

# St Mary's CE Primary Collective Worship Policy – January 2016

*Do everything in love*



**1 Corinthians 16:14**

Reviewed January 2016

Presented to Governors: .....

*St Mary's Church of England Primary School is a warm, friendly and welcoming Church school that provides high quality education for all its pupils. As a Church school we hold our Christian values at the heart of everything we do. These are: Love; Respect; Determination; Courage; Compassion; and Honesty.*

*It is very important to us that the children are happy and experience the best education possible. We value strong links and a close partnership between home, church and school and recognise the importance of trust and shared responsibility in education.*

The 1988 Education Act states that: 'All pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship unless the parent requests that he may be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school' 1998 Act 6 (1) and 9 (3)

### **The requirement for a daily Act of Worship**

- There must be a daily act of worship for all pupils at the school and this should take place on the school's premises. This can be organised at any time of the day with a variation of groupings where appropriate.
- The parents' rights to withdraw should be made clear in the school brochure and in policy statements on worship. This does not mean that schools can guarantee an exemption from the Christian ethos of the school.
- Teachers in aided schools whose National Society Contract includes clause 8a on Religious Education and clause 8b on respecting the character of the foundation are expected to take part in worship.
- The style/content should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character over a period of time.
- The worship should have regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the children in this school.
- The Headteacher has responsibility for Collective Worship together with Senior Management.

### **Aims objectives for Collective Worship at St Mary's**

1. To foster the school's identity and community spirit.
2. To come to know God / Christ by providing time for silent reflection and prayer
3. To learn about Christian beliefs and those of the major world religions.
4. To provide training for worship, reflection and active involvement.
5. To affirm human values as reflected in the school's behavioural policy and generate a moral awareness.
6. To provide language stimulation and communication skills.
7. To encourage the mutual enjoyment and enrichment of all participants.
8. To heighten pupils own sensitivity to the meaning and purpose of life.
9. To focus an understanding of religious commitment and a respect for other people's rights to their own religious beliefs.
10. To deliver an act of worship, providing a participatory process, which engages pupils in an open and honest way.
11. To fulfil the legal requirements for collective worship.

### **WORSHIP AT ST MARYS C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Worship at St Mary's is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England, Opportunities are provided for pupils to offer worship to God, through Jesus Christ, without losing sight of either the different starting points of each of the pupils, or the need for the act of worship to take account of the developmental ages of the pupils.

## At St Mary's School worship **will**

- Be provided for every child every day.
- Provide opportunities for spiritual and moral development.
- Enable everybody to celebrate the whole life of the school in the presence of God.
- Allow pupils to become familiar with a variety of worship in the Anglican tradition, according to their developmental stage.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to address God directly.
- Encourage pupils to learn more about the Christian faith.
- Nurture a concern for the wider world.
- Encourage reflection on pupils' own experience and beliefs.
- Foster a sense of community and to share and promote the ethos and values of St Mary's C.E. Primary School.
- Build links with the wider community e.g. by using faith and community leaders.
- Explore values of human concerns e.g. courage, justice, life, forgiveness etc. and gain a perspective on a wider world.
- Acknowledge diversity.

## **Worship in an Educational Context**

Providing opportunities for worship to be offered to God within an educational context means stressing active pupil involvement, encouraging the pupils to engage with profound questions of meaning and value, and ensuring that there is time for reflection and prayer. It is neither possible nor desirable that pupils should be compelled to worship, but they may be encouraged to respond to the consideration of the spiritual dimension to the lives in an atmosphere which affirms both themselves and the community and foundation of which they are a part.

Assemblies are planned to ensure continuity and progression. Themes are reviewed annually. St Mary's is a values based school and each half term pupils work collectively upon a chosen value. Our values are Honesty, Love, Courage, Determination, Compassions and Respect.

Infant and Junior assemblies follow the 'Twelve Baskets' assembly scheme. This incorporates the SEAL themes into the daily act of collective worship, bringing the added dimension of spirituality. Most assemblies include a story from the Bible.

## **Elements of Worship**

There are many elements which make for worship in schools. These elements need to respect the right of the pupil and the teacher to choose to be separate from the activity.

## **At St Mary's C.E. Primary School we strive to acknowledge**

- The sense of the transcendent

- The awareness of the infinite and of one's position within it
  - The acceptance of life as given
  - The sense of mystery and wonder
  - The celebration of personal fulfilment and of those who have given service to others
  - The concern for the created world and for all life
  - The acknowledgement of moral demands
- **The sense of the transcendent**  
e.g. moments of quiet and reflection to think about yourself in relation to others, the universe and what God might mean to you.
- **The awareness of the infinite and of one's position within it**  
e.g. pupils might look at slides or pictures of galaxies, stars etc with some statistics which show the vastness of the universe and the smallness of people.
- **The acceptance of life as given**  
e.g. the leader of the assembly generates a positive outlook by making clear that everybody in the school is there to be accepted and loved. The Act of Worship can generate laughter or sadness, making it clear that these are various aspects to life.
- **The sense of mystery and wonder**  
e.g. by using natural objects, pictures or slides pupils can be encouraged to reflect on how such a complex world came into being.
- **The celebration of personal fulfilment and of those who have given service to others**  
e.g. the achievements and successes of pupils, staff and the community are celebrated in the Act of Worship
- **The concern for the created world and for all life**  
e.g. pupils may be challenged with environmental issues and their responsibilities for animals and the world.
- **The acknowledgement of moral demands**  
e.g. in their relationships with others, making it clear that behaviour such as bullying, telling lies or stealing are not acceptable

## PRACTICAL ISSUES

The timing of an act of worship is vital to prevent pupil boredom. Ten minutes is sufficient to have a clearly focused act of worship.

At St Mary's we always endeavour to include some of the following ingredients for worship.

- A clearly stated appropriate theme
- Music for pupils to enter and leave the room to create an atmosphere of calm and peace.
- Singing of hymns which the pupils understand, and which match the theme, and the occasional inclusion of hymns which are also sung in the local church.
- Use of visual aids or drama to explain the theme
- An exciting, short relevant story, poem, or Biblical material
- Interactive involvement of the pupils

- Sung or said prayers (sometimes written by the pupils) along with prayers learned by heart e.g. the Lord's prayer, The Grace, The School Prayer
- Moments of reflective silence
- An ordered but relaxed atmosphere where all pupils feel comfortable to contribute
- A welcoming of visitors who have been given a clear brief concerning the Act of Worship
- A focal point for pupils to look at in order to help them to realise that an Act of Worship is distinct from the ordinary day.
- To foster a sense of community and to emphasize the fact that worship is valued, all staff and all pupils need to be present.

## **RESOURCES**

There are a wide range of Worship/R.E. resources for staff to access

Religious artefacts are kept in trays in the hall. Books are kept in the Head's office.

### **Providing a Focus in Acts of Worship**

At St Mary's we believe that by providing a focal point in a hall or room will enable the pupils to concentrate their minds and understand the special nature of worship. This focus may be in the form of an overtly Christian symbol such as cross or crucifix, or it may be a vase of flowers on a table or an Easter Egg at Easter time. An Act of Worship is separate from the activities which take place during the rest of the school day and using a symbol to show that this is a special time helps the pupils to enjoy a different experience from the PE and lunch-times with which they more normally associate the room. As with classroom displays, in order to avoid familiarity and also create interest, the focus needs to be changed frequently. As do displays in the entrance hall.