

Thurnham C E Infant School



Collective Worship Policy

Members of Staff Responsible	Miss N Saunders
Position	Christian Distinctiveness Lead
Dated	September 2018
Date of next review	September 2019

THURNHAM CE INFANT SCHOOL COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Introduction

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our values of (*insert school values*) and celebrates the central role that each child to play in their community. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is 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 Legal Position

The Education Reform Act (1988) on Collective Worship in County Schools restates the requirement found in Section 25 of the 1944 Act that all pupils attending a maintained school should take part in a daily Collective act of Worship. In a Church of England school, the act of Worship must be consistent with the terms of the trust deed of the school, and reflect Anglican beliefs, practices and values. The Act permits flexibility in timing and organisation and allows for a single act of Worship for all pupils or separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups.

Parents, as stated in the school prospectus, have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship, after a request in writing. (Though there is a legal right for children not to attend if their parents so wish, they are encouraged to do so). Parents who are considering this are asked to discuss this with the Headteacher. Collective Worship is an integral part of our school life at Thurnham and ideally all children should feel part of our school family at worship time. Every child has equal access to Worship regardless of faith.

Aims

Collective worship at Thurnham CE Infant School will support the school's distinctive vision and Mission Statement, by providing opportunities for members of the school community:

- to consider spiritual and moral issues and, through reflection, raise awareness of the ultimate questions of life
- to reflect on their own beliefs
- to develop an enquiring mind and express and explore their own views openly and honestly
- to encounter God in Jesus Christ
- to reflect in ways that are of a broadly Anglican Christian tradition, whilst recognising the validity and importance of other Christian denominations, religions, belief systems and other world views.
- to nurture a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values
- to foster an awareness of the world around them and a sense of their place within it
- to take responsibility for their own conduct, charitable giving, and social actions so that they might contribute positively to a multi-diverse society
- to develop a sense of sharing and belonging through different groups of students coming together

- to experience silence in a busy world
- to encourage inquisitive engagement with, and reflection on, the teachings of the Holy Bible

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Learning and saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- Using Psalms with simple responses – Taizé style

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Using Collects as a focus for worship

Implementation

The act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class.

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including Collective Worship leader, the incumbent, the Curate and Youth Worker of our local church, and The Family Trust in consultation with the Collective Worship Leader. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using Canterbury Diocese Collective Worship Planning which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community, using a variety of resources to implement. This ensures there is a shared understanding of the long- and short-term planning of worship and enables continuity. Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies. This includes discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership if the Christian Distinctiveness lead is unavailable to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

We meet :

Worship is held every day for a period of 15 minutes with the exception of the regular Year group Celebration time which may last longer than this. Class Worship occurs when another Year group is having their Celebration time. These sessions are planned by the lead and are consistent across the school.

Themes for Worship are lead from your Christian Values, the time of the year both within the school and the life of the Church and from Canterbury Diocese guidance as required.

The Worship rota is created termly and are shared with all staff including the Church team who deliver KS 1 worship sessions on a weekly basis. From Term 3 they also lead EYFS Worship on a regular basis.

Worship is led by the Head Teacher and the Christian Distinctiveness leader. Other members of SLT deliver Worship when required to do so.

The Family Trust deliver a termly worship from their annual programme. They also deliver a Christmas based pantomime to the whole school in December.

Celebration time is also held for each year group and parents of the children selected for certificates are invited to attend. Children's names are recorded in a Celebration time file. A candle is lit and a familiar liturgy is said at the start. It includes a prayer and a song also. It is a lovely time for the celebrated children to share their success and the school Worship practises with their parents. This is started in Term 1 for KS1 and Term 2 for EYFS.

Collective Worship is organised using a variety of groupings, allowing greater flexibility to meet the needs of all pupils as well as the needs of the school. Whole school Worship is a lovely occasion, celebrating belonging to our school, whilst class-based Worship is more intimate and informal, reinforcing the closeness of the class group through Christian teaching. A candle is the focus of all these Worship times.

