



## Hawkesbury CE VC Primary School

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

#### **Rationale**

The school ethos statement informs the policy and practice of collective worship in Hawkesbury CE VC Primary school.

*' At Hawkesbury CE VC Primary School, we aim to provide a caring, Christian environment where all can enjoy, achieve and believe through encouraging perseverance, curiosity, honesty and respect for ourselves and each other, our community and the world around us.'*

School worship is an affirmation and celebration of the Christian foundation values and ethos of the school and provides a space and a place for telling the story of Jesus. In our school, we seek to provide a community that will sustain and guide pupils; school worship provides an opportunity for the mutual giving and receiving of worth within a zone of freedom where individuals can face choices.

Worship is central to the life and purposes of our school and will reflect the Christian understanding of God as Trinity. This will include belief in God, the source of all being and life; belief in Jesus, who reveals God's love by his life, death and resurrection; and belief in the Holy Spirit, who makes the presence of Jesus known in the world. Prayer and time to reflect are part of each school day and pupils are encouraged to pray in a variety of creative ways.

#### **Aims**

*Through collective worship in our school we aim to:*

- provide an experience of worship that will help children to respond to the presence, power and peace of God, allowing the expression of an encounter with God in verbal and non-verbal language.
- provide opportunities for reflection, participation and enjoyment where children can be actively involved, take part in ritual and "special time" that encourages calm, stillness and peace.
- introduce children to Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the church year so that children are offered a pattern of meanings and a symbolic framework.
- explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers and introduce children to some well known Christian prayers, e.g. Lord's Prayer
- strengthen and support the school community, giving expression to, and reaffirming, the core Christian values agreed by all stakeholders in the school. Worship will not compromise the integrity and dignity of individuals but will provide a shared experience which is educational in nature; a time where individuals can reflect inwardly and where together the school community can explore ways of living which reflect the shared values and vision of the school.
- develop a sense of self-worth and celebrate the gifts that each child brings to the school community, recognising the uniqueness of each individual made in the image of God
- encourage pupils to reflect on the puzzling questions that life poses and to respond to the wonder and mystery of the world around them
- foster a concern for others within the school community and wider world.
- foster an appreciation, and awareness, of our responsibility for the created world.
- encourage respect of others religious beliefs and practices.

- evoke a sense of beauty, awe, wonder and feelings of pride, pity, compassion, etc through exploring the spirituality of life and experience.

### **Legal Framework**

There must be a daily act of collective worship for all pupils that takes account of their age and aptitude (Education Reform Act 1988). Parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

However, in our church school, worship has a central place and is regarded as a very important part of pupils' education. There is an expectation that parents would meet with the Headteacher to explore their reasons for requesting a withdrawal. The governors have the responsibility for worship in a church school, in consultation with the Headteacher. There is an expectation that staff will be fully involved in worship in this school.

### **Organisation**

The Christian values of the school are identified and expressed and celebrated in collective worship through a variety of services each week;

- Whole school Values services led by the Headteacher and Deputy Head
- Whole school service led by the Vicar of St Mary's church
- Whole school service led by the Open the Book team which is comprised of members from various local churches
- Whole school service led by Regenerate
- Whole school service led by each class
- In class services led by the children and class teacher
- Celebration service

During service children are supported in making links between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school.

Worship is conducted in various ways: whole school, key stage and in class.

Worship is usually held in the afternoon at 1.00, Celebration service is at 2.00.

Service is usually 15 minutes in total, though Celebration Service is 30 minutes.

The Worship Warriors (a group of children) usually start each act of Collective Worship and worship tends to follow the same structure of, gather, respond, listen, reflect.

The content and approach of acts of worship differs according to the day and the person leading it:

*Values for Life (led by the Headteacher) service follows the 18 Christian values and follows a 4 year cycle*

*Open the Book (led by the Open the Book team) follows the programme set out developing a chronology of Bible stories for the children*

*One World service(led by the Deputy Headteacher) uses Christian Aid materials to develop the children's understanding of the world*

*Key Stage service (led by the Headteacher) uses the Open the box resource and develops a deeper understanding of the terms value*

*In class service (led by the class teacher and children) focuses on the terms value and uses windows, mirrors and doors to enable children to reflect on the value of the term*

*Class services (led by the class) focus on aspects of school learning and related back to the values*

*Reverend Thomson leads fortnightly worship and focuses on the chronology of the Bible stories*

*Celebration Service (led by the headteacher) focuses on celebrating individuals and their use of the values in their lives*

*Regenerate (led by the team) links to SEAL themes and God's message*

Worship mostly takes place in the school hall. It is made special through the use of the worship table, candles and focus pictures. Special lighting is sometimes used to create an atmosphere of reflection. Liturgical colours are used to mark the seasons of the church year, Christian symbols used in the hall and worship table, music especially Taize used for gathering and exiting, hymns often sung. Worship is sometimes conducted, especially in the summer months in the outside classroom or mound on the field. We use the St Marys church for worship at least once per term and for key Christian festivals.

Our Worship Warriors are actively engaged with service, they set up the hall and worship space, choose prayers, pictures and responses and think of ways to improve Collective Worship. All children are encouraged to participate in Collective Worship through taking part in a variety of ways;

being encouraged to ask and answer questions

acting a story

miming to a story

reading

using pupils' artwork

using poems or prayers written by the pupils

allowing children to present and lead worship

Worship is planned in the long-, medium- and short-term by the Headteacher, teachers, children and Foundation Governors. The various groups also plan their own worship in consultation with the Headteacher to align with the Values cycle.

The Headteacher, Louise Lewis is responsible for the leadership of Collective Worship who maintains clear forward plans for a term in advance and a record of what has already been covered.

Worship also focuses and celebrates key parts of the church year, using the Bible and key stories as a source book of inspiration and learning. By using a range of presenters from different local churches and faiths the children experience a range of approaches to worship. We also use artefacts, stories, music, video clips and pictures so the children can experience other faiths.

Visitors leading worship work with the Headteacher to discuss the approach to worship and a guidance leaflet for visitors is given which is produced by the Diocese. Members of St Marys regularly lead some acts of worship through the open the Book services and also at other times of the year, eg Armistice Day, Pentecost, to lead the Eucharist.

Worship is evaluated and monitored by both the Headteacher and the foundation Governors through participating in acts of worship and using the schools evaluation forms.

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