



Collective Worship Policy

Old Catton Church of England Junior School



Learning is a Journey ...

Dream, Believe, Learn, Achieve.



OLD CATTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND JUNIOR SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Rationale

The Trust Deed and school ethos statement inform the policy and practice of collective worship in Old Catton Church of England Junior School. School worship is an affirmation and celebration of the Christian foundation values and ethos of the school.

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.

Aims

Through collective worship in our school we aim to:

- provide an experience of worship that will allow children and staff to respond to the presence, power and peace of God and enable the school community to consider spiritual and moral issues.
- introduce children to Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the church year
- explore a variety of ways of praying 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 Christian values of the school, and to enable children to explore their own beliefs and encourage participation and response,
- celebrate the gifts that each child brings to the school community, recognising the uniqueness of each individual made in the image of God
- encourage children to reflect on the puzzling questions that life poses and to respond to the wonder and mystery of the world around them and develop a sense of identity and responsibility towards each other, the wider community and the local church.
- foster a concern for others within the school and wider world, an appreciation of the created world and an awareness of our responsibility for it.
- to provide our pupils with regular opportunities for stillness, reflection and prayer

Legal Framework

There must be a daily act of collective worship for all pupils which 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. Since this is a church school however, Christian worship is central to its life and work and is regarded as a very important part of children's education.

Organization of Collective Worship

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school and this forms part of each assembly. The whole school, including members of staff, meet together in the hall each day. Collective Worship usually lasts for fifteen minutes. We conduct collective worship in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that this is a special time, a period of reflection. We expect children to behave in an appropriate way; we ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and to participate fully in prayer and hymns. The school prayer is said regularly, as is the Lord's Prayer. The lectern acts and a small wooden cross act as focal points.

The headteacher and assistant headteacher normally lead collective worship; other staff also lead collective worship on occasion. Members of the congregation of St. Margaret's (including a Foundation governor) also lead 'Open the Book' assemblies fortnightly.

The children offer a 'Thought for the Day' each day and our Year 6 pupils also have the opportunity to reflect upon the themes and their experience during assemblies and collective worship.

The incumbent leads collective worship once every half term. Other visitors may also be invited to contribute to acts of worship.

The school holds a service in St. Margaret's Church for Harvest Festival, Christmas, and Easter each year.

Some of our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children: assembly times provide opportunities to celebrate success. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues discussed in their class or the School Council. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They provide an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised.

Learning Expectations and Intended Outcomes

Education, celebration, praise and hope are essential features of our worship at Old Catton Church of England Junior School. We aim to make children aware of what it means to be a community committed to serving and caring for each other, God and our environment. In so doing we hope to create an atmosphere in which pupils are invited rather than compelled to explore issues for themselves, reflect upon and learn from their own and others' experiences, develop sensitivity and a sense of wonder, awe and mystery for the world of which they are part.

Content and Approach

We have developed a range of themes and topics through which Collective Worship takes place. Themes for each half term are chosen and presented in a variety of ways. The current list is included in the Collective Worship folder. Key themes include love, joy, trust, forgiveness, justice and the value of all human life. We regularly use the 'Values for Life' resource. The school explores themes through stories, hymns, prayers and responses;

- Celebration of the major festivals of Christianity and of other faiths
- Presentation of Bible stories
- Topical matters from the news or the locality
- Literature with implicit or explicit religious teaching
- Appreciation of the natural world and human activity
- Appreciation of the talents, achievements and work of ourselves and others
- Visitors who represent organisations who have a brief acceptable to the school
- Prayer in different forms - formal, pupils' own, silence
- Use of music
- Appropriate focal points and artefacts
- Participation by the children

Children are encouraged to think of the occasion as a special time and to reflect on how we can apply Christian teaching to our lives in school. The headteacher and staff who lead collective worship plan keep plans of collective worship; the children monitor the impact of collective worship by recording their thoughts and experience of collective worship and how it impacts on their lives.

Resources

The school budget includes a sum of £200 to be used annually for resourcing collective worship.

Equal Opportunities

In sharing what is meaningful and significant in our lives, along with our common concerns, responsibilities and values, we affirm the equality of each individual, regardless of gender, creed, ethnicity, physical or mental ability.

Special Educational Needs

The staff and governors at Old Catton Church of England Junior School are committed to ensuring that every child in the school will derive benefit from collective worship, whatever her or his ability. Every attempt is made, therefore, to ensure that materials used are appropriate to a range of abilities, aptitudes and interests.

Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. 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 this time. Parents do

not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. A record is kept of children who withdraw from collective worship.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is the role of the named school governor with responsibility for religious education and collective worship to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. The governor concerned liaises with the headteacher and/or the assistant headteacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship.

Evaluation strategies used by staff for assessing the outcomes of collective worship are:

- observation of the children's interest level and attentiveness;
- observation of the children's general behaviour in and around school, and to one another
- a focused visit by Foundation Governors.
- written observations; checking that practice matches planning
- conducting occasional formal observations of collective worship and providing feedback
- seeking feedback from children, staff, parents, governors, incumbent and visitors
- observing the extent of the collective worship's influence on children's attitudes and behaviour throughout the school
- holding discussions with colleagues

Conclusion

At Old Catton Church of England Junior School we offer pupils opportunities to explore and share beliefs and consider the importance of prayer, meditation and silence. We encourage them to consider the relevance of ideas, beliefs and values to their own lives, to think about the needs of others and what it means to be part of a community. The opportunity is given to put into practice the values of the school. Collective worship offers a time to celebrate achievement and worthwhile or positive behaviour, thus contributing to our community.