



THE VALLEY PARTNERSHIP

Collective Worship Policy

This Policy was agreed by Governing Board of
The Valley Partnership

Date: 6th February 2018

Signed:

Review Date: February 2021

“Climb to your highest.....do your best for yourself, for others and for God”
The Valley Partnership Mission Statement

Worship Policy Statement

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aim and practices of Worship across the Valley Partnership. Arrangements for Worship in each school are made by the governing body in consultation with the Head teacher. Foundation governors have a particular responsibility for ensuring that that character or foundation of the school is reflected in its Worship.

Rationale

We understand Worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an act of worship. We expect everyone to take an active part in the act of worship. As a Church of England (Voluntary Aided and Voluntary controlled) Schools, we base our Worship on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church, in accordance with the trust deeds.

However, we conduct Worship in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school. While acts of worship in our school are Christian-based, we also recognise worship that reflects other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Ethos Statement

Recognising its historic foundation, the schools will preserve and develop their religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The schools aim to serve their communities by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice.

They encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promote Christian values through the experiences they offer to all pupils and staff.

Aims and Purpose

The aims and purpose of collective worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for everyone to worship God, reflect on Him and give Him honour;
- to enable individuals to appreciate their worth and value to God
- to offer opportunities to celebrate together the love of God, including opportunities for self-expression and creativity in worship.
- to offer space for reflection, prayer, meditation and silence;

- to encourage participation and response
- to give memorable and positive experiences;
- to foster feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy,
- to give an opportunity to bring before God in prayer personal needs and those of others, locally and globally
- to share with participants some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level, and thereby give them the encouragement to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework
- to give opportunities to celebrate major and minor festivals as a community
- to provide a vocabulary of worship and an experience of a wide variety of worship forms, including symbols and imagery.
- to establish, explore, and reinforce the common Christian values and ethos of the school community such as love, peace, kindness, compassion, forgiveness.
- to encourage respect and care for God's creation by a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues.
- to share some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level, and to encourage children to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework to offer opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- to develop empathy and search for meaning
- to underpin the Christian values
- to develop a sense of community spirit;
- to reflect the aims of the school;
- to celebrate gifts, talents and achievements.

The legal requirement for collective worship

Collective worship must be daily and is a legal entitlement of all children in school. It is the legal right of parents to withdraw children from worship; Collective worship is conducted “in accordance with the founding Church of England Trust Deed and the Ethos Statement in the school’s Instruments of Government”. Should a child be withdrawn, a voluntary rota of adult supervision will be drawn up, including the parents as much as possible, or indirect supervision will be given through careful positioning of chairs in other areas. If the service is to be in another venue, other arrangements will be made with the parent. For example, a morning 9.00am service, the parent will be given the opportunity for their child to join school at a later time.

Worship in School

Worship is the fulcrum of The Valley Partnership. It is about prayer in action, reflection, celebration and thanksgiving in order to promote spiritual development and foster a sense of community, identity and self-esteem. Worship in school is organised around themes. Some of these are based from experience as children learn best from first-hand experience. It allows opportunities for praise, cheering, saying sorry, being thankful, wishing, hoping, being still and wondering, sharing and offering.

Organisation of Collective Worship

Timings...

We hold a daily act of Worship in both schools, which is normally whole-school, although sometimes we also hold acts of worship in separate Key Stage groups or classes.

What we do...

We conduct Worship in a dignified and respectful way. We demonstrate to everyone that Worship time is a period of personal reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect everyone to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully in prayer, hymns and responses. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using a variety of approaches for example, music or art. As well as the school cross, we use candles and other symbolic objects to act as a focal point. We use Anglican based responses and have an altar table with the appropriate Church colours at the front of the worship together with lighted candles to remind children that "Jesus is the Light of the World".

The head teacher or other members of staff normally conduct Worship; however local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups also conduct Worship in school on a regular basis. This is timetabled termly.

