

# Haytor View Community Primary School & Nursery

## Collective Worship Policy

### 2023-24



*Learning together - enjoying success - aiming high - celebrating difference – enriching community*

## OVERVIEW

We understand the importance of collective worship in terms of its educational, inclusive and spiritual nature and this can play an important part in the lives of our young children. We ensure that the Convention on the Rights of the Child are embedded into all collective worship that takes place in our school, explicitly recognising this spiritual element of a holistic child's development, along with social and moral well-being, cultural development and physical and mental health. The Equality Act places a duty on us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. It affirms diversity and the needs to respect integrity of pupils and teachers whatever their faith or non-backgrounds.

Worship is a 'time to breathe'; a time when all can come together to find a space, silence and quietness to reflect on their own spirituality, values and place in the world. Just as breathing is vitally important to life, worship is a significant and sacred time in the life of our children; ensuring the time is valued to allow all to 'breathe'.

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The law requires that all pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship. Taken over a term, the majority of such acts should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian nature. Specifically, the law requires that

- All pupils should take part in an act of collective worship each school day
- There may be a single act of collective worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils in different age groups or school groups
- In community schools without a religious character, the Head Teacher, after consultation with the Governing Body, is responsible for the arrangements for collective worship
- Acts of collective worship shall take place on the school premises
- Acts of collective worship should be appropriate to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from any or all acts of collective worship. The parent does not have to give a reason for this request.
- The school retains responsibility for the pupil's health and safety.
- All Teachers (including Head Teachers) retain the right to withdraw from acts of collective worship.

## Collective Worship - Definition

Collective Worship in school has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring "collective" not "corporate" worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worth of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit. Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

## Rationale

It is our vision that Collective Worship will also provide opportunities to contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of each child. Such opportunities may include:

- Experience of what worship is and what people do when they worship
- Explore, reflect on and think more deeply about important moral and social issues within a Christian context
- Allow reflection and response to the fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings
- Foster a sense of awe and wonder
- Celebrate all that is of value in life
- Express their concerns, hopes and joy
- Have an opportunity to build a relationship with God
- Give expression to, and reaffirm and practise the values of the school community
- Nurture their individual spiritual growth
- Celebrate the whole school community and the individual values that everyone brings
- Provide a safe space in which children can express thoughts and feelings
- Appreciate the values and beliefs that people live by
- Acknowledge and become more aware of the needs of others

## Aims

Our aims are to:

- Develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different values and faiths
- Provide opportunities for prayers and promote reflection upon readings from holy texts or other writing
- Reflect on values that are of a broadly Christian nature and on their own beliefs
- Provide opportunities for pupils to consider life's big questions and their responses
- We seek to lead pupils to the point where they can appreciate and if they wish, develop faith.
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Opportunities to be still
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Reflect on the character of God and the teachings of Christ
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar
- To promote a common sense of ethos and shared values
- To help our pupils to develop respect and sensitivity to beliefs and values of others

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of the other people in everyday situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not
- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community

- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community, the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....;
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.
- Develop respect and sensitivity for the beliefs and practices of people of other faiths and worldviews
- To encourage global citizenship and social responsibility
- To encourage positive contribution to the wider community
- To develop a sense of increasing respect and understanding in order to live cohesively in pluralistic societies

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

There is an act of collective worship every day, to which every child within the school must be invited to attend (whole school, Key Stage, or in the classroom).

The first Act of Worship of the week will set the scene for the week and reflect our school ethos, key Christian values or current events, British Values and key RE attitudes. Throughout the rest of the week daily Acts of Worship will take place, additional acts of worship throughout the week may include class collective worship, singing practice, worship as part of the celebration of children's achievements that week.

Special services are often held at the local church to celebrate a range of Christian festivals. These may include Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Parents are often invited to share these occasions, either in church or in school. The following identifies a range of elements which our children may experience. These can be used to help to encourage the religious development of the children, and understand the meaning of worship:

- Songs and music from a variety of cultures.
- Prayer (traditional and contemporary)
- Reflection and contemplation.
- Individual and group activity.
- Bible readings and material adapted from it
- Special clothing, artefacts.
- Discussion, speech and silence.
- Procession and ritual action.
- Food and drink.
- Dance and drama.
- Use of the senses.
- Opportunities for pupil led worship by the school ethos team

## **GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Collective worship is well planned and is flexible and sensitive, responding to and reflecting on contemporary events.

