

Collective Worship Policy

At St. Matthew's we aim:

1. To have happy, confident and caring children.
2. Every child to achieve academic success.
3. Embody our Christian values of compassion, respect and peace.
4. Provide our children with a primary education to remember.
5. Build strong partnerships with families and our community.
6. Nurture and celebrate the whole child.

1. Legal Requirements

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal) must "on each school day take part in an act of collective worship"
- Teachers may retain the right to withdraw from collective worship, but they may be required to attend assembly
- Acts of worship can take place at any time during the school day
- Pupils may be grouped in various ways for collective worship: as a whole school according to age; or in groups which the school uses at other times e.g. teaching groups, year groups, key stages
- Responsibility for the arrangement of collective worship lies with the Headteacher in consultation with the governors
- Most acts of worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".
- The acts of worship must be appropriate: for the pupils, in that they should take account of the pupils' ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.

2. Foundation of the School

St. Matthew's is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School and as such is governed by its Trust Deed, which requires that our school provides education within the framework of **'the principles and practices of the Established Church'**. At St Matthew's we embed and embrace our core Christian values which are compassion, respect and peace. Every member of the St Matthew's school community works towards these values and they are at the centre of all that we do. The caring and nurturing Christian ethos of the school, rooted in our core values, impacts significantly on our children's development.

3. Aims for Worship

- a) Contribute to pupils' Spiritual Development
 - Experience what worship is and what people do when they worship
 - Develop the ability to use silence creatively
 - Reflect on and think more deeply about important issues
 - Foster a sense of awe, wonder and creation
 - Celebrate all that is of value in life – truth, love, goodness, beauty etc.
 - Explore mystery and important questions about life and creation

Express their concerns, hopes, joys etc.

b) Introduce pupils to the worship of the Church of England

To be familiar with the important and famous prayers of Christianity and the Anglican Church

To have the opportunity to join in with appropriate responses and forms of prayer

Experience worship in St. Matthew's Church

c) To gain knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith

Explore Christian beliefs about God

Learn about the significance of the Bible

Learn about the significance of Jesus

Explore the nature of God as revealed in Jesus

Experience different forms of worship

Celebrate the festivals of the Church Year

d) To explore and share the beliefs of others

Listen to stories from other faiths and learn about their significance

Observe special celebrations from other faiths

Discover how believers from other faiths worship

Celebrate values and attitudes shared with members of other faith communities

e) Contribute to pupils' moral development

Develop the ability to reflect on moral and social issues

Appreciate the values and beliefs that people live by

Acknowledge and become more aware of the needs of others

f) Contribute to the general development of pupils

Provide them with opportunities for leadership and developing performance skills

Develop pupils' singing ability

Participate in group preparation and presentation

g) Celebrate the life of the school

Celebrate work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum e.g. Star of the Week Assembly, Celebration Assembly

Build up the sense of community of our school

Develop and reflect on values of our school

Share achievements, joys and difficulties with the school community

h) Look out to the wider world

Take note of events in the world and express joy or sorrow, as appropriate

Celebrate and give thanks for God's world

Develop a sense of community within the school and of being part of a wider community

4. Expectations of Pupils

- Enter the hall in silence and to sit down, ready to take part

'Let Your Light Shine' Matthew 5:16

- To experience the feeling of 'belonging' to the whole school when staff and pupils are all gathered in one place
- Experience peace and quietness in the midst of a busy school day
- Listen to music from different origins attentively and respond sensitively, focused listening on certain areas for particular instruments, change in speed etc.
- Listen to the leader of the assembly and participate when required – not calling out
- Sit quietly and reflect upon the content of the assembly. Sometimes candles or other objects that act as a focal point for the attention of the children.
- Leave the hall in silence, ready for the next activity

5. Collective Worship

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 assembly.

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 assemblies on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our assemblies, however, in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

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

Our Christian ethos is reflected in all aspects of how we work and pray. Central to this is our devotion to the Holy Trinity. Our core Christian values are all related in the Trinity and that is what we build our worship around.

Respect – God the Father

Compassion - Jesus

Peace – Holy Spirit

All year groups are taught the meaning of the Holy Trinity and its relationship to our Christian values.

6. Organization of Collective Worship

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school.

Monday morning – Whole School affirmation – Worship Leaders plan, prepare and deliver the worship, which is attended by all staff. (Rec – Y6, all staff and parents, visitors are invited to attend)

Monday afternoon – whole school assembly led by the headteacher (deputy in his absence) (Years 1 – 6)

Tuesdays – Whole school assembly led by Rev. Kate (Year 1 – 6)

Wednesdays – Teacher led assembly, on given themes organised by RE coordinator.
Thursdays – Whole School hymn practice incorporating a time for collective worship prayer and reflection (Years 1 -6)
Fridays – Whole School Celebration Assembly (Years R – 6)
There is a reflection book at the main central display where children are invited to write what they have taken from any particular assembly.

Each morning, all classes say their own individual class prayers that they have composed together incorporating our Christian values. Alongside this, each class takes a turn at saying their class prayer at the Monday morning affirmation. This is done on a rota.

All classes have their own worship areas. These areas allow children time to spend reflecting and expressing their own individual thoughts. The worship areas also have a weekly quote which allows for debate, expression and a chance for children to compare and contrast.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher normally conduct whole school assemblies. We invite Rev. Kate, from St. Matthew's Church to lead our Tuesday Assembly. If Rev Kate can not make the assembly the RE coordinator will lead it. Wednesday and Thursday assemblies are led by the teaching staff.

Reception gradually join Key Stage / Whole School assemblies as the year progresses. When they are not attending an assembly they have a short time of prayer and reflection, in their classroom.

We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our assemblies as part of a series of themes well in advance of the day they take place.

Each class is timetabled to visit church throughout the school year. This is coordinated by RE coordinator and Rev Kate and Christian topics that the children are studying are explored deeper. This is also a time for children to ask questions, take part in mediation and learn more about the Christian faith.

Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. Our Friday assembly is to celebrate the 'Star of the Week' and other awards. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies 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. St. Matthew's is a successful school and we celebrate the successes of all the children in assemblies.

We invite parents and governors to our Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Monday affirmation and Leavers' Services as well as half-termly Celebration Assemblies. We encourage parents to attend, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our

children. Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter are usually celebrated at St. Matthew's Church.

7. Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. Any parent can, however, 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 1988 Education Reform Act. Parents wishing to exercise their right to withdraw should notify the Headteacher in writing.

The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.

In the formulation of this policy, reference has been made to the Diocesan Guidelines for Collective Worship.

8. Monitoring and review

It is the role of the Headteacher, Mr Johnson, to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. He reports to the governors on religious education and collective worship.

'We are a beacon in our community.'

Karen O'Donnell RE coordinator

This policy is pending approval of the school governors.