

# **RICHARD TAYLOR CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Policy For Acts of Collective Worship**

### **Introduction**

Our daily act of collective Worship is a special and distinctive time of our school day. Our school is an educational community not a faith community. Therefore, we do not celebrate corporate Worship which assumes a group of believers but collective Worship which means we gather and provide the opportunity for Worship to take place but do not assume participants will have any beliefs or make particular responses.

We understand collective Worship to be educationally valid and inclusive. Our school Worship gives us the opportunity to look within and beyond ourselves, and some of us might encounter God. It is an occasion which allows space for Worship to take place but also allows other responses from participants.

An act of Worship an important part of our whole curriculum, and empowers the children to be open to life, feelings, commitment, celebration, values, and vision.

### **Collective Worship and the Law**

Arrangements for collective worship in a church school are the responsibility of the governors in consultation with the head teacher. Foundation governors have a particular responsibility because they are appointed for the purpose of securing, as far as is practicable, that the character of the school as a voluntary school is preserved and developed, and that the school is conducted in.

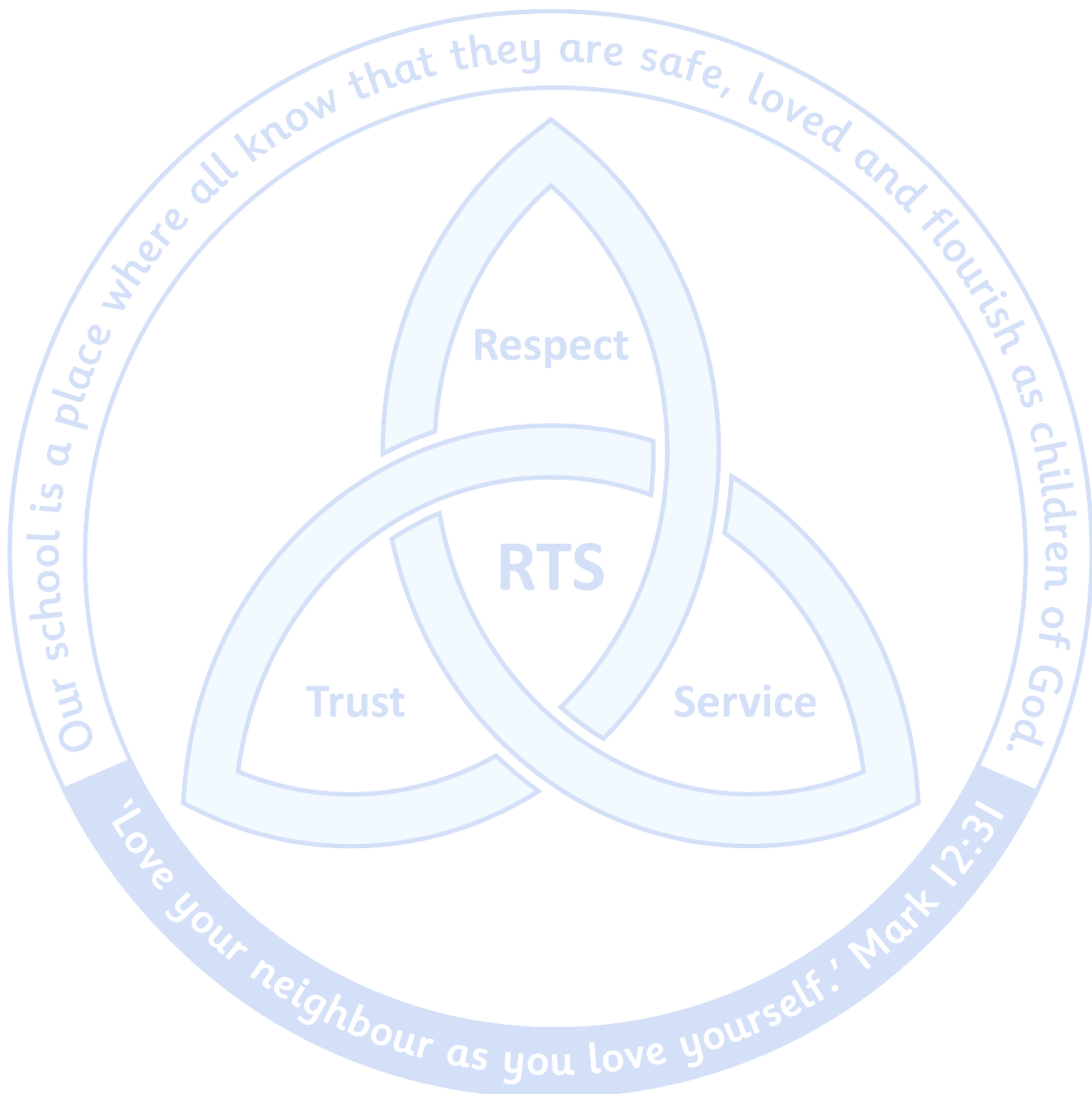
accordance with the provisions of any trust deed relating thereto. The head teacher has a responsibility to ensure that all arrangements for collective worship are secured.

