

# St James C.E. Primary School, Handsworth

# **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY**

## **June 2020**

Our role as a Church of England school in a multi-faith community is that of a gift to the community we are in. We believe that St James School must make and does make a significant contribution to community life and we strive to be fully inclusive of the children of the wider community, for children of faith and those with no faith.

Although we do not serve church needs we do have a role in nurturing faith and spirituality. In this role we endeavour to positively value faith as represented in the world religions. We enable children to explore their own religions and those of their peers so that they can develop a positive understanding of each other's lives and learn to respect one another.

A daily act of worship enriches the life of our multi-cultural school and binds our school together. We are therefore pleased to comply with the 1988 Education Reform Act and the Trust Deed of our school. The legal basis serves as a minimum for our own expectations.

The Trust Deed (from 1843) of this Church of England School commits us to worship and teach "according to the principles of the Church of England under the direction of the minister of the parish."

Our policy explains how this founding principle is lived out in a richly multi-faith school comprising of over 400 children of many different faiths, including Christian from a variety of traditions, Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist and approximately 15% being of other or unknown faiths.

### **Aims of Collective Worship Policy:**

- To affirm children and adults of any faith in their religious identity.
- To encourage respect of all people for traditions other than their own.
- To encourage inquisitive, critical thought about religion, faith and the existence of God.
- To weave together visible, practical, invisible, emotional and spiritual aspects of home and school life in worship.
- To firmly establish reflection and opportunities for prayer in the rhythm of daily school life.
- To develop individual conscience, strengthening children to make ethical/moral decisions aware that they are part of a diverse community.
- To celebrate and teach the Christian values of the Church of England through Christian teachings and the teachings of the community faiths.

### **Collective Worship in Our Plural Society**

All schools are required by law to teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. (Prevent Strategy 2011)

As a gift to our community, we believe that St James School *must* make and *does* make a significant contribution to community life and that we strive to be fully inclusive of the children in our wider community. As such we represent a coming together of our diverse community in microcosm.

As an Anglican school we serve the community.

As such we have a crucial role in nurturing faith and spirituality. In this role we endeavour to positively value faith as represented in the world religions. We enable children to explore their own religions and those of their peers so that they can develop a positive understanding of each other's lives and learn to respect one another.

### **When and where does worship take place?**

There is a daily act of worship within the school. It may take a variety of forms:

1. **Within the classroom** (Either as a single class or as a year group).
  - Singing
  - Class / school prayer
  - Themed assemblies led by visitors
2. **In the hall as a Key Stage assembly.**
  - Weekly praise assembly, celebrating the good work and the good behaviour of the children
  - Age focussed themed assemblies led by staff
  - Age focussed themed assemblies led by visitors
3. **In the hall as a whole school.**
  - Themed assemblies led by staff
  - Themed assemblies led by visitors
  - Pupil led assemblies
  - Class led assemblies focussed on key festivals / event / themes (parents and the community are also invited in to celebrate during these whole school times)
4. **Within the Parish of St James Church.**
  - With celebration of Easter and Christmas taking place at the church.
5. **As part of the wider Church of England Community**
  - e.g. the Year 6 leavers and Year 2 celebration services at Birmingham Cathedral.

### **Who leads the Collective Worship?**

- Led by all members of staff within class and Songs of Praise.
- Led by the Head, Deputy Head and other members of staff, who wish to, on a weekly basis.
- Led by our parish priest from St James Church
- Led by the children and their classes, during class assemblies and festivals.
- Led by invited representatives from different Christian groups.
- Led by invited speakers from different faith communities who may invite prayer according to their faith tradition.
- Representatives of different faith groups explored through visits to local Mosques, Gudwaras, Mandir, Buddhist temple and other places of worship
- Developing the idea that the children will be given advanced notice of the weekly themes for assemblies, so if they feel able they are able to take the lead in an assembly they will be supported by members of staff.

At every opportunity children are encouraged to participate and lead the collective worship in ways that they are comfortable with. A school worship council leads assemblies and works on setting up themed activities at different points in the year.

### **Contents of the collective worship.**

The Head Teacher draws up a yearly rota of themes for collective worship. The programme will reflect both the Christian Calendar and those of other faiths. It will give the opportunity for the life of the school to be expressed at this time, through celebrating success, welcoming and saying farewell to people. The programme has the flexibility to incorporate both worldwide and community events. The programmes will also be linked to key curriculum areas – the RE Discovery curriculum and to PSHE themes to give children a connected learning process.

Our Anglican foundation is embedded in the Trinitarian belief of God as maker, redeemer and sustainer. Acts of worship should broadly involve thanksgiving for creation, acknowledgement of human need and requests that God helps us to grow and change our society and ourselves.