- The leader should try to create a welcoming and inviting atmosphere conducive to worship by, for example: - Playing worship or quiet reflective music on arrival - Or displaying an image, quote or question to engage the children in the theme
- There should be a welcome
- Try to ensure that children always have a role within the worship. This could be planned or spontaneous, individually, in groups or as a whole community.
- Be creative and allow the children freedom and opportunities to be creative within the worship experiences.
- Children should be given a chance to discuss, in talk partners, share their ideas/answers to a posed wondering question (I wonder what respect means? What does it look like in our school?)
- There should be a time for children to be still and silent to reflect and think about the key thoughts and/or the Bible message
- Children should be given opportunity to pray/reflect, which might be personally (silently) or out loud as a group or on behalf of the other children or in other ways
- It is important to send the children out with a thought, verse, prayer or question to enable them to continue their thinking and spur them into action (when appropriate) following the worship session
- The end of worship/ the gathering provides a good opportunity to close with a blessing prayer/reflection

## Developing attitudes

Attitudes such as respect, care and concern should be promoted through all areas of school life. There are some attitudes that are fundamental to religious education in that they are prerequisites for entering fully into the study of religions, and learning from that experience. The following attitudes are fostered in our collective worship opportunities:

### a) Curiosity and wonder:

- developing imagination and curiosity
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live
- developing their interest in and capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose
- exploring the nature of religious practices and teachings
- being willing to look carefully at 'the other' and be open to learning from it • following mysterious and profound lines of thinking through, to see where they lead.

### b) Commitment:

- understanding the importance of commitment to a set of values by which to live one's life
- willingness to develop a positive approach to life
- the ability to learn, while living with certainty and uncertainty.

### c) Fairness:

- listening to the views of others without prejudging one's response
- careful consideration of other views

- willingness to consider evidence, experience and argument
- readiness to look beyond surface impressions
- developing the courage to pursue fairness.

**d) Respect:**

- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others
- developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when others' views are different from their own
- being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- appreciating that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society
- being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias
- recognising the rights of others to hold their own views
- avoidance of ridicule
- discerning between what is worthy of respect and what is not
- appreciation that religious convictions are often deeply felt.

**e) Self-understanding:**

- feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas and a mature sense of self worth
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth
- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people
- developing the capacity to discern the personal relevance of religious questions
- deepening awareness of the role of belief and tradition in identity and culture.

**f) Open mindedness:**

- being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions
- developing the confidence in one's own identity to appreciate the identity of others
- willingness to seek new truth through learning • openness to points of view different from one's own.

**g) Critical mindedness:**

- a willingness to examine ideas, questions and disputes about religious and spiritual questions

- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith
- the development of attitudes that distinguish between such things as superstition or prejudice and such things as conviction, personal commitment and faith
- the ability to argue respectfully, reasonably and evidentially about religious and spiritual questions.

#### **h) Enquiry:**

- a desire to seek after the truth
- developing a personal interest in ultimate or metaphysical questions
- an ability to live with ambiguities and paradox
- the desire to search for the meaning of life
- being prepared to reconsider existing views critically
- being prepared to acknowledge bias and prejudice in oneself

willingness to value insight and imagination as ways of perceiving reality.

## **Visits and Visitors**

As part of the curriculum, we ensure that appropriate visits are made available for the children in order for them to have first-hand experiences and gain a greater understanding of various places of worship. Visitors are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge. All visitors to the school and visits to places of worship are in line with the academy safeguarding and health and safety policies. We ensure that all visitors are in line with the Prevent and British Values curriculum and that they have met with a member of staff pre-visit.

## **Planning**

Collective Worship will be treated like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation. The content of Collective Worship should be varied and there should be evidence of this in planning. This pattern is flexible and on occasions it is recognised that teachers may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.

## **Rights of Withdrawal**

We seek to be an inclusive community. However, we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. Parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss withdrawal and to explore how their concern may be met. Parents are not obliged to attend such a meeting in which case withdrawal shall be put into effect immediately and the school will notify the parent. Withdrawal from Collective Worship may be in whole or part. We will provide a system of suitable supervision for children withdrawn from Acts of Collective Worship in line with safeguarding procedures. However, no additional work will be set or followed in this time as this is time for reflection. Also, alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts (see, for example, Part 6 of the Education Act 2002, and Circular 1/94).