



# St John's CE (A) Primary School

**Dedication - Courage - Joy**

## ***Collective Worship Policy 2019-2020***

### **INTENT:**

Our Collective Worship Policy is based on the Vision and Values of our Christian School.

*Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught and you will overflow with thankfulness.*

*Colossians 2:7*

The purpose of this policy, is to set out clearly to all stakeholders the ways in which collective worship is conducted in our school. We recognise as a Church of England school that worship is an integral part of our daily lives and helps us to become happy, healthy, global citizens.

### **Worship is...**

***Giving honour and reverence to a supreme being.  
Worship is concerned with bringing praise, prayer,  
thanks giving and adoration to God whatever the religion.***

***It is an activity of response: in words, actions and thoughts.***

Our daily act of collective worship aims to ensure that the Christian character of our school is preserved and developed. This requires worship to be consistent with the faith, principles and practices of the Church of England.

In addition to this, we also take into account DfES legislation. The following link will take you to the current legislation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-worship-in-schools>

We also take into account the 1988 Education that states,

*'.....all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall in each school day take part in an act of collective worship',*

And, that this should be,

***'.....mainly of a broadly Christian character'***

In addition to our legal obligations, we recognise that collective worship is a fundamental aspect of developing a holistic child as the mental health and spiritual wellbeing of our pupils is always paramount. We believe that developing children's '*...hearts and minds...*' gives the necessary foundations for an outstanding education. Thus, collective worship is a means by which the school's Christian vision is expressed (Strand 6 SIAMS 2018). This is set within the context of the corporate community of our school and its historic partnership with St John the Evangelist Church, Trent Vale. We affirm every individual's unique contribution, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ability, background or religion.

## Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

We are aware that as a Church of England (A) School, will be inspected on collective worship and the impact this has on the whole school community. This emphasises, **the ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision** (Strand 6 SIAMS 2018) and we believe that by developing the children's hearts and minds, we are also developing their spiritual curiosity and enabling their development and tolerance as a global citizen in an ever evolving world.

Here at St John's CE (A) Primary School, this inspection will evaluate the school's collective worship on the following:

- that it is inclusive, invitational and inspiring
- offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

### IMPLEMENTATION:

At St John's CE (A) Primary School, we facilitate a rich and varied weekly cycle of collective worship. During this time all pupils and staff are invited to celebrate, reflect and bring praise, prayer, thanks giving and adoration to God.

The week commences with a collective whole school worship led by the Head Teacher or a member of SLT. During this special time, the theme for the forthcoming week is introduced which then becomes the focal point of collective worship for whole school, class or key stage deliverance.

Each day pupils gather to take part in collective worship which takes place in many forms: whole school, class and key stage which is facilitated by a variety of leaders. This enables worship to be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of our pupils. Evidence of this worship is evidenced in the School and Individual Class Floor books.

As part of our vision, we aim to instil Christian Values into our pupils (Dedication, Courage and Joy). In order to celebrate pupils' achievements in line with our values, we hold a weekly Celebration Assembly in which we acknowledge the pupils that have demonstrated Dedication, Courage and Joy in and around school throughout the week (this link links with our behaviour policy and the three visible consistencies: Clever Classrooms, Brilliant Break times and Great Greetings). Whilst we acknowledge that pupil achievements should be celebrated each week, we also recognise that praise and thanks should be given to God for pupils' achievements and successes. As such at the end of every celebration assembly we reflect and say a prayer to God thanking him for his guidance.

We recognise the right of withdrawal from worship for pupils (at the request of parents) and for staff, but the aim is that collective worship is inclusive and at the very least provides opportunity for personal reflection. (Appendix 1)

To enable our pupils to have a deeper understanding of the world and help to develop global citizens, we use Picture News as a resource across the school. This enables the pupils to *'Learn from the world around us! Each week using a current news story, whilst providing an image, together with a thought-provoking question.'*

**Worship at St John's CE (A) Primary School provides opportunities to:**

- enhance the spiritual development and response of pupils
- foster reflection, meditation, prayer and silence
- create an atmosphere in which God is both normal and natural
- foster a reverential attitude to God
- foster empathy and imagination, enabling pupils to participate in a variety of ways
- actively involve pupils in the delivery of worship in creative and imaginative ways (reading, poetry, drama, dance, quiet / silent reflection, prayer, singing)
- explore and enjoy praise, prayer and the rituals of Christianity (the Anglican tradition in particular)
- affirm the Christian faith and the central Christian status of Jesus as the Son of God
- affirm the Christian belief in the Trinity and explore the meaning of each person of the Trinity
- explore Eucharistic worship (where appropriate) within the Anglican tradition, at St John's CE (A) Primary School we have close links with the church and our Reverend visits the school on a half termly basis to offer up communion. All pupils and staff observe the Eucharist worship, with an invitation for all staff and pupils to either receive communion or receive a blessing
- enable pupils to reflect on the experiences of Christian adherents
- foster and value a search for a faith to live by
- explore the schools Christian values (Dedication, Courage and Joy) to deepen pupils understanding of them and how they relate to the school, local community and wider world
- learn about and reflect upon Christian teaching, Biblical material and Christian festivals, in a way that relates to the pupils' experience and to living together in community
- worship together rather than apart
- provide an evocative setting for worship that fosters spiritual growth and reflection
- experience a broad spectrum of Christian tradition (various expressions of worship)
- inspire pupils to explore further their own faith and tradition
- encourage pupils and staff to plan, participate and lead in worship
- develop a sense of community and shared values
- consider the needs of others and to foster charitable works
- celebrate the highest achievements of the human spirit
- celebrate achievements of members of the school in every aspect of school life
- foster a thought provoking atmosphere allowing for spiritual reflection and response
- make regular use of local church buildings for worship

