

Sonning Church of England Primary School

Collective worship policy



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Contents

Introduction	1
Aims.....	1
Implementation.....	2
Impact of worship on our children.....	3
Reviewing worship, including self-evaluation.....	3
Parental withdrawal	3

Introduction

At Sonning Church of England Primary School, our vision is to build strong foundations for the years ahead. Supported by our school values of love, courage, respect, aspiration and curiosity, we seek to help pupils make positive choices in all they do. Like the wise man who built his house upon the rock (Matthew 7:24-25), we follow our Christian values to build strong foundations for the years ahead.

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision to build strong foundations for the future, and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in the school 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 school strives for collective worship to be invitational, inspiring and inclusive to all faiths, to allow the spiritual development of everyone to flourish. This includes welcoming other faiths into the school and other faiths (and no particular faith) into our daily acts of collective worship.

It should be noted that all references to ‘parents’ should be read as ‘parents or carers’.

Aims

Collective Worship gives pupils, staff and the school community the opportunity to experience and be a present part of the following:

- Regularly attend church services at St. Andrew’s Church, Sonning.
- Engage in an act of community togetherness.
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God (Christian or otherwise).
- Be still and reflect.

Building strong foundations for the years ahead (Matthew 7:24-25)

Love - Courage - Respect - Aspiration - Curiosity

Sonning Church of England Primary School

Collective worship policy



- Inspire children to think, question and reflect on their faith.
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events.
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness.
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts.
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes.
- Experience awe and wonder moments for the children.
- Visit different places of worship (Including other faiths).
- To instil Jesus' teaching of love (including kindness and compassion), respect for others and a curiosity to learn more about ourselves and others, courage to stand up for what we believe in and to aspire to be the best person we can be, and live in a Christlike way.
- Share each other's joys and challenges.
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar (and other faiths).

In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship achieves the following:

- Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer and reflection.
- Experience and explore the varied liturgical and other traditions / festivals of the Church of England.
- Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, have access to regular training and Diocesan advice.
- Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.
- Teaches tolerance and respect for all faiths and beliefs, including those with no faith. This includes recognising the significance of other religious festivals to those within our school community.

Implementation

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders – including staff, pupils, St. Andrew's clergy and external visitors – in consultation with the collective worship leader. This 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). Our school plans systematically and cohesively using appropriate resources and approaches in line with the schools' vision and values. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long- and short-term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative worship, including prayer partners, playing games, singing, prayer, storytelling, reflection, symbolism, demonstrations, drama and art.

Our worship consists of four elements:

- **Gather**
 - We welcome the community to this act of worship. We are invited to prepare our hearts and minds to meet with God.
 - This may involve music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle.
- **Engage**
 - We engage with the big things and the little things in life
 - We encounter Jesus and the stories of the Bible

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Sonning Church of England Primary School

Collective worship policy



- We listen to God's message and how consider how it might apply to our lives.
- We share, for example, a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message.
- **Respond**
 - We respond to what we have heard and seen through prayer, silence, stillness and reflection.
 - We are given the invitation to worship God in different ways.
 - Pupils may, for example, discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing.
- **Send**
 - We share, for example, the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day, learning and/or behaviour.
 - We are sent out to love and serve one another, and to make a difference in the world, and we are all sent out with God's blessing.
 - We close with liturgy, a final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle.

Pupils regularly plan and lead worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the collective appropriate staff during to develop their own understanding of worship and to design a worship to support the spiritual development of one another.

Impact of worship on our children

Daily acts of collective worship, in whatever form they take, have a positive impact on us as a community. Some of these benefits are as follows:

- Children will make better life choices.
- Pupils develop their own faith, spirituality or sense of self.
- Children are mindful of themselves and others.
- Pupils show respect and tolerance for all faiths and beliefs, including those with no faith.
- Confidence to ask and challenge ideas.
- Being grateful and enjoying life in all its fullness.

Reviewing worship, including self-evaluation

The governing body will keep up to date with the latest guidance from the Church of England and continually work with school staff, St. Andrew's Church clergy and the Diocese of Oxford to ensure the highest quality worship is offered to children in the school. This may include attending Diocesan training, visiting the school to monitor/evaluate the effectiveness of worship and engaging with the school community.

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community against our school vision and values. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. We also welcome ideas or suggestions from the school community. Outcomes of evaluations are shared amongst staff and discussed at governing body meetings. Continual review plays an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school. Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of Oxford (SIAMS).

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. We respect the right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents, and parents are invited to contact the school office to arrange a meeting.