The main legal requirements for collective worship.

- Collective worship in a church school should be carried out in accordance with the school's founding Trust Deed, and in accordance with the school's Ethos Statement, which is to be found in the statutory Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practice of the Church of England.
- The school must provide an act of collective worship for all pupils every day.
- 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 unit.
- A statement must be included in the school brochure that makes it clear parents may withdraw their children from collective worship on religious grounds. A similar statement should appear in the collective worship policy document. The "religious grounds" do not have to be justified and explained by the parents. There is, of course, no guarantee that pupils can be withdrawn from the Christian ethos of the school. Should children be withdrawn from Collective Worship, the school must provide adequate supervision to

ensure their safety. Children should not be withdrawn from collective worship for other purposes, e.g., reading, music lessons; to do so is to break the law!

- Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude, and family backgrounds.
- The daily act of collective worship will normally take place on the school premises. All schools are now able to hold their act of collective worship elsewhere (e.g., the local Parish Church) on special occasions.



## **Parents' Right of Withdrawal**

Parents have the legal right to withdraw children from Worship, and parents are made aware of this right. But the Governors expect that in choosing a Church School, parents will support their children in taking full part in all the religious activities of our school, including our daily act of collective Worship.

## **Teacher's Rights**

Appointed Teachers should be sympathetic to the aims of our Church School and should therefore be willing to fully participate in school Worship.

## **The Aims of Collective Worship**

When planning collective worship in school it is important to consider how the worship is related to the school's Mission Statement or Statement of Purpose. It is frequently stated that, by virtue of their foundation, worship in church schools should be of the highest quality and a central activity in the life of the school. Effective collective worship is one way in which a church school can give expression to its founding Trust Deed. Collective worship aims to:

- provide an opportunity for the children to reflect upon God and to give Him honour.
- help children discover their place in the world.
- highlight and nurture the spiritual dimension through experiencing worship.
- provide children with a vocabulary of worship and an experience of a wide variety of worship forms, including symbols and imagery.
- provide an opportunity to celebrate major, and some minor, Christian festivals.
- heighten awareness of the ultimate questions/realities of life and provide the opportunity to reflect upon these.
- support the search for meaning.
- enable children to appreciate their worth and value to God, and to the community, and to respect the integrity of everyone as a child of God.
- enable pupils to make effective use of silence in opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation, and prayer.
- celebrate gifts, talents, and achievements.
- establish, explore, and reinforce the common Christian values of the school community such as love, peace, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation.
- foster a feeling of community and belonging in the school through a sharing of experiences and feelings.
- develop personal relationships and to encourage social development.
- provide an opportunity to empathise with the needs of others.
- provide an opportunity for children to become acquainted with people from the local and wider community, particularly the local church.
- encourage stewardship, respect, and care for God's creation by a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues.
- foster feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery, and joy.
- give memorable and enjoyable experiences.

