‘Love one another as I have loved you’ (John 13:34)

Collective Worship Policy

Last Reviewed: September 2018
*To be reviewed annually.*
OUR VISION

With God’s love, each member of our fellowship will flourish and succeed, growing into unique individuals well prepared for life’s journey. Respect will be at the heart of our school, allowing us to value the strengths, the wisdom and the diversity of others.

OUR MISSION

We provide a nurturing and inclusive environment, united through the love of Jesus that enables all members of our school family to make progress, thrive and reach their true potential.

OUR AIMS

- To foster an understanding of the Christian faith.
- To promote a love of learning so children can flourish and grow as independent learners.
- To provide an engaging, nurturing and challenging learning environment.
- To value, respect and develop each individual within our fellowship.
- To establish a partnership between school, parents, the church and the wider community.
- To enable children to develop a range of skills and knowledge they can apply independently in a broad, balanced, Christian based curriculum.
- To ensure a safe and secure environment where diversity is respected and tolerance is vital to prepare them for modern life in Britain.
- To develop and promote healthy bodies and healthy minds to prepare for the demands of modern life.

OUR RATIONALE

Collective Worship at St. Thomas’ lies at the heart of school life and helps to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the pupils. It also prepares children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The main emphasis is on the tradition of Christian belief and in the teachings and life of Jesus Christ (in line with the 1988 Education Reform Act) however, we conduct our Acts of Worship in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school. Some non-Christian elements will be included when it is appropriate or as a response to local or world issues. Collective Worship will take place every day for every child.

At St Thomas’ we consider Collective worship to be a significant educational activity that both reflects and explores the schools distinctive Christian character and contributes to the academic achievement, personal development and wellbeing of all learners.

Therefore, Collective Worship at St Thomas’ is planned:

- to be inspirational and inclusive. It should engage all learners and they should be able to talk about the impact it makes on their relationships and on life in the school
- to regularly include Biblical material and Christian teaching and this should explore and relate to the schools Christian values
- to have a strong focus on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit enabling all learners to embark on an understanding of the Trinity
- to help all learners to understand Anglican and other Christian traditions found in the UK and worldwide.
- to challenge all learners of all backgrounds to understand and embark on their own spiritual journey. They should understand the value of Prayer, Reflection and Stillness
- to contribute significantly to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; by providing all learners with “something more than the obvious, something to wonder at, something to respond to”
• to be an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals. Collective worship should be an experience that does not offend the integrity of the non-religious or those of different faith.
• to provide shared experience of: awe and wonder, spiritual uplift, pride, sadness and loss, the expected and the unexpected.

**PLANNING FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Collective Worship is seen as an integral, though unique and special, part of each child’s education and as such, must be carefully planned, prepared, presented, resourced and evaluated. The responsibility for Collective Worship lies ultimately with the Governing Body in consultation with the RE and Collective Worship Leader and Head teacher. Each half-term school focuses on one of our Christian Values, which the whole school community learns about, reflects on and responds to. As a school we have chosen a set of 12 Christian Values and focus on six of them each year (the values link with the season of the church year). These values are:

![Christian Values Icons]

Acts of worship are usually structured in the following way:

• Welcome- the time to create a special place where everybody feels **welcome** and in which they can draw close to God. Candles will be lit to signal the start of worship and to represent God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and music will be played.

• Learning- Symbolised by a window, the **learning** element is when new possibilities or different perspectives are opened up through the use of drama, visual images, poetry or puppetry based on Bible stories or other texts.

• Reflecting- Symbolised by a mirror, the **reflecting** element encourages everyone to consider how the Bible story or stimulus has resonated with, or challenged them. Usually searching questions are offered as a focus for reflection. Moments of silence are encouraged at times during this stage.

• Responding- Symbolised by a door, the **responding** element provides an opportunity to consider how God might be challenging those present in the worship to ‘step out’ and play their part in making a difference in the word either as individuals or part of the whole school community.
IMPLEMENTATION

Collective worship is a legal requirement. In line with the statutory requirement, a Christian act of collective worship is provided for all pupils every day. Time allocated to collective worship is not part of curriculum time.

Monday- 10.00-10.30am, Whole Department Collective Worship, Halls

Tuesday- 10.00-10.30am, Whole Department Collective Worship focussing on hymns, Halls

Wednesday- 10.00-10.30am, Class Collective Worship, Classrooms

Thursday- 10.00-10.30am, Whole School Collective Worship, Hall

Friday- 10.00-10.30am, Whole Department Collective Worship focussing on Celebration, Halls

Teachers share the responsibility of leading acts of worship in school and pupils are always fully involved in the worship. Pupils lead their own class worship every week and some pupils support teachers in leading whole school/department worship. Collective worship is evaluated by pupils and staff on a regular basis. This provides further reflection opportunities after worship and also allows us to refine, adapt and improve our collective worship to ensure that we are constantly developing our relationship with God.

Throughout the year every class leads an act of worship to which parents are invited. Pupils in the EYFS (Reception Class) will lead acts of worship from the Spring term onwards. Parents are also invited to the Special Acts of worship that are organised for Harvest, Christmas, and Easter. In addition to this, parents are invited to attend a Leaver’s Service when the Year Six children are presented with Bibles before they finish school in the summer term.

Acts of Worship are also organised to celebrate special occasions and events in the life of people involved in school. Governors, parents and members of St. Thomas and All Saints Church are welcome to attend any of the Acts of Worship that take place in school as we consider this to reflect the ethos of our school where parents and the community are seen to have an important role in the education of the whole child.

Our pupils make regular visits to Church and take part in services held there, e.g. Year Five and Six pupils visit once or twice a term to join the parishioners for a Communion service, Year Two pupils lead a Harvest Festival in Church etc.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Care must be taken during worship when a lit candle is used. It is the responsibility of the adult leading the worship to ensure that the candle is extinguished at the end of worship and that the matches or lighter used to light them are kept safely out of reach of pupils and returned to safe storage after the time of worship.

RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

We expect all children to attend all acts of Collective Worship. However, the right to withdraw a child from Collective Worship may be exercised after discussion with the Head teacher and the Chair of Governors. The school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the worship. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.