



Worship Policy Statement **October 2005**

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aim and practices of Worship in school. Arrangements for Worship in school are made by the governing body in consultation with the Headteacher. 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 Controlled) School, we normally base our Worship on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church, in accordance with the trust deed. 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 hold acts of worship that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Ethos Statement for Church of England Schools (York Diocesan Board of Education)

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

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice.

It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

Aims and Purpose

The aims and purpose of collective worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship God;
- to offer opportunities for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- to offer space for reflection, prayer, meditation and silence;

- to enable children to explore and evaluate their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to underpin the Christian values and ethos of the school;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to reflect the aims of the school;
- to be inclusive and aim to respect each individual's integrity.

Worship in School

Worship is the fulcrum of the school. 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 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. The context is the assembled school/group sharing its collective experiences.

Organisation of Collective Worship

We hold a daily act of Worship in our school. This forms part of each assembly, which is normally whole-school, although one day a week (currently Tuesdays) we also hold acts of worship in separate Key Stage groups, and at least twice a half term we meet in House Groups.

We conduct Worship in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that Worship time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children 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 and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music. As well as the school cross, we sometimes use candles or other symbolic objects to act as a focal point for the attention of the children.

The headteacher or other members of the teaching staff normally conduct Worship, local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups also conduct Worship in school on a regular basis. In addition to our daily act of Worship we sometimes hold special services of thanksgiving (eg. At Harvest, Christmas and Easter as well as for our Leaver's in July) at Holy Trinity Church in the village.

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 we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our Worship as part of a series of themes on a termly basis.

Our Worship reflects the achievements and learning of the children in both the weekly Celebration assemblies and the monthly House Group assemblies. We encourage the children to participate in Worship by showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Within these assemblies we offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of schools. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Worship in school is one of the key contributors in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire valuable insights into themselves and others as well as the world around them. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Right of Withdrawal

We expect all children to attend Worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1998 Education Reform Act. Teachers also have a right to withdraw from Collective Worship. The headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from Collective Worship.

Role of the Collective Worship Leader

The Collective Worship Leader assists the governors and headteacher in fulfilling their legal responsibilities with respect to Collective Worship. She works with staff to support the planning and delivery of Worship. She plans for the development of Collective Worship and evaluates and reviews provision with governors and staff. She works with the Governing Body to review and update the Worship policy. She develops an adequate range of resources for Worship. She attends relevant inset and disseminates information to staff. She liaises with a variety of people, including the parish clergy, diocesan advisers and visitors who can advise and support in the delivery of Collective Worship.

Monitoring and Review

It is the role of the Foundation Governors to monitor the policy and practice of Worship. The governors concerned have a key role in this process to ensure that the legal requirements are met and that the Worship offered to pupils is of the highest quality. The governors liaise with the headteacher before reporting to the full governors.

J. Forth
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