Knowing of this tradition, we delight in affirming and learning from all the religious traditions, which make up our community.

These principles are explored with imagination through:

1. Looking at an aspect of belief from a particular religion or from several religions.
2. Learning about some aspect of worship.
3. Celebrating anniversaries, festivals, and events.
4. Story, both religious and moral.
5. Learning from experiences of others both historical and contemporary.
6. Reflection upon ultimate questions (remembering the need to respect the beliefs of other faiths, making sure that we reflect on Christian values), e.g. why are we here, how can we be of service, what will happen to us?
7. The development of the human spirit.

8. Responding to challenge, achievement, endeavour, endurance and social concern
9. Consideration of the meaning/messages contained in hymns/songs and prayers.

**Children can become involved in worship at their own level through:**

- Drama, movement and dance.
- Play and mime
- Song
- Story and poetry
- Symbols
- Silence
- Readings
- Prayer
- Leading assemblies

**They may respond through:**

- Observation.
- Participation.
- Leading assemblies
- Generating themes for assemblies
- Listening.
- Reflection.
- Prayer.
- Song.
- Emotion.
- Pieces of written or drawn work which are used in displays around the school.
- Speeches made by the Year 6 children during their Graduation at the end of the school year.

**Their attention can be focused on:**

- Self-awareness.
- Suffering through out the world, and the help and support they can give.
- Human weakness.
- Natural world.
- Love.
- Reconciliation.
- Relationships.
- Celebration.
- Birth and death.
- Courage.
- Beauty. (Natural beauty and beauty within each other.)

**Singing in Assembly time:**

Songs are chosen to reflect the themes that are used for the assemblies during the term. Great care is taken when choosing the songs used. We use the words Father, God and Lord in our songs, but do not sing about Jesus unless we are celebrating Christmas or Easter. We are a multi-faith school

with many commonalities. It is felt that it is better to sing to God/Father/ Lord as most of us relate to this important figure. For many children and staff God is a familiar and important figure, so singing about him and the great gifts he has given us is comforting and faith affirming.

### **Celebration of Community Festivals:**

The main community festivals are celebrated each year with the children and classes leading these celebrations, but this can depend on when they fall, may be led by an adult. (Especially if they fall very close to a beginning of term, when rehearsal time can be limited)

Christmas and Easter are celebrated within the school, but also as a school, at St James Church, bringing together Church, School and Local Community.

### **Reflection and Quiet Area:**

A quiet Reflection Area has been established where children could go and pray if they wish, or just to be quiet during the day. It has been opened to children to visit during dinner time to write prayers or sit quietly during the dinnertime slot.

### **Resourcing:**

- Clergy of St James Church, especially the vicar as he is also part of the wider community of the school.
- Books
- Artefacts belonging to the school and other places of worship.
- Visitors with experience and expertise.
- Children leading worship.
- Training
- Development of relationships within the other faith communities within our school community and the local neighbourhood.
- Use of internet sites [www.assemblies.org.uk](http://www.assemblies.org.uk)

### **Evaluation:**

1. Review of the termly Assembly Rota prior to and following delivery.
2. An annual review of policy and practice of Collective Worship within the school, being facilitated by the Vicar of St James or his nominee and the Head Teacher.
3. Termly meetings involving the Link Governor for Collective Worship and the head teacher.
4. Reports to the Governing Body and the Standards & Improvement Committee.
5. Review against the SIAMS evaluation criteria.

### **Rights of withdrawal:**

- Parents have the right of withdrawal for their children.
- Pupils withdrawn from Collective Worship should be adequately supervised and engaged in purposeful activities.
- Pupils who are withdrawn should not be made to feel different or isolated.

- Teachers/Staff are not obliged to lead Collective Worship.
- At St James we ask all teachers to remain within the hall for Collective Worship, but if they feel they cannot take part in that part, they do so respectfully.

Policy drawn up by Rev David Warbrick and Elaine Riley, June 2000.

Reviewed December 2002 by Elaine Riley, Father Peter Hibbert and Mr Alan Brown.

Last reviewed: Sarah Cross Head Teacher June 2020

**Referenced to the following documents:**

**St James as a Church of England School in a multi-faith community**

**Race Equality Policy**

**Equal opportunity Policy**

**RE Policy**

**Prevent Policy:** - 10.15 All schools are required by law to teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. (Prevent Strategy 2011)

**June 2020 – ADDENDUM**

Collective worship is planned to be more class based during 2020-2021 school year due to the pandemic. Reflective log books used to allow children time to reflect on assembly themes as well as reflect with their own religion.