



Worship Policy

Approved	October 2022 (Ethos Committee)
Next Review	October 2024

Collective worship at St Stephen's C of E Primary School

At St Stephen's, we build each other up in love and learning, embracing our strengths and developing a passion for lifelong learning. We create opportunities for every child to see themselves as unique, courageous and resilient global citizens - to always be active upstanders for fairness and equity and against discrimination and injustice.

Introduction

St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School is a voluntary aided school and therefore collective worship is carried out in accordance with the school's Trust Deed, as it is central to the overarching mission of the school. It works in partnership with St. Stephen's Church, Twickenham. We embrace this opportunity to come together to retrieve, review and to respect. Worship is central to the life and purposes of our school and will reflect the Christian understanding of God as Trinity. This will include belief in God the source of all being and life, belief in Jesus who reveals God's love by his life, death and resurrection and belief in the Holy Spirit who makes the presence of Jesus known in the world.

The legal requirements for Collective Worship

1. Collective worship at St. Stephen's School complies with the 1988 Education Act where it is stated that 'collective worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character which means that it reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief.'

2. Children take part in an act of collective worship on each school day, as required.
3. Parents have the right to request the Head teacher that a pupil be withdrawn from collective worship and the school is required to make adequate supervision for the child during that time. Parents are asked to come and discuss this decision with the Headteacher and then make a formal written request. Pupils cannot be withdrawn from collective worship on educational grounds. If, for example, a club clashes with a scheduled time of collective worship for the school, it is the class teacher's responsibility to organise a separate time of collective worship later in the day.

The Value of Collective Worship

1. It makes a major contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils of all faiths or none.
2. It provides a means of developing an appreciation that goes beyond the material world, fostering a concern for others and providing a forum for exploring shared values.
3. It offers children, young people and adults an opportunity to participate in humanity's shared search for God, and in doing so builds community in and beyond the school.
4. It provides experience of meditation, reflection and prayer as spiritual resources.

What does Collective Worship involve?

1. Sharing what is meaningful and significant in each individual.
2. Affirming the equality of each individual in God's sight.
3. Celebrating the major feast days in the church year.

Aims

With the support, daily meetings and collaboration of the close links with the church, the Governors and staff aim, through collective worship to;

1. Promote a common Christian ethos and shared values and develop a sense of being part of a Christian caring community within the school, as well as of being part of wider communities.
2. Provide opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and ponder their own beliefs within a Christian context.
3. Impart Christian values and maintain a Christian atmosphere in all areas of school life, so helping each child to:
 - a. Realise their potential spiritually, mentally and physically

- b. Develop a moral and social awareness of the needs of others
4. Find enjoyment in their school life and gain satisfaction and self-confidence in their achievements and develop a sense of commitment.
5. Recognise that not all staff or children may have a Christian background so every effort is made to ensure that collective worship is conducted sensitively so that everybody feels that they are able to participate.
6. Enable pupils to use silence for reflection, contemplation, meditation or prayer.
7. Provide opportunities to celebrate achievements together.
8. Enable pupils to enjoy the sense of unity that derives from an appreciation of being together and taking part in shared experiences.
9. Help pupils develop shared values – honesty, respect, tolerance, self-discipline, empathy, support and forgiveness.
10. Provide opportunities for children to develop sensitivity and a sense of awe and wonder for the world of which they are a part.
11. Help children appreciate that people differ and should be regarded with a spirit of openness and respect whatever their beliefs or culture.
12. Provide opportunities for thanksgiving and enable pupils to enjoy the sense of unity that derives from an appreciation of being together and taking part in shared experiences.
13. An opportunity for pupils to listen to the life and teachings of God/ Jesus and to use these teachings to enable pupils to identify how to celebrate being unique, courageous and resilient global citizens.
14. Worship is also a great opportunity to show pupils how they can be active upstanders for fairness and equity and against discrimination and injustice through the teachings of the church.

