



*To create a school where we all:
Go further than we thought,
run faster than we hoped,
reach higher than we dreamed,
to become the people God meant us to be.....*



Collective Worship Policy

This policy should be taken and used as part of Sutton on the Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled School's overall strategy and implemented within the context of our vision, as an instrument of government aims and values as a Church of England school. It is consistent with the overall aims of the school as expressed in the Prospectus and Ethos Statement and the Christian Foundation of the school as expressed in the Trust Deed, i.e. the principles and practices of the Church of England. It takes account of worship guidelines from 'Worship Works' - a handbook for leaders of Church of England Schools, the Framework for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) and recent legislation related to Collective Worship (see DfES Circular 1/94).

1. Aims and purpose

1.1 The aims and purpose of Collective Worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for children to worship God;
- to enable children to consider spiritual, moral and cultural issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos, with shared values, and to reinforce positive attitudes based on a Church of England foundation;
- to teach children how to worship.

2. Guidelines

2.1 Collective Worship should be 'a rich source of inspiration for the whole school, and a focus for all that is good and worthy of celebration' (York Diocese, in accordance with the requirements of the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Trust Deed of the School).

2.2 We understand worship to be a special act or occasion, the purpose of which is to show reverence to God. Collective Worship is meant to be 'educational in intent', but is not the same as a Church service. It differs from 'Assembly', which implies simply a gathering of people. It involves all members of the school coming together and participating. We expect everyone to take an active part in the Collective Worship.

2.3 In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that Collective Worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our Collective Worship on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church. We conduct our Collective Worship, however, in a manner that is sensitive to the variety of faiths and beliefs of all members of the school community.

2.4 While most acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect the traditions of other religions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

3. Organisation

3.1 We hold a daily act of Collective Worship. As stated by the York Diocese, it is 'the entitlement of all pupils and should happen daily'. Collective Worship forms part of each morning assembly, which can be either the whole-school, separate departments such as Infants and Juniors or individual classes. The sessions will take place in the school hall, classrooms or at All Hallows Church.

3.2 We conduct Collective Worship times in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that Collective Worship 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, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate fully in songs and hymns. Although during prayer it is optional to join in with 'Amen', all children are expected to sit quietly with eyes closed and hands in laps. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, candles or other objects, to focus the attention of the children.

3.3 The Act of Worship, whether in the hall or classroom, will follow a recognisable format:

- The worship should last between five and twenty minutes, depending on the timetable.
- In longer times of worship, there will usually be songs in an appropriate place which, wherever possible will relate to the theme of the worship. Hymn books will be used or song words will be provided on song sheets
- There will be a quiet time for reflection or a prayer. Prayers may be taken from Common Worship, other collections of prayers, teachers' own resources or children's own work. They may also be extemporary. Short poems or quotations may also be used.
- The worship will have a clear focus and will often involve pupil participation. The theme will be developed over a period of time.
- Elements used in the worship may include music (CDs, tapes, singing, instruments etc.), listening to stories, Bible Readings and other relevant

passages, use of movement, mime, drama, artefacts and audio-visual material.

- Seating will be as comfortable as possible in order to aid a worshipful experience.
- Any notices will be clearly separated from the act of worship.
- Children will be expected to walk in and out of the hall quietly. Music or songs will be played to create a spiritual atmosphere.

3.4 Collective Worship is normally conducted by the Head teacher or other members of staff, but is sometimes led by local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups. All those responsible for arranging an act of worship will be given a copy of the Worship Plan, and will receive due notice of the times they are required to lead. The Worship Plan is prepared and distributed by the Collective Worship Subject Leader.

3.5 We take the themes of our Collective Worship from the traditions of the Christian faith, and we observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. The themes follow a two year cycle and aim to provide continuity and progression in considering issues and an opportunity for children to develop spiritually over a period of time. They may also relate to topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum and will include opportunities for the development of PSHE (linked with the national SEAL program) and Citizenship. The worship is planned to be relevant, meaningful and inclusive of all and allows for a variety of responses, including awareness and appreciation, respect and commitment, and devotion and adoration. Plans are made each term for the coming term.

3.6 Our assemblies also reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in the assembly by showing their work to the other children, and by raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued, and all achievements are recognised. Opportunities will also be taken to celebrate birthdays.

3.7 Each term classes hold a sharing assembly which parents are invited to attend. We encourage their attendance, as this promotes community spirit, and shows the school and the homes working together in support of the children's achievements. There will also be opportunities for the wider Church family at All Hallows Church, as well as parents and friends, to attend school Festival Services and occasional involvement in Sunday Church Services.

3.8 Governors' attendance at our Collective Worship is always welcome.

3.9 Resources are listed on the Worship Plan and are available from the collective worship bookshelf's in the hall and in the school office, SEAL resources are stored centrally in the learning Resource Centre. RE Resource Boxes are also stored in the Learning resource room. A wide variety of resources are also available on loan from the RE centre at the University College of Ripon and York St John.

4 Right of withdrawal

4.1 We expect all children to attend Collective Worship. Any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious assembly, however, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of Collective Worship. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

4.2 The Head teacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from Collective Worship.

5 Monitoring and review

5.1 Monitoring the policy and practice of Collective Worship is the role of a named school governor, who is also responsible for Religious Education. The governor concerned liaises with the Head teacher before reporting to the governors.

5.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

6 Conclusion

Children should see Collective Worship as a time where teachers and pupils may express joy and thankfulness, share concerns and experiences and affirm the beliefs and values of the school community and the Christian Church of which they are a part.

Last reviewed by Governing Body: March 2016

To be reviewed February 2018