- provide an opportunity to bring before God in prayer, personal needs, and the needs of others.
- share with participants some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level and give them the encouragement to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God.

### **Objectives for worship**

Worship should develop each person's understanding of themselves and the world around them, and may be:

- an individual response to God
- an awareness of beauty and goodness
- a sense of awe and wonder
- feelings of sorrow and regret
- praise or thanksgiving
- reflection or prayer
- a celebration about things we care about/special occasions.
- thinking together about things of concern
- sharing thoughts, ideas, or class activities
- sharing experiences of living in and responding to the world around us
- a deepening ability to be sensitive to sincerely held religious beliefs.
- about affirmation
- an opportunity for participation
- about worth.

### **The Anglican Tradition**

We are aware of our Anglican foundation and seek to include the following shared Christian elements in our collective worship.

- using the Bible, either as a source book, or as an inspiration for themes and stories.
- observing the cycle of the Church Year - Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saints Days.
- learning and saying traditional prayers from several sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the Grace, and simple responses.
- singing a wide variety of hymns, from traditional to modern.
- using Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning e.g., cross, crucifix, bread and wine, colours of the church year.
- the use of readings, poetry, prayer, meditation, silence, and reflection.
- using Psalms with simple responses.
- a focus on the Trinity.

The Anglican Church is a worldwide church with a strong commitment to ecumenism, so Church of England schools should also feel free to draw upon appropriate materials from other Christian churches in their collective worship, as well as inviting visitors from other churches to lead collective worship on occasions.

### **Diversity in the school community**

Pupils in our school community, come from a variety of backgrounds reflecting the plural and secular nature of society. The school community may include those who have, or who come from:

- families with commitment to the Christian faith.
- families with a commitment to a faith other than Christianity.
- families with no commitment to any religion.

The governors and head teacher in a voluntary school will consider ways in which acts of collective worship can be provided which reflect the Anglican foundation of the school, but which do not impinge upon the integrity of staff and pupils or the faith communities from which they come.

Acts of collective worship will take account of the family backgrounds of all pupils as part of the school's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Diversity should be seen as enriching the life of a school community. Care will be taken to ensure that in acts of collective worship diversity is embraced in positive and sensitive ways.

### **Diversity and special educational needs**

If Collective Worship is to be fully inclusive it must take account of those with special educational needs. Planning will ensure that all pupils benefit from the experiences offered; for example, an over reliance on oral linguistic presentation may be a barrier to those with learning or hearing difficulties. Planning will also ensure that acts of collective worship are sufficiently engaging for high achieving pupils. For many pupils with special educational needs strategies that enable pupils to respond effectively are beneficial. Such strategies will include the use of:

- singing and instrumental music.
- visual stimuli such as artefacts, pictures, or special objects.
- stories, particularly those which enable pupils to come to terms with personal experiences through their capacity to promote self-reflection and understanding of the thoughts and feelings of others.
- drama, mime, or dramatic reading.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **The role of the Governing Body**

- Governors are aware of their legal responsibilities regarding collective worship and take account of the School Trust Deed and policy and guidelines of the Diocese.

- Governors are familiar with all documentation regarding collective worship issued on their behalf and be actively involved in the process of collective worship development within the school.
- Governors ensure that collective worship is appropriately reviewed as part of the school development plan.
- Governors are aware of the requirement under Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools for the inspection of collective worship.
- It is a statutory requirement that a school prospectus includes details of collective worship provided at the school. These details should inform parents of whether a 'determination' has been granted. The parental right to withdraw their child from collective worship either in whole or in part should be clearly stated together with the arrangements and provision made for those withdrawn.

### **The role of the Head Teacher**

- The Head teachers is aware of his legal responsibilities about collective worship and take account of the policy and guidelines of the Diocese. The Head teacher will ensure that governors and staff are well informed and receive appropriate training to implement the school's policy on collective worship.
- The Head teaches may designate the responsibility for co-ordinating collective worship to a member or members of staff. (A team might include young people, staff, governors, clergy, parents).

