



Be the best I can
in the love of Christ

Worship Policy

At St. Mary's School we aim to:

- Create a caring Christian community in which everyone is valued and able to learn and grow together;
- Inspire all our children to develop enquiring minds and a lifelong love of learning;
- Release potential through a broad and creative curriculum;
- Sustain an environment in which independence, respect and resilience will flourish;
- Nurture strong relationships between home, school, church and the wider community;
- Empower the children to become responsible local, national and global citizens.

"Be the best I can in the love of Christ"

1. Statement of Intent

- ~ All children on each school day should take part in an act of collective worship
- ~ This may be a single act of worship or separate acts for pupils in different age groups
- ~ It may take place at any time of the school day
- ~ Worship should take place on the school premises or in St Mary's Church in keeping with the Anglican tradition of the Trust Deeds
- ~ Worship will mainly take place in the context of school assemblies but will also be evident in other contexts such as class prayers before lunch and at the end of the school day
- ~ Worship will follow themes of the main celebrations of the Church year
- ~ The acts of worship shall be wholly of a Christian character in keeping with the Trust Deeds
- ~ The type of worship to be provided in St Mary's School is to be the responsibility of the school governors in keeping with the Trust Deeds. Foundation governors have been appointed for "the purpose of securing as far as practicable.....that the school is conducted in accordance with the provisions of any trust deed relating to the school"
"The arrangements for collective worship in a....voluntary aided or controlled school....shall be made....by the governing body after consultation with the Headteacher" so that the act of worship is consistent with the purpose of the school"
Education Act 1995

2. Conscience Clause

The school recognises the right of parents to withdraw their children from worship
"All pupils in attendance at a mainstream school shall on each school day take part in an act of worship unless the parent requests that he may be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school." (Education Act 1996)

The school recognises the right of staff to withdraw from worship.

3. Defining the terms

What do we mean by collective worship?

The Education Reform Act uses the word collective rather than corporate to remind us that school worship is not intended to be the same as church worship. Corporate worship is usually seen as adoration of God by a group of believers in a voluntary association.

Our broader understanding of collective worship is:-

- ~ to provide an atmosphere of trust where pupils can be encouraged to reflect meaningfully on life:
- ~ to give children the opportunity to worship:
- ~ to introduce children to Christian worship in a meaningful way:
- ~ to bring children to the threshold of worship

Acts of worship should leave pupils **free to respond** in a way appropriate to them eg awareness, appreciation, respect, preference, commitment, devotion, adoration, feeling of shared sadness or loss, sense of peace, sense of wonder and awe, sense of thankfulness, sense of stillness in the midst of bustle, sense of beauty sense of compassion.

4. Activities associated with Worship

Traditionally:

Music- hymns and songs

Readings- biblical and others

Prayers- silent, spoken, formal

Holy Communion

The whole school life has a role to play in the spiritual and moral development of the children, and collective worship will play a significant part. The religious material that is presented must relate to their own experiences but must also take them beyond everyday experiences so that they can reflect on their own values and beliefs within a Christian context.

Children need to be helped as they develop in relationships, as they learn to value and respond to one another, and to be encouraged to ask difficult questions of life in the search for meaning. These are important aspects of our school.

5. School Commitment to Worship

Worship will mainly take place within the context of an assembly. There will be other opportunities for prayer during the day eg before lunch and at the end of the day. The school's aims for worship are to:

- ~ introduce children to Christian worship and provide for their creative involvement and use of their gifts
- ~ provide opportunities for spiritual development
- ~ provide an atmosphere of trust and free response from all
- ~ celebrate the school's values and ethos
- ~ enable adults and children to worship together

6. Worship should be governed by the following principles

1. Worship should aim to be central to school life;
-good worship gathers together and offers to God the ethos life and work of the school
2. Worship should aim to be stimulating and reflective;

- good worship increases children's awareness of God through varied experiences

3. Worship should be inclusive;

- good worship should be an activity and experience to which, in principle, all can contribute and from which all can gain, no matter what their personal commitment

4. Worship should be curricular;

- Worship should be seen as part of the whole school curriculum and a special element within it - there are two ways to develop this principle:

- a) like any other part of the curriculum, Worship can be an intentional learning experience which requires careful and professional planning, preparation, execution, evaluation and resourcing.
- b) Worship can be a launching pad for what goes on elsewhere in the school.

5. Worship should be educational;

Good practice can bring about a number of educational gains:

- a) providing the opportunity to celebrate – achievements, special occasions
- b) providing an opportunity to share and experience differences
- c) providing an opportunity to receive comfort in difficult times
- d) providing time to examine and reflect upon common values, including moral values
- e) fostering a sense of group identity

6. Worship should aim to contribute to the religious education of all pupils

7. The Role of the Worship Coordinator

Within these guidelines (Diocesan Toolkit) the role of the coordinator would be to:

- ~ monitor the evaluation of school provision for worship
- ~ collate and draw conclusions from responses from children, staff and other adults on the quality of acts of worship
- ~ report to the head teacher, staff and governors on the findings on a regular basis
- ~ suggest developments for worship in the school
- ~ set up structures to implement and evaluate these

8. Policy Review

This policy was reviewed by the Worship Group in June 2011 and should be reviewed again in three years.