



Witchampton CofE First School

Collective Worship Policy

April 2017

Policy Statement

At Witchampton CofE First School, the daily act of collective worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life.

It is a time where we come together to share our love of God and celebrate our achievements (and sometimes failures) together. The worship of the school is based on promoting the Christian, British and school values which permeate the ethos of the school. As such, the contributions of staff, pupils, church clergy and other visitors are valued highly.

Values Education

We blend Christian teaching and Values Education in order to create opportunities for children to develop physically, emotionally, personally, socially, mentally and intelligently so that their self-esteem and well-being is sound and supported by ever growing emotional intelligence; leading to an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens. The systematic introduction of a common values vocabulary allows children to access moral and ethical thought.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement stated in the 1988 Education Reform Act 6 (1) and 9 (3), which states the need for each child to attend a daily act of worship either as a whole school, class or group. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship either partially or wholly. Any parents wishing to do so should contact the Head of School. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from leading and taking part in worship.

Organisation

We aim to provide a variety of worship experiences for the children.

Our current worship schedule is as follows:

Monday - whole school worship led by the Head of School.

Tuesday - class worship which is led by the class teacher in their own classroom. Time will be given for reflection.

Wednesday - worship is led by the local clergy or the 'Open the book' group.

Thursday - whole school hymn and singing practice, with prayer/reflection time, led by Mrs Wilson.

Friday - Celebration worship led by the Head of School.

Worships are approximately at least 15 minutes in length.

Planning, Content and Detail

The themes for **Monday's** collective worship reflect our Values focus for that month, the Church calendar, our school ethos and current events. The worship begins with the children entering the hall; each year group being led by a candle. The main candle is lit and the worship begins. The children are regularly involved in the worship, which finishes with

a prayer. The candles are then turned off. The children exit to music, again being led out by the class candle.

Class assemblies have planned themes for their acts of collective worship on **Tuesdays**. The format is similar to Monday's whole school worship.

Wednesday's worship takes many forms. It is sometimes led by the local clergy, and other times the group 'Open the book' perform a story from the bible. In the Autumn term, this usually takes place in the church and parents are invited to attend.

Thursday's hymn and singing practice includes the lighting of candles to focus the children's attention and aims to develop the children's understanding of new hymns as well as learning them. The session ends with a time for reflection or a prayer before the candles are turned off. The children leave in the same way as before.

The celebration worship on **Friday** celebrates the children's achievements both in and outside school. Normally, teachers choose one member of each year group to receive a certificate and a golden star trophy (which they keep for a week). We also celebrate those children who have reached a milestone of rainbow points.

Prayer and Reflection

Collective worship always includes a time of prayer and/or reflection, including in hymn practice. A range of prayers is used including the Lord's Prayer, prayers written by the children and others. They are introduced in an appropriate manner with a short time of quiet. At the beginning of the whole school worship led by the Head of School, a time of reflection and quiet is encouraged by the 'lighting' of the main candle. A cross is also displayed in the hall.

At the beginning of the lunch hour, grace is said by either an adult or child in each class. Prayers are also said at the end of the school day. These prayers are taken from the class prayer book and have been written by the children.

The school has a Prayer Tree in the hall. Children are encouraged to write short prayers and clip them onto the tree. Sometimes these are related to the Value for the Month, on other occasions this could be a personal prayer.

Other Faiths

At Witchampton CofE First School our worship reflects our Christian beliefs and values and we are also committed to respecting each other's faith stance and culture, showing tolerance and understanding regardless of pupils' beliefs. The class led acts of worship may portray other cultures and beliefs as they reflect the faith studied as part of the R.E. curriculum requirements.

Visits and visitors

As part of the curriculum, Witchampton CofE First School ensures 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 to the school are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge - their role is to educate, not to evangelise. Witchampton church, St Mary and St Cuthburga's, is our most valuable and frequently used resource, with the whole school attending and contributing towards annual Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' Services.

Equal Opportunities and special needs issues

All pupils, regardless of academic ability, age, gender and ethnic origin, have access to a wide range of appropriate activities to support their understanding of R.E. At each Key Stage, the teacher will draw from other religions as appropriate to acknowledge and celebrate the religious beliefs of the children within the class.