Foundation Stage children have Class Worship initially, in their own familiar classroom with their teachers and TAs. From Term 2 they have a weekly year group Worship time altogether in the music room based on the Citizenship Time. From Easter they attend church led Worship on a Wednesday morning after they have fully settled into school life.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including (eg: music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT).

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- *Gather* – we welcome the community with music , liturgy and the lighting of a candle
- *Engage* – we share a bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message
- *Respond* -- pupils discuss, share , reflect , pray or sing
- *Send* – we share the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle.

The daily act of Worship is an important part of the ethos and values of Thurnham School and is linked to the Mission Statement which states:

Children's Version:

At Thurnham School we learn to love and love to learn.

Adult Version:

At Thurnham School we aim to provide an environment in which everyone recognises they have a valuable role to play, and in which learning will be an enjoyable, satisfying experience encompassing all aspects of development. We expect children to work hard and reach high standards of achievement, relevant to their levels of ability.

Through the strong Christian ethos of the school we strive to provide a sense of tolerance and consideration for others in both the immediate and wider community.

The daily act of Worship provides a daily focal point in school life for promoting all that our school stands for. It is a time of affirmation and celebration, encompassing awe and wonder, stillness and silence, whilst introducing children to formal and informal worship. We aim to be sensitive to the needs and experiences of all pupils taking into account their age, ability, race, ethnicity and family background including religious observances. Through our Christian beliefs, values and practices we aim to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the pupils. During our Worship time we introduce children to various broad aspects of Christian beliefs, practices and customs in accordance with the Diocese guidelines.

Christian Values

All staff aim to communicate and exemplify our six Christian values and beliefs that are focused upon in each of the six terms a year. These values are:

- **Friendship – Linked to the Man Lowered Down Through the Roof.**
- **Kindness – Linked to the Good Samaritan.**
- **Trust – Linked to Noah’s Ark.**
- **Love – The Prodigal Son**
- **Respect - Jesus Calls His Disciples**
- **Sharing – Linked to Feeding the 5000.**

Early Years Worship at the start of the year focus on the Christian Values and how these impact on the children’s life in the way they impact on Christians and on Jesus. They will be encouraged to uphold these values in school and in their daily lives. A display in the Hall highlights all the Christian values, as a reminder to the children there is a linked bible story and also some songs. The values are reinforced in Worship and also in the class room during conversations with the children.

Acts Of Worship Times	Content	Led By
Monday, 9.10am From Term 2 whole Yr group not class.	Y1,Y2 Belonging To God’s Community (including Birthdays, Awards, Behaviour and Safety) Year R Class Worship	Head teacher C.James Reception Teachers
Tuesday 9:10pm From Term 2 whole Yr group not class.	Term 1 onwards - Y1,Y2 Celebration Time Term 2 onwards – EYFS, Yr1 and Yr2 Celebration Time Term 1 - Year R Class Worship	Head teacher C.James Reception Teachers
Wed 9.10am From Term 2 whole Yr group not class.	Y1,Y2 Church Visitors Act Of Worship on chosen theme (Rec join after Easter) Year R class Worship	Church leaders Reception Teachers
Thursday, 9.10am	Y1,Y2 Act of Worship on	Family Trust/Christian

From Term 2 whole Yr group not class.	chosen theme/Family Trust Year R Class Worship led by teacher	Distinctiveness lead Reception Teachers
Friday 1:30pm – 3pm	Worship In Song (Rec, Y1 and Y2 half hour each)	Singing teacher (Mrs L Holland) and TAs on a rota

Developing Worship

The school allocates part of its budget to support the daily act of collect worship. The Collective Worship Leader attends regular professional development with Canterbury Diocese and accesses a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.

Special Worship Times

There are also special Worship times held throughout the year when parents and governors come to join us. The children write prayers for these acts of Worship. We have a harvest service for Years 1&2 and their parents. Each year group does something special for Christmas, with Year 2 having a Carol Service at Holy Cross Church. The highlight is the special candlelit Worship time in the hall where the whole school attends, many candles are lit, songs are sung and a theme is explored. It is a magical time. Easter is celebrated with a special act of Worship to which parents are invited. We have a Leavers' Service with singing, prayers (written by the children), acting and computer input, contributed to by Year 2 children, to mark their transition to the next stage of education. The service celebrates and gives thanks for their three years at Thurnham where they have all been a special part of the school. We have an annual whole school service at Holy Cross Church, when we walk the whole school to the church for Worship. This has become an annual feature of our Worship programme in the Summer term.