**Worship Co-ordinator:     Andrew Symonds**

### **Role of Co-ordinator:**

- To ensure the legal requirements are fulfilled.
- To co-ordinate the provision of a daily act of collective Worship.
- To monitor the perceptions and feelings of children and staff about the provision.
- To regularly evaluate the acts of Worship in the school
- To support staff and other providers.
- To organize and maintain resources for Worship.
- To keep up to date on Worship issues.

Associated Policies: R.E.

Spiritual Development

P.S.H.E.

Behaviour Management

Equal Opportunities



## **POLICY INTO PRACTICE**

### **Worship or Assembly?**

At Richard Taylor Primary School we refer "our act of collective Worship" as a time to celebrate, reflect and share. A time dedicated to thinking about God. If notices must be included, they should not be presented in a way that detracts from the feel/atmosphere of our Worship time.

Acts of Worship should be:

- **Inclusive** and therefore child centred, related to children's experiences, relevant to children's concerns, affirming, and involving the children as active participants. Acts of Worship should foster a sense of community, shared values, identity, and purpose. There should be no need for the right of withdrawal to be exercised. If participants integrity is being respected the "cringe factor" should be avoided!
- **Educational** and therefore learning experiences of real quality. Acts of Worship should be properly prepared, delivered, resourced, and evaluated. There is no place for evangelism or indoctrination in a school act of Worship. School records of our act of Worship will be kept. There is a partnership between the content and conduct of school Worship and the ethos of our school.
- **Spiritual** and therefore a special time where an atmosphere conducive to Worship is created. Attenders should feel relaxed, secure, comfortable, and calm. Spiritual development can be fed through words, music, images, and atmosphere. Opportunities will be created to participate in a variety of spiritual activities and space given for individual reflection and response. Children may find God through meaningful experiences not through "closing their eyes" or being forced to participate in a particular way.
- **Planning for Worship**. Themes will be chosen for each week in the previous half term, to cover Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and Friday Worship times. Wednesday Worship times may also fit in with the theme. This planning will be flexible enough to allow for sudden events, disasters, celebrations, and sadness's and joys in our community to be acknowledged.

Themes for our acts of Collective Worship are agreed during the previous half term. Themes are chosen by the Head teacher in consultation with the RE co-ordinator, Foundation Governor, school council and clergy. The clergy team from St John's Church have developed alongside school themes a series of themes which reflect the nature of the Anglican year or aspects of Anglican Worship e.g., prayer.

### **Organisation**

All children should take part in an act of Worship each day. Opportunities for Worship will be organised as follows:

Time	Grouping	Place	Leader	Teachers attend*
Monday 1.15	Whole School	Hall	Andrew	Yes
Tuesday 1.15	Whole School	Hall	Visitors - St John's Clergy	Yes
Wednesday 1.15	KS1/2 Worship	Hall	Carmel KS1 staff	If invited.
Thursday 1.15	Class led Worship. Whole School Worship Leader led	Hall Hall	Andrew or Class teacher	Optional Optional
Friday 1.15	Whole School	Own classroom Hall	Class teacher Emma	N/A If invited

\*It is hoped that whenever possible staff attend.

On special occasions our Act of Worship may be held off the school premises.

### **Timing**

Worship times in the hall will normally not be more than 20 minutes in length. Length of Worship may be varied to suit accommodation, age of children, setting. Class based Worship will probably be 5-10 minutes.

### **Planning**

What is the theme?

What is your aim?

Will there be a focus for the children?

How will you introduce the idea?

Outline the delivery? Is it relatable to the children's world?

Are hymns or songs appropriate?

Will there be a time for prayer, reflection, directed thoughts?

Which approaches will you use?

How will you conclude your Worship?

What resources do you need?

Do participants need to be prepared?

Is a particular seating arrangement more appropriate than others?

Can you identify the Worship elements/Christian elements?

