

Mereside C of E Primary School



Policy for Collective Worship

Merside CE Primary Collective Worship Policy

General Principles for our School

Introduction

At Mereside C of E Primary School our desire is to develop quality acts of worship within the spirit and the letter of the 1988 Education Reform Act and in accordance with the principles and practice of the Church of England

The Legal Context

Church schools must fulfil three main legal requirements for collective worship:

- Provide an act of worship for all pupils every day
- Ensure that collective worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school
- Include a statement in the school prospectus that makes it clear that parents may withdraw their children from all or any part of collective worship.

There may be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups.

Worship may take place at any time during the school day. Most acts of worship within a school term must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian nature. Pupils (via parents) and teachers have the right to withdraw from collective worship.

Arrangements for collective worship should take account of and be applicable to pupils' ages and aptitudes and the circumstances relating to family background.

What is Worship?

At Mereside Primary School we believe that worship is:

- A response to things of worth
- A recognition of and response to the spiritual dimensions of human experience
- A celebration of love for God by believers
- An expression of praise and gratitude, of awe and wonder, and of love and compassion
- An invitation to participate or observe

We believe that Collective worship is central to the life of our school and in achieving our vision for the school.

- It offers an opportunity for the whole school community to explore together the distinctive Christian beliefs and narrative that underpins our Anglican foundations and Christian character.
- It provides us with time to celebrate our Christian values, vision and ethos and reflect upon their contribution to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of all members of our school community

Our Aims

Through our worship together we aim to:

- Promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our pupils
- Help our pupils learn about and reflect upon Christian Teaching, Biblical material and Christian festivals, in a way that relates to their experience and to living together in community
- Promote understanding of the nature of God

- Enable learners to develop an understanding of the person of Jesus Christ and the central position He occupies in the Christian faith.
- Develop pupils understanding of the role of prayer

Objectives

We will achieve our aims through:

- fostering empathy and imagination, enabling our pupils to participate in a variety of ways in worship
- giving a significant place to the Bible in our worship and relating this to the school's core values and our learners' own lives
- providing opportunities to respond to a wide variety of stimuli in our worship including, for example, praise, silence, songs, art work, technology, guided reflection, drama, music, prayer and above all promoting pupils active involvement
- choosing themes that raise aspirations, inspire a high level of spiritual and moral reflection and challenge learners to take responsibility for their own conduct
- developing pupils understanding of the value of personal prayer and reflection as part of their individual spiritual journey
- providing opportunities to understand and celebrate the seasons of the Church year and Christian festivals including local celebrations
- using a variety of settings, timings and environments to enrich worship

Collective Worship is distinctively Christian, but we recognise the importance of times of assembly which allow the school community to:

- recognise and celebrate the beliefs and culture of others, particularly those represented in the school community
- celebrate achievements of members of the school that are held to be of worth
- reinforce school expectations, behaviour strategies, school routines
- share school and community information

RE, Assembly and Collective Worship

We feel it is important that the relationship between RE, Assembly and Worship is understood by teachers and pupils. They are distinctive activities which all contribute to a broad and balanced curriculum, they should endorse one another, and are all intentional learning activities within the curriculum and therefore important in the planning process.

RE is about developing knowledge and understanding, concepts, skills and attitudes in order to make decisions about fundamental questions. It involves both learning about religion and learning from religion. We believe that a classroom context is more appropriate for effective RE to take place.

Assembly is an occasion when pupils are gathered together in a larger group, usually with some formality. One of its many purposes is to strengthen the sense of the school as a community with shared ethos, values and aims.

Worship can take place within an assembly and can be seen as one element or dimension. But an act of worship is far more than just a coming together of the school; it should fulfil the definition of worship as described in this policy. An assembly does not have to include an act of worship nor does an act of worship have to take place in an assembly.

MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- The Foundation Governors, in conjunction with the Governing Body, Headteacher, staff and school community have responsibility to ensure that the daily act of collective worship is consistent with the principles and practices of the Church of England and the trust deeds of the school.
- The Headteacher has responsibility for managing collective worship on a day-to-day basis, ensuring all legal requirements are complied with. This involves the planning of a programme for Collective Worship that ensures continuity, variety and a clear focus on Christian beliefs, teaching and festivals, and the way that these link with the values and life of the school.
- Leaders ensure worship is relevant, creative, cohesive and will enrich the spiritual journey of participants.
- The themes and values to be explored through worship times each term are decided in advanced and shared with pupils and their parents.
- Records of plans and content are kept centrally on the T Drive and in hard copy in the Deputy Heads office. It is the responsibility of Headteacher to ensure that these are kept updated.
- Pupils are encouraged and enabled to be involved in planning and leading acts of worship and have regular opportunities to do so.
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of Collective Worship is an on-going process that involves input from staff, pupils, parents and governors, and takes place every term. Feedback provides insight into how worship influences the life of the community and is used to ensure on-going relevance and improvement. Outcomes of monitoring will be reported back to full Governors' meetings. At present the following arrangements for effective review are in place: Headteacher monitors aspects of collective worship half termly. The Chair of Governors or another Foundation governor monitors worship with the head termly. The outcomes from this monitoring are used to inform future actions including professional development for staff and changes in planning.
- The Headteacher also has responsibility for auditing and keeping records of resources and ensuring they are accessible to pupils and staff as appropriate.
- The Headteacher keeps in touch with development in the subject and acts in an advisory capacity to colleagues, ensuring that worship is prioritised on the School Development Plan, to allow for INSET and resource development.
- The Headteacher and Chair of Governors are aware of the requirements of the section 48 (statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections with regard to worship, and will ensure that the school is striving to ensure that worship at this school develops and aspires to best practice as articulated in inspection criteria.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Through its monitoring and evaluation priorities for development of the school including collective worship are identified and acted on. The plan includes actions, success criteria, and monitoring. It identifies who will lead the actions and who will monitor their implementation and success.

The current priorities for 2014-15 are:

- Increasing opportunities for pupils to lead worship through ways they have chosen
- strengthening pupils understanding of the Trinity
- Drawing on examples from lives of others of role of prayer e.g. new vicar
- Exploring opportunities for pupils to participate in worship at our parish church with parishioners rather than always leading the worship to develop understanding of role of worship in the lives of others
- Widening the range of visitors to include those of different Christian traditions in worship when possible

RIGHT TO WITHDRAWAL

We recognise the legal right of withdrawal from worship for pupils at the request of parents and for staff, but encourage discussion with the relevant individuals to ensure that there is understanding of the aims and objectives of worship, and strategies for minimising the disruption caused by any withdrawals.

CURRENT PRACTICE

The pattern for worship each week at present is as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Whole school worship	KS2 worship together / EYFS & KS1 class worship or Rev Knight to lead Whole school worship	EYFS & KS1 worship together KS2 class worship	Class worship for all or "Open the Book"	Whole school worship

In addition the school worships in Church on the following occasions: Harvest, Christmas, Easter and a Y6 leavers service.

Parents and members of the congregation are invited on these occasions.

Appendices

Resources and relevant documents

Definition of SMSC and what is meant by "broadly Christian" worship

Worship Plan

