reference point for the theme of worship. Bible references should be used as an integral part of the structure (liturgy) of collective worship. Liturgy is the form which holds worship together and is usually based on the Bible and church tradition.
- Links could be made to current/world affairs. Real life stories and experiences may be used along with other stimuli that promote deeper thinking about the priority we place on *who* God is in our lives and *where* God is on our list of priorities.
- Sending:** As we close the worship we make a tie into the daily life of the school and how the implications of worship are worked out in our lives. We conclude the act of Collective Worship with prayer.

Worship takes place in the hall, in classrooms and sometimes outdoors. There are opportunities for worship/prayer throughout the day;

Evaluation of Impact

The impact of Collective Worship is regularly reviewed by the Headteacher, RE and Collective Worship Leader and/or members of the governing body through:

- Pupil voice
- Monitoring visits
- Parent, staff, governor and visitor feedback
- Photographs
- Reflections

Monitoring reports feed into the planning for future worship.

Special services

There is also a regular pattern of special services at St Mary The Virgin, Witney. These include Harvest celebration, the Nativity Play, Holy week worship, the leavers' service. These are usually led by a member of the ministry team. Members of the wider school community are often invited to these special services.

Collective Worship and the Law

By law, Collective Worship must:

- be provided for every child every day;
- reflect the school's Trust Deed.

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.



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Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship. In the first instance we ask parents who may wish to exercise this right to visit school to speak with the headteacher.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.