Every Child Matters

1. As St. Stephens is a Church of England Aided School, collective worship is Christian in nature but also reflects the school's interest in promoting good relations between people of different faiths.
2. The school promotes equality of opportunity in all areas of practice and ensures that the materials that are selected for assemblies are appropriate for every child, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religious persuasion, physical or educational ability. **See Inclusion Policy.**
3. For SEN, EAL and Gifted and Talented children **See Inclusion Policy.**

Format for Worship

We work closely with the church to organise themes for Worship for each term. We use pupil voice to support identifying areas which we may need to focus on. Collective Worship at St. Stephen's may follow one of these formats:

Class Worship

We use the Worship rota for the term to ensure class worships follow the same theme. They give children the opportunity to explore their own faith and beliefs whilst respecting that of others in a smaller setting. In Class Worship, pupils are able to still follow the same layout as the Church and Key Stage assemblies. Pupils are able to sing hymns, reflect upon a theme, retrieve previous knowledge from a previous assembly or RE topic and finally pray.

“I like class worship as it gives me time to think about how I want to live my life, it allows me to sit still and reflect with my friends”

Singing Assembly

Singing assembly takes place once a week and gives pupils the opportunity to practice a range of songs. They are able to learn actions to support with recollection of the true meaning behind each song. We work closely with the Church to select a range of hymns which are current and have a message which can be deciphered during this time. Pupils are also encouraged to explore the meaning of words, messages and school values in the hymns.

“I like the singing assembly as I feel it is a celebration of everything we have I discussed in other assemblies. I enjoy the opportunity to find out messages of Jesus and God through songs. It helps me learn in a different way.”

Merit Assembly

This assembly happens once a week, it allows teachers and staff the opportunity to celebrate each individual's accomplishments together as one big family. We celebrate the achievements of our pupils through their excellence in their work, the actions of children who have followed our school values. We also celebrate children who have followed our school vision. This assembly is followed by a hymn, reflection time and a prayer.

“I enjoy the Merit assembly as I get a chance to celebrate the achievements of the whole school. It is lovely to hear how pupils have demonstrated the school values in the school day. This helps me think about how I can incorporate my school values or the teachings of Jesus into my daily life.”

Church Worship

This happens once a week and is led by a member of the church team. We work together with the Church to ensure our themes are carried across the school week to unite the message and instill it in our pupils. Church worship is also a time for reflection, retrieval, a hymn and it will end with a prayer.

“I like when we get visitors from the Church, they teach the messages in a way which sticks in my head”

Key stage assembly

This is an opportunity to share the teachings of Jesus, Christianity to make links with other faiths or celebrations. It enables us to teach these messages in a smaller group and is tailored to their age. This assembly is also a time for reflection, retrieval, a hymn and a prayer.

“I like going to the assembly as it is always a different teacher who leads it. They tell us the teachings of Jesus but they link it to modern day life.”

We also aim to visit the Church for an assembly once a term or for RE related topics. We have a close link with our Church which enables us to work together to carry the message and teachings of Jesus in an effective and spiritual way.

Spirituality in worship

We inspire to create a sense of wonder and awe through our assemblies and to encourage pupils to think that there is something or someone more than just them. We aim to ensure that our assemblies intrigue pupils and to extend their thinking. We work closely with the children’s pastor to ensure that spirituality is incorporated separately through prayer meditation or breathing activities.

Links with St Stephen’s Church

The RE coordinator works closely with the children’s pastor at St Stephen’s to plan themes, discuss the format of daily worship. We also work closely, to ensure class worship is a celebration of what pupils have discussed/ learnt in church worship along with making links with our school values in our big question/ theme for the week. This is to ensure that all pupils have the sense of belonging within our school community and can make links between parables, the life of Jesus and their daily lives. The RE coordinator works closely with the ETHOS committee to regularly review and present the Worship policy, themes overview and the schedule of worship. We are incredibly lucky to also hold school assemblies at St Stephen’s church for Christmas, Easter and the Leavers assembly. The close connection with the church enables us to ensure our weekly themes are instilled in pupils and can support both teachers and pupils when required.

Development of Policy

The policy for collective worship was written by the RE coordinator, with reference to the previous school policies on collective worship, the 1988 Education Act and documentation from The National Society (Church

of England) for Promoting Religious Education and the Churches and Collective
Worship in Schools' position paper

It was agreed by the staff onand presented to the Governor's Curriculum
committee

for ratification on

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the RE coordinator, staff and Governors
on an annual basis.