

GREAT CHESTERFORD C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY



Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively.

Ecclesiastes 4:9

Collective Worship Policy November 2024

'Together we are great'

Introduction

At Great Chesterford C. of E. Primary Academy, our Collective Worship Policy strengthens and supports the Christian ethos of the school, explores our vision of 'Together we are great' and the associated values we derive from them: God's Guidance, Respect One Another, Excellent Behaviour, Aiming High and Tremendous Teamwork. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and will recognise and follow the Christian Liturgical year.

Worship at Great Chesterford C of E Primary Academy is not simply a statutory duty. The daily Christian act of collective worship is the heartbeat of our school, central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

The aims and purpose of Collective Worship as defined in the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for children to worship God.
- To enable children to consider the spiritual and moral 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 reinforce positive attitudes.

Legal Requirements

We seek to comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and schedule 20) which requires that:

All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.

The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the academy and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.

All acts of Collective Worship in church schools and academies must be Christian in character. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for worship such as whole school, year groups, key stages, classes or other combinations.

Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.

The daily act of worship will normally take place on the Academy premises, but it may be held elsewhere e.g. the parish church on special occasions.

Responsibility for the arrangements of Collective Worship in a Church of England school/academy rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Headteacher.

Principles of collective worship

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality (see Church of England Collective Policy Guidance) Collective Worship will therefore be:

Inclusive – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating and watching.

Invitational -in our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to ‘do anything’. Rather worship will provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.

Inspiring – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship, we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect, and ponder on their and the wider community’s behaviour and actions.

Implementation

In addition to the above, we seek to provide acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England. Therefore:

We use the Bible as a sourcebook for inspiration and learning and make the pupils familiar with the Lord’s Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture. We also introduce them to a variety of well-known prayers – many of which express the central beliefs of Christians throughout the ages.

We use aspects of Anglican liturgy to create a framework for worship articulate here e.g. gather, engage, respond, send. We observe the cycle of the Anglican year, including the major Christian festivals.

In Great Chesterford C of E Primary Academy, we aim to provide a worship space which is attractive and well-prepared with appropriate thought having been given to colour, space, seating, ambience and music.

We foster links with All Saints Church, Great Chesterford, involving the clergy in leading worship and providing coherence between worship in church and school. We visit All Saints at least four times a year as part of the Christian calendar.

We recognise that different members of our school community spiritually reflect in different ways. Music, story, silence, prayer, drama and other approaches are incorporated within a varied Collective Worship offer.

Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths

The Anglican Communion sees itself as part of a global church and promotes ecumenism. At Great Chesterford C of E Primary Academy, we work to promote links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of collective worship. We recognise that while some pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, many worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting where everyone finds something positive for themselves and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

Rights and responsibilities.

As established by the 1944 Act and reinforced through this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, having chosen to send their children to Great Chesterford C of E Primary Academy, it is hoped that no one will exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act.

Our Collective Worship Pattern and Practice

Leadership

Collective Worship is led by a range of different individuals and groups including but not limited to the Headteacher, members of the Senior Leadership team, Class Teachers, members of the clergy, invited guests, a whole class or specific groups of children e.g. School Council.

Planning

A member of the Senior Leadership team suggests themes for each term's Big Questions. Three themes are agreed and 'Big Questions', related Bible stories, quotes and psalms support these each term.

All Year 6 children have the opportunity to lead worship and prepare their ideas supported by an adult in school usually the Deputy Headteacher. On occasions, other groups, such as the School Council might lead worship for specific projects and these will be planned and supported in conjunction with the children by the relevant member of staff.

The themes chosen for Big Questions will reflect the liturgical calendar and ensure that key Christian events are explored each year e.g. Harvest, Christmas, Easter, the Epiphany.

The themes reflect both the school's Christian vision and values and these are explicitly explored each year.

There are explicit links between the Big Questions and Bible stories and texts. These are indicated on the schedule for Worship at the beginning of each term. Hymns relating to these questions are also chosen where possible.

A range of materials can be used in the celebration of worship including websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, film clips and pictures.

The Big Questions also provide an opportunity to explore faith in today's world, which might be through specific themes, guest speakers or ways opportunities that enable children to develop their courageous advocacy.

The Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God is explored through relevant Biblical texts and the understanding of the trinity as a family where father son and holy spirit are distinct persons who share the same divine nature.

Spiritual growth is encouraged through prayer, stillness and reflection.

Organisation

The pattern for Collective Worship will typically be:

Monday: A whole school Worship led by the Headteacher or, in their absence a member of the Senior Leadership team.

Tuesday: Key Stage 2 Worship led by a group of Year 6 children. Key Stage 1 will hold a Collective Worship in their classrooms.

Wednesday: Key Stage 1 Worship led by a group of Year 6 children. Key Stage 2 will hold a Collective Worship in their classrooms.

Thursday: A member of the clergy will lead a whole school worship or named teachers will lead a singing worship in which a range of Christian hymns or songs will be sung and explored.

The liturgical calendar will be included to celebrate the key Christian traditions such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Epiphany.

A sense of time and place will be encouraged through a designated space for a cross, candle, picture etc. Music will be used for reflection and to create a sense of collective reflection. The altar decoration will reflect the Liturgical calendar.

A common greeting will be used to identify the special nature of worship and there will be a prayer to offer an opportunity for quiet reflection at the end of the worship.

Children may be seated in year groups or, on occasions, in mixed groups that reflect preferences, colour groups or other collaborations.

Collective Worship will usually take place first thing in the morning and last for at least 20 minutes. Worship can also take place in classrooms or other locations in school including outside spaces or in the local church.

Resourcing, Staff Development, Training.

A selection of books and artefacts to support Collective Worship are collated and updated. We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and teams.

Visitor Leaders for Collective Worship

We welcome visitors to lead and participate in our Collective Worship. Visiting Collective Worship Leaders are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies. The welcoming member of staff will discuss with the visitor, prior to the visitor leading Collective Worship, the content, expectations and practices for Collective Worship. The purpose is to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors, who have not provided the necessary DBS are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

We recognise that although SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of Collective Worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area. For example, children will be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate: the deeper meanings of life; consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness; appreciate the contribution of others and respond to their needs; value their own culture and the cultures of others.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Collective Worship practice is regularly reviewed by the Local Governing Body and a named governor who will discuss it with pupils and staff through observations and reflections. These evaluations feed into the planning and delivery of future worship by the SLT.

Collective Worship is monitored by the named governor, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and will be and is developed by considering the themes and Big Questions that will build and support children's religious literacy each term. Collective Worship may be included in the School Development Plan.

Discussions with wider staff feed into the planning and delivery of future worship. Each year, there is an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of the Big Questions and offer suggestions for future appropriate themes.

Inclusion

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual need where appropriate.

Implementation of the Policy

The Headteacher as Collective Worship Coordinator is responsible for this policy which will be reviewed every two years. Its implementation is the responsibility of all those planning and leading Collective Worship.

Role of Parents

In addition to our community links, parents are welcomed at weekly celebration assemblies. During each term, every class plans and delivers the act of Collective Worship, usually on a Friday. At these assemblies, children are also encouraged to celebrate birthdays and achievements both inside and outside of school.

Evaluation, Review and Revision

This policy was written in November 2024. It will be reviewed in two years' time or before if it is felt appropriate. It was drawn up in consultation with, and reflects the consensus of the headteacher, members of the teaching staff and members of the Governing Body.

Signed: Head teacher	Date:
Signed: On behalf of the Governing Body	Date:
Next Review Date: November 2026	