**Other opportunities that worship can offer are:**

- celebrate the beliefs and cultures of others particularly those represented in our school
- celebrate of achievements of members of the school community
- reinforce school expectations, good behaviour and school routines
- share local school and community information

## **Spiritual Development**

At St. John's we believe that the Spiritual development of our pupils and staff is fundamental to ultimately leading a happy, healthy fulfilling life. We accept that Spiritual development is linked to forming effective relationships with others, and in the case of believers, with God. It is the search for individual identity and the means by which we respond to challenging experiences that we may face in our lives, alongside our encounters with good and evil. In the ever changing world in which our children are growing, we believe that Spiritual development is important in the search for meaning and purpose and for the values by which, as individuals, we base our future decisions.

Pupils' spiritual development is demonstrated in several ways:

- An expression of their own beliefs (this can be religious or otherwise), which inform their own perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values. This is done through reflections, when appropriate, throughout the school day.
- A sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them.
- A use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences (positive or negative).

## **Management and resourcing of worship**

Ultimately the responsibility for collective worship lies with the Head teacher and the Chair of Governors. At St John's CE (A) Primary School, we are lucky enough to have a Vice-Chair of Governors who is the Reverend of our local parish church. However the role of planning, resourcing, managing and evaluating worship has been delegated to the Assistant Head Teachers. In addition all teachers in our school are 'spiritual leaders' and have a responsibility to help pupils develop spiritual awareness. To ensure that pupils receive rich spiritual development, the Reverend works closely with the SLT and alongside our link governor.

As a church school, we adequately resource worship, using Roots and Fruits as it is regarded as an important part of school life. We have a Worship Council where pupils are encouraged and provided with opportunities to plan acts of worship and special events (whole school, year group, key stage or class), so that they have ownership of it. This is facilitated by staff members and the children meet on a fortnightly basis.

Linking collective worship with world events through the use of Picture News and Roots and Fruits ensures that worship remains relevant and up to date. As well as global issues we look to the Bible to help us to address localised issues and use this as a problem solving resource in the context of looking towards what Jesus would have done.

## **Approved and signed off by**

Head teacher.....

Chair of Governors.....

## **Appendix 1**

### **Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education and Collective Worship March 2017**

#### **Collective Worship**

The **1944 Education Act** gave the right to withdraw from RE or collective worship to parents who wished their children to receive different form of RE or worship. This right is also confirmed in section 71 of the **School Standards and Framework Act 1998**. In the case of collective worship, the government guidance document is **Circular 1/94: Religious Education and Collective Worship**.

Collective worship in all Church of England schools and academies should honour the school's trust deed and Christian foundations. Worship is central to school life, offering an opportunity for the whole school community to explore the distinctive beliefs and narrative that underpins the school's Anglican foundations and distinctive Christian character. Worship is the responsibility of the governing body in conjunction with the head teacher, working in partnership with the staff and the local parish church.

Our Church of England schools should strive to ensure they are consistently excellent, distinctive, and inclusive, and that the whole curriculum is underpinned by Christian values. Religious Education is an important part of the curriculum in all Church of England schools and academies. Its nature, objectives, and content should be shared with parents each term to ensure that parents are able to recognise that RE is of educational value to all pupils, whatever their belief background. In the same way, collective worship should lie at the heart of school life, proclaiming its distinctive character and faith in a way that is relevant, inclusive and that leads each pupil a little further in their spiritual journey. In this way, the likelihood for parental requests for withdrawal should be reduced. However, when they are made they must be handled accordingly to the legal guidance, while there is scope for a little realism and adaptability in order to ensure the best for every pupil.

In many of our schools within the Diocese of Lichfield, there is a large percentage of children whose families are members of another faith. It is the purpose and duty of every church school to be distinctive as a Church of England school. In each school, it is part of the mission of the church to welcome those of other faiths and no faith. In most cases, parents will have chosen the school for their child, making a specific choice of the school because of the ethos and education it offers. In a small number of cases, parents of other faiths will have been offered a place at a church school because no other school has a place for their child within a reasonable catchment area.

The right to withdraw from collective worship should be at the instigation of the parents or pupils above the age of 16.

### **The right of withdrawal from collective worship**

The right of withdrawal from collective worship would normally be exercised through the physical withdrawal of the pupil from the place where the act of worship is taking place. Indeed the school could insist that this is the way the right is to be implemented. If, however, both the parent and the school agree that the pupil should be allowed to remain physically present during the collective worship but not take part in it, nothing in the law prevents this.

Experience suggests that, to avoid misunderstanding, a Head teacher will find it helpful to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right to withdrawal:

- the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part;
- the practical implications of withdrawal; and
- whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and, if so, how much.

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to a particular faith or denomination, the governors and Head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school; and
- that the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in **Section 1 of the 1988 Education Act.**  
**(Circular 1/94)**

