

Highnam Church of England Primary Academy



Collective Worship Policy

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Introduction

Collective worship is central to the life and purposes of our church school and is fundamental to the development of our Christian foundation, vision, values and ethos. The headteacher and staff will be responsible for establishing policy in consultation with the governing body. Policy and practice is informed by the Trust Deed and Ethos Statement of the school.

Collective worship provides a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story, the mutual giving and receiving of worth as well as times of reflection and prayer. At its best, collective worship is inspirational and transformational.

Our church school is a community which is inspired by the Christian understanding of God as Trinity. God the Father, the source of all being and life; God the Son, who reveals God's love by his life, death and resurrection; and God the Holy Spirit, who makes Christ known in the world. The fundamental part that worship plays in the life of the school requires that it is given the highest priority.

Legal Framework

There must be a daily act of collective worship for all pupils that takes account of their age and aptitude. The 1988 Education Reform Act states parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children. However, as collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the church school, there is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the head teacher to discuss their concerns and requirements.

The governors in a church school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

The aims and purpose of collective worship at Highnam C of E Primary Academy are:

- provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to respond to the presence, power and peace of God
- evoke a sense of beauty, awe, wonder.
- enable children to become familiar with the Bible and biblical underpinning of the values. They will grow in their appreciation that for Christians it is God's word.
- provide opportunities for reflection, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality.
- help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well-known Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- offer opportunities to children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship.

- strengthen and support the school community, giving expression to, and reaffirming, the core Christian values of respect, friendship and perseverance, which underpin the school's vision, policies, curriculum and moral code.
- develop a sense of self-worth and celebrate the gifts that each child and adult brings to the school community, recognising the uniqueness of each individual made in the image of God
- reflect on the puzzling questions that life poses and learn to appreciate the significance of mystery i.e. that we can't understand and explain everything
- foster a concern for others within the school community and wider world.
- deepen appreciation of the gift of the natural world and the importance of acting responsibly toward the environment
- encourage respect of other people's religious beliefs and practices.

Organisation:

The religious foundation of the school as stated in the Trust Deed 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

All children attend the daily act of collective worship, further information is available on the school website:

<http://www.highnam.gloucs.sch.uk/our-school/collective-worship>

Visiting speakers are welcomed to share in Collective Worship. They will be offered guidance in leading worship in accordance with our school booklet 'Guidelines for those leading worship' (Appendix 1)

There is a Worship Council that is made up of children from our school. The Worship Council is responsible for preparing the hall for acts of worship, organising the worship song and welcoming visitors. In addition, the Worship Council leads Collective Worship throughout the year. These are discussed and planned with the headteacher and evaluated with the children.

Collective Worship will be based on:

- 'Values for Life' and 'Roots and Fruits' published by Gloucester Diocese with a separate value for each term
- Special events in the Christian Calendar.
- Issues, which arise from the everyday life and ethos of the school.

At specific times throughout the school year, celebrations of worship are held in the local Parish church. Parents, governors and friends share in these services, which may be held during Harvest, at Christmas, Easter and the end of the school year.

Collective worship time in school will need to be distinct from other classroom activities, retaining a sense of occasion and togetherness. A table will be used with a cloth to act as a focus for whole school acts of worship. In addition, the school has a collection of specific artefacts to add to this focus. Items include a variety of crosses, candles and other objects.

A file containing words used for singing worship songs and hymns are stored electronically on the laptop situated in the hall. These are accompanied by a variety of CDs or through the internet.

Children will be given the opportunity to consider familiar ideas and explore new ones. We will enable them to experience a wide diversity of worship practice, which encourages a variety of responses.

For example:

1. Elements of worship

- Prayer
- Reflection and contemplation
- Individual and group activity
- Reading, sermons
- Special clothing, artefacts
- Discussion, speech and silence
- Procession and ritual action
- Food and drink
- Dance/drama
- Use of the senses
- Artistic imagery and plainness
- Different seating plans
- Songs, music

2. Senses and Feelings

- Sense of beauty, wonder and awe
- Feelings of pride
- Sense of pity
- Sense of peace or thankfulness
- Sense of shared sadness or loss
- Sense of smallness in the face of the greatness of things
- Sense of grandness in the face of the smallest of things
- Sense of stillness in the midst of a busy experience

Collective Worship Framework:

Most Collective Worships will be based on the term Christian values. These themes are found in the 'Values for Life' folder and 'Roots and Fruits' book in the headteacher's office, and follows a 2- year cycle.

Collective Worships will be monitored and evaluated regularly by the Bishop's Visitor, a foundation governor and members of the school community. The evaluations are entered into the evaluation book situated in the school hall.

Right of withdrawal:

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from the daily Act of Collective Worship. [Education Act 1988] Any parent wishing to do so needs to make a written request to the headteacher and attend a meeting to discuss their wishes with the headteacher.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years and its effectiveness discussed with children, staff and governors of the school. Collective Worship will be evaluated by the children as part of collective worship times and by staff and governors periodically as part of planned monitoring visits. Outcomes of monitoring visits and discussions will inform future planning and delivering of Collective Worship so as to ensure that the aims of collective worship as described in this policy are fully met.

Links:

- Spiritual Development Policy
- Behaviour and Rewards Policy
- <http://www.highnam.gloucs.sch.uk/links/church-links>
- <http://www.highnam.gloucs.sch.uk/our-school/collective-worship>

Reviewed November 2018

Next Review: November 2020