In addition to our daily act of Worship we hold special services of thanksgiving; for example, Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Mothering Sunday, family services as well as for our Leaver's in July. Some of our services are held in local churches. All Saints Church, Holcombe Rogus which is situated in Holcombe village. St Mary's Church, Burlescombe which is situated in Burlescombe village.

Planning...

We plan in advance our Worship as part of a series of themes on a termly basis. This is done by the Worship coordinator in discussion with the Executive Head teacher and guidance from the Diocese.

We take the themes of our acts of Worship from the traditions of the Christian faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our Worship reflect and build on topics that link to the school curriculum. Our themes also incorporate a variety of approaches using themes developed from the Diocese, known authors, SEAL materials as well as bible stories and staff inspiration.

Our Worship also reflects the achievements and learning of the children in both the weekly Celebration assemblies, stars of the week, and the performance and celebration assemblies that are at least every half term.

Acts of worship...

We encourage the children to participate in Worship in a variety of ways. This may be through dance, drama, music, prayer, leading planning reviewing. We also offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. All aspects play an important part in promoting in God's eyes everyone is important, all are valued and all achievements are recognised.

We have Collective worship monitors to support the worship leaders. They light candles, support the music and invite and deliver responses in our worship programme.

Examples of responses are:

The Lord be with you...
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts...
We lift them to the Lord

We light the candles...
To remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World.

You are the Lord...
And to you we pray

Christ has died...
Christ has risen, Alleluia, Alleluia

We use a combination of ideas to develop our worship...

- Using the Bible, either as a source of knowledge and inspiration for themes and stories
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saints Days
- Learning and saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the Grace
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to rap
- Sing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning e.g. cross, crucifix, bread and wine and candles
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- Using Psalms with simple responses – Taizé style

Extending beyond the school

We welcome Governors attendance at our worship at any time and frequently invite parents and community members to join us. We work closely with the Parochial Church Council and Dioceses to develop the Christian community in which we live and work to be sustainable and expanding spreading the “Good News”

Visitors leading in Worship

All visitors will be briefed by a member of staff in advance:

- whether it will be the whole school or a section of it, and if so, which section
- what the school’s aims, ethos and policies are
- how long the speaker is expected to talk for (10 – 12 minutes)
- the current assembly theme and context for the speaker - what has already been done and what will be done later in the term
- how pupils and staff are normally involved in collective worship
- what resources or hardware are available to them, should they so wish
- exactly how much their contribution will be - is it just the talk or will they be asked to choose the hymn and lead the prayers

They will be

- given plenty of notice
- will be invited to attend an act of collective worship beforehand so that they may see how the school conducts them, or, if this is not practical, or will be lent a copy of the collective worship policy document
- also told that collective worship is not a vehicle for hard sell evangelism, and that inclusive language (“we all believe....”) is to be avoided
- NOT be left alone!

Visitors who are regularly involved in collective worship will be given sensitive feedback on the appropriateness of their contribution to the school assembly programme.

Monitoring and Reviewing

This is done regularly through parent, pupil and staff questionnaires, and through discussion. The Head teacher works closely with the Diocesan Education officer and discusses collective worship and its impact through the school. Governors regularly review this policy in line with their programme and are part of reviewing the evaluations form questionnaire responses.

And the future...

We are developing our knowledge and understanding linking to the Church of England’s most recent document and their Vision for Education. Deeply Christian, serving the common good:

Educating for WISDOM, knowledge and skills: enabling discipline, confidence and delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge, and developing talents in all areas of life.

Educating for HOPE and aspiration: enabling healing, repair and renewal, coping wisely when things go wrong, opening horizons and guiding people into ways of fulfilling them.

Educating for COMMUNITY and living well together: a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.

Educating for DIGNITY and respect: the basic principle of respect for the value and preciousness of each person, treating each person as a unique individual of inherent worth

We will be considering how these will impact our collective worship policy , practise and reviewing impact and effectiveness.