

Eastchurch Church of England Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

Date: March 2015

Review Date: March 2018

Introduction

The Education Reform Act (ERA) requires all pupils registered in maintained schools to attend a daily act of collective worship (ERA 6 (1)).

In classes where children are not predominantly of statutory school age children will be gradually integrated into whole school collective worship during their first year. They will have daily opportunities for circle time and worship within their own classes/year group.

The act of collective worship in this Church of England controlled school will reflect Anglican beliefs, practices and values in accordance with the practice observed in the school since its foundation.

The material used will be drawn predominantly from Christian sources but reference will be made to the beliefs and practices of other faith communities so that the children can grow in tolerance and understanding of these faiths and cultures.

Aims

- To celebrate and affirm personal worth and religious belief
- To explain and celebrate the major festivals in the Church calendar
- To offer the opportunity for spiritual awareness and growth and use silence as a means to encourage reflection, contemplation and prayer and to introduce the children to some formal elements of Christian worship, eg The Lord's Prayer, responses etc
- To provide our children with the opportunity to experience a variety of forms of worship and become more aware of their own beliefs and those of others
- To celebrate difference and diversity
- To attempt to create feelings of awe, wonder and appreciation, gratitude and respect
- To celebrate individual achievement, school achievement and wider community achievement.

Planning and Co-ordination

A termly collective worship plan is provided by the diocesan adviser and for the majority of acts of worship we follow these themes. These are sometimes linked to themes from the Kent Agreed Syllabus. These can be found in the Head of Schools' folder for Collective Worship.

Dates in the Christian calendar, including some Saints Days, will be included in the programme.

Organisation

Whole school collective worship will usually take place on four days of the week, in the morning. Three of these sessions will be whole school; the fourth session will be a daily act of worship led by the class teacher in their own class. On a Friday collective worship will be in the afternoon and will also focus on the pupils' celebration and achievement.

Guidelines for leading classroom worship are shown in Appendix 1.

Individual training and guidance for staff leading whole school acts of worship will be given by the Worship Co-ordinator.

Worship time will be a maximum of 15 minutes unless it is a special celebration. Class worship will also last 15 minutes.

Content/Delivery

We will aim to use a variety of secular and Bible stories to raise issues and encourage the children to reflect on spiritual and moral insights.

Children will be invited to contribute to worship by sharing their thoughts on an incident or event. Expression through singing and poetry will be a consistent part of our collective worship.

We will celebrate achievements and birthdays as a method of affirmation.

Each class will present an assembly to parents and the school to celebrate the work they have done in class. This will happen once each academic year.

Children will be encouraged to read prayers during worship, either from a selection of printed prayers or one written by themselves. Children will be introduced to simple responses e.g. 'The Lord be with you'. Response – 'And also with you'.

We will encourage reflection through the use of a 'thinking' candle and/or focus.

We will encourage reflection by saying an end of day prayer. Children will reflect on the good things that happened during their day.

Time will be given to reflect on world-wide issues that the children may empathise with.

Recording/Monitoring/Evaluating

As previously mentioned a termly worship plan is provided by the diocesan adviser. Comments/spontaneous events can be added to the record. There will be suggestions for links with RE.

Formal monitoring is carried out on a regular basis. A sheet to record formal monitoring of Collective Worship is available in Appendix 2.

Budgetary and Resources

In conjunction with resources for RE it is planned to expand the story selection relevant to RE themes. Artefacts which have been purchased prove to be invaluable when introducing the practices of other faith communities. These are kept in the resource area.

We aim to allocate a sum of money annually to resource collective worship.

Governors

Governors are invited to attend acts of worship at any time.

Parish Links and the Wider Community

The school enjoys a close link with the Parish Church of All Saints. The rector leads regular acts of worship for the school, both in church and in school. The vicar is a member of the governing body. In addition to this, the school is on the Visiting Ministers rota; various representatives from local churches also come and lead worship at both sites. We have recently set up links with the Warden Bay Evangelical Church and the children from the St Clement site have started attending special services there.

The school is keen to encourage the children to look at the wider community hence there will be activities which highlight world wide needs and aim to help others in practical ways, e.g. holding a Christingle Service in aid of The Children's Society, encouraging a collection for Christian Aid Week etc.

Cross-curricular links

Attempts will be made to link worship themes with other work in the curriculum. Suggestions will be made for teachers to follow up in class or to reflect on the content.

Equal Opportunities

Acts of worship will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. They will seek to present religions and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards that diversity. Although we promote the Christian ethos of Eastchurch School we also value the beliefs of all children in our school and allow them to feel that their views are recognised and valued.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise during worship, particularly when using lighted candles and other artefacts and visual aids. Care must be taken when using any of these items. There is an evacuation issue while having the whole school in the hall at the same time. There are two fire exits (clearly labelled) in the halls and two further exits enabling speedy evacuation.

Teachers right not to attend collective worship

From the time of the 1944 Education Act, teachers have had the legal right not to attend acts of worship with religious subject matter. Any refusal to attend the daily act of collective worship will not be used to discriminate against them.

Parents right to withdraw pupils from Religious Education

From the time of the 1944 Education Act, parents have had the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. The school must comply with any requests from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. The parent is responsible for providing suitable material and activities to fulfil their personal beliefs. A Teaching Assistant will be given responsibility for the supervision of any children during assembly times.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. Resources and needs will be identified and priorities established.

Leading Classroom Worship

1. Think of a total time of fifteen minutes depending on the content, but include:
 - Some time for thinking
 - Some time for sharing
 - Some time for listening
 - Some time for stillness and silence
 - Opportunities for experiencing awe and wonder
2. Use a focus which the pupils will learn to recognise and respect: the lighting of a candle, a vase of flowers, a picture, a piece of sculpture, a cross, a shell, or another natural object.
3. Learn to use silence, through stilling exercises. Regularly conclude with silence.
4. Keep the session simple and short. Use some of the following:
 - The theme for the week
 - A short passage of scripture
 - A story, poem, or piece of literature
 - A picture, poster or slide
 - A prayer – perhaps with a simple ritual
 - A hymn or song which the children know well
 - A flower, a twisted root, a shell, signs of seasonal change
 - An object from the technological world to assist reflection on the power and creativity of human beings
 - A personal account of an event or experience in your life
 - Music
 - Silence
5. Invite pupils to reflect on the content of the worship either individually or in small groups, allowing discussion and reflection for two or three minutes.
6. Use music to begin or end
7. A well organised classroom act of worship may lead pupils into a quiet, creative activity such as writing or painting.