



ST. MARY'S

Worship Policy

St Mary's CE Primary School

2019-2020

St Mary's is a Christian Community and at the heart of all we do is our deep belief that

'.... there is something **extraordinary** and **wondrous** in everybody as **unique creations of God**. We **value** all our children as **children of God** and **celebrate difference** and **diversity** within a **safe, encouraging** Christian school environment in which all **flourish**.

Therefore, all will aspire with God's strength to reach for the stars.

*"I can do all things through him who **strengthens** me." Philippians 4:13*

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLE

How do you discover the 'heart' of a school? Where do you go to feel its pulse, learn about its values and catch its life? Here at St Mary's, we believe that collective worship is the core to our coming together as a community. It is here that a sense of community is nourished, it is here that our shared school values are expressed, and it is here that everyone's contributions are celebrated. It is also here that God is given honour and is worshipped.

We believe that Worship is about the whole person: spirituality lived out through relationships, challenges, beliefs and ideas, growing each individual's identity within social, moral and cultural contexts: it works best when it is an embedded part of schools' community life, the true 'heartbeat' of the school.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the schools rationale for worship; provide an outline of how worship is organized, roles and responsibilities and how the impact of worship is monitored and evaluated

Collective Worship at St Mary's plays an important part in the life of our school. As the "living centre" of the work, worship and worth of the school, it offers the whole school community opportunities to participate in Christian worship, valued and honoured through the school's Anglican foundation. Our school values affirm every individual's unique contribution, regardless of age, sex, ability, background or religion.

2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

We recognise the legal responsibility of the whole Governing Body or Board of Directors (not just the Church-appointed governors/directors) to ensure that a **Church of England school/academy** is conducted according to its **trust deed** and constitutional documents. This requires worship to be **consistent with** the faith, principles and practices of the Church of England.

- Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of all pupils.
- Worship takes place in the hall twice a week and in class 3 times a week; this allows us to worship collectively with our peers as well as a whole school. During whole school worship a variety of worship leaders are involved and each week, class teachers, visitors or children lead worship. Worship always takes account of the cultures and beliefs represented in school especially as a variety of faiths are represented within the community.
- Worship takes place at 9.05 daily for 25 minutes with children's achievement celebrated each week as part of the Friday worship.
- We recognise the right of withdrawal from Worship for pupils at the request of parents, **but** currently enjoy the full support of the whole community.
- All children and families are encouraged to join the whole school worship.

3. AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

As a school we wish to enhance the spiritual development and response of pupils; to foster reflection, meditation, prayer and silence; create an atmosphere in which God is both normal and natural and to foster a reverential attitude to God.

We also would want for the school community to enable pupils to participate in a variety of ways fostering empathy and imagination. We also feel it is important to explore and enjoy praise, prayer, and the rituals of Christianity. And through this we affirm the Christian faith and the Christian status of Jesus as the Son of God.

It is important that the children learn about, and reflect upon Christian teachings, Biblical material and Christian festivals, in a way that relates to the pupils' experience and to living together in a community. Reflection is embedded throughout our practice in school.

4. MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- The Governing Body has responsibility to ensure that the Trust Deed of the School is honoured, in conjunction with the Head teacher, staff, and the school community. The worship policy created articulates the management and delivery of this area of the curriculum.
- The worship coordinator has responsibility for managing this area of the curriculum on a day to day basis, ensuring all legal requirements are complied with. This involves the development of a bespoke programme for Collective Worship, designed around the Christian annual calendar and ensuring links to our school values. The use of music and Christian hymns is thoughtfully planned and incorporated into our Worship rota to ensure links with the themes. Worship has continuity of Christian teachings with balance of life experiences that is appropriate to the school community.
- The Worship Co-ordinator also oversees our Worship team who are representative from Year 2 up to Year 6. They meet weekly and share our religious views with one another in a supportive, caring and inclusive environment. Whilst sharing our views, we respect each other's Religious beliefs and opinions. We work together to help promote our core Christian Values, with the aim of making a difference both to the school and the Wider Community.
- Records of content for whole-school worship are kept collectively. These documents detail the theme, staff delivering, music and record of visitors for each collective worship. A record of mass is also kept.
- A comprehensive budget is negotiated to ensure the worship programme can be carried out effectively.
- The worship co-ordinator also keeps in touch with development in the subject and acts in an advisory capacity to colleagues, ensuring that worship is prioritised on the School Improvement Plan, to allow for INSET and resource development.
- Monitoring the quality of Collective Worship is an on-going process. At present the following arrangements are in place: Children are encouraged to reflect on worship and share verbal and written comments with class teachers or the Head teacher.

- Visiting worship leaders are encouraged and children's view on the content of the worship again is shared with staff or the Head teacher.

5. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- The Diocesan advisor provides ongoing advice and support and training needs are identified during the Annual Review.
- Our SIP details our priorities for collective worship as it is central to the school and allows for reflection, prayer and spirituality.
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6. CURRENT PRACTICE

The Eucharist is celebrated in school as part of worship during significant Religious events. Parents and members of the congregation are invited to these occasions. At present our priest leads Mass each week in particular year groups. Usually this session involves KS2 only.

Celebration Assembly each week is a vehicle for everyone to recognise the beliefs and culture of others, particularly those represented in the school community. It also enables us to develop a sense of community and shared values; to consider the needs of others and to foster charitable work and to celebrate achievements of members of the school that are held to be of worth. Our Star of the Week reward certificates are linked to our four values and these are shared with the school.

In addition, the school worships in our local Church, Christ Church, on All Saint Days or other significant Church celebrations i.e. Ash Wednesday.

Visitors and outside speakers are invited to lead our worship on a regular basis. These include Rev. S. Hatcher from Englesea Brook, Rev Arthur Wakelin from Burslem Methodist circuit, and Alice Mashanga from Burslem Methodist circuit.

No worship outline can ever be entirely pre-planned. There will always be the spontaneous moment or occasion when it is important spiritually for us to focus on the immediate so that pupils become aware of how the spiritual dimension transcends all our experience ie natural disasters.

Methodology for delivering the worship programme

The school traditionally begins each day with collective worship. This has been felt to share God's love before doing ones best for Jesus in lessons. Mass also provides an opportunity for parents and the community to join the school in the Eucharist.

We follow a structure to ensure consistency throughout our school for collective worship:

Worship

- The start of every worship begins with the lighting of a candle and the reading of a child's prayer; this is to signify that worship has begun.
- Children have access to prayer themed writing paper available in every reflection area, that they can use to write prayers. These prayers are then read out at the start of worship after the lighting of the candle.
- When in whole school worship, the worship team introduce the person leading worship. When a significant Christian event takes place, the Head boy/girl will support with the leading of the event.
- All worship (class and whole school) refer back to our vision so that the children can clearly articulate it to others and identify ways in which they can demonstrate it through school life.
- On the worship rota, there are identified opportunities for classes to access the outdoor reflection area.

This policy is reviewed annually

Date: September 2019

Date ratified by Chair of Governors: S Oxford