Links with spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and the wider curriculum

The themes for Worship and the observance of times for reflection are also included in curriculum plans and in the personal and social development activities at Thurnham. We try to provide opportunities for spiritual experiences, building on our infant children's natural delight and wonder in the world around them.

Through circle time, and using SEAL resources, we encourage children to reflect on social, personal and moral issues, and develop an understanding of themselves and their peers. *SEAL promotes social and emotional literacy in children and equips them with the skills they need to lead a healthy, happy life.* We foster their growing confidence and self-esteem.

In all areas of school life we endeavour to provide a caring, supportive ethos, where children are prepared to take risks and explore their potential and new areas of learning.

Opportunities for Prayer

There are always prayer times in Worship, and children are introduced to the Lord's Prayer, school prayers, response prayers, and special prayers relating to the theme of the Worship. Children say a prayer at the end of both morning (grace) and afternoon sessions (a home time prayer which is said or sung). Children write their

own prayers for Worship times placing them in the prayer box in the entrance hall. There are prayer request forms which the children use to request prayers at Morning Prayers at the church, these are collected weekly and form part of the church prayer list.

Opportunities for Reflection

The school has an external area for reflection which is available to all children and staff. The Curate introduces reflection to EYFS when they start school and revisits it throughout each term with the whole school. This area provides a peaceful view away from the school buildings and playground with relevant materials for holding during personal reflection, e.g. acorns and conkers in the Autumn.

Equality and inclusion

Every child has equal access to our worship, regardless of gender, faith, culture, ethnicity, and ability. Because of this it is rare for any parent to exercise their right to remove their child from this important part of the school day. However, parents have the right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship, and are asked to discuss this with the Head teacher. (Though there is a legal right for children not to attend if their parents so wish, they are encouraged to do so). Pupils with significant special educational needs are supported by their individual assistant to allow them full access, using signing or any support strategies necessary. Gender and cultural differences are represented positively and sensitively, and resources for Worship are selected with these considerations in mind. An effort is made to explain issues simply, whilst challenging children to think deeply about complex concepts to encourage them to think carefully about their own ideas and those of others. We have a broad and inclusive approach which supports the development of the ethos and values of the school community and which enhances community cohesion.

Everything we do in school promotes the well-being and development of the 'whole child', and Worship provides a time of peace and reflection in a busy school day. We also have a reflection seating area in the corner of the playground. Our daily Worship forms an important part of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a church school. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none and is in no way intended to evangelise or proselytise.

We respect the right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship on grounds of conscience. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents.

Health, Safety and Well-being

In Collective Worship, we follow the school's health, safety and well-being policy. For example, appropriate care is taken when using lighted candles and electrical equipment. In line with our 'net-safety' policy any internet resources used must be checked by the leader prior to their use in act of Collective Worship. In the event of fire all pupils are familiar with exit routes from the halls and other areas of the school where Collective Worship takes place. Visitors are not left unaccompanied with children. Special Collective Worship with particular risks, e.g. the Christmas Candlelight Worship, has a risk assessment to ensure safety of children and staff.

Self-assessment and Inspection

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. We also welcome the contributions of parents through the annual parental questionnaires. Foundation Governors monitor provision for Worship on a regular termly programme of involvement. The recommendations found from the monitoring are shared at the Christian Aspects Steering Group meeting on a termly basis. The impact of the recommendations is then monitored throughout the next Term and progress reported back to the group.

Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury.

Diocese involvement

The Christian distinctiveness leader attends the Diocese run meetings for Collective Worship leads held three times a year. These allow for networking opportunities as well as discussions around the latest requirements and resources ensuring we are current in our delivery of entitlement.