### **Evaluation**

Leaders will evaluate their acts of Worship. Children and other participants will be included in the evaluation of our school Acts of Worship. Foundation Governors will be invited into school



on a regular basis to share in the Acts of Worship. They will provide all Governors with a reflective evaluation on the quality of the Acts of Worship seen.

### **Children**

Children shouldn't be pressurised to believe. The leader should try to create an occasion for children to respond to the ideas presented on several levels. Worship is one level at which response is possible. Children should have the choice to opt in. The integrity of children and staff should be maintained. Some will have no explicit awareness of religious beliefs and responses; some may have a personal commitment to a particular faith.

### **Skills which can be developed**

listening	sharing	making choices
communicating	respecting others	understanding others
analysing	reflecting	using silence
growing in knowledge and understanding of self		
growing in knowledge and understanding of Worship		

### **Teacher's Role**

Acts of Worship are essentially shared experiences for our school community. Teachers should normally be part of that experience, to help the children get most out of the experience, i.e., teachers will be able to respond to children's later questions or comments. Teacher's attitudes to acts of Worship affect the atmosphere of assembly and the value children attach to the activity (i.e., teachers as participants or as disinterested spectators). Teacher's presence can help support those leading the Act of Worship. Teachers should ensure children leave for the hall/classroom with the right attitude. Worship time starts in the classroom. All teachers should assist in leading acts of Worship.

### **Class based Worship- Thursday Afternoon**

In a small group the children are more able to participate, express their feelings and the needs of age group/individuals are more easily addressed. Leaders are more likely to be able to link Worship with class experiences and should include time for thinking, sharing, listening and stillness. It may be more appropriate to consider difficult concepts, such as death, in the warm supportive atmosphere of the child's own class where individual responses can be addressed.

### **Preparation for the Hall/room**

Physical surroundings are important in creating right atmosphere for school Acts of Worship. The use of focal point/Worship cloths can help in the creation of "a special place" feeling. Children will enter the hall by class and will be able to use calming music and images displayed on the data projector as a focus for quiet reflection. Children organise OHP/Music/door closing when all are assembled.

### **Focal Point**

Could be	flowers	candle	object	picture	slide	phrase
or thought	symbols	sculpture	image on OHP.			

## **Approaches to Worship**

Within the Christian faith, various denominations encompass a rich variety of experiences and practices in relation to Worship. Presentation/expression of Worship may include:

story	drama/mime	candles
prayer	flowers	religious readings
artefacts	video	songs/hymns
music	tape/cd	dance/movement
meditation	art	creative silences
poetry	use of senses	natural materials
sharing food	reflection	children's experiences
dialogue/discussion	celebration of festivals	
aspects of school curriculum/work/activities		

The material to be used should be carefully chosen. Children should be introduced to the means to Worship, without being expected to Worship in a committed way. Different forms of presentation, style, format, and content should be included.

**Elements of Worship** which can be experienced.

reverence	symbol	hope	suffering
concern	wonder	grief	praise
forgiveness	fellowship	silence	fear
duty	ritual	love	responsibility
sense of mystery			

## **Story**

The use of story is a powerful tool and may be perceived at different levels by those involved.

Story can:

- raise awareness.
- set a scene outside the realm of children's experiences.
- increase children's understanding of themselves.
- enlarge their perspectives on the world.
- increase empathy.
- increase knowledge and understanding of nature of faith.
- demonstrate joys and difficulties of lives children not experienced.
- provide insights into lives of others.
- pose moral questions.
- develop language and listening skills.

Stories can be:

historical	dramatic	biblical
values based	biographical	country based.
folk tales	seasonal	fictional
environmental	Christian	anniversary based.
news based	contemporary	musical
allegorical	multicultural	other world faiths

### **Prayer/Reflection/Directed Silence**

Children should be invited to listen or to think about prayer. "Now in a moment of stillness the chance to pray or think for a while". It is important not to exclude anyone, prayer should be an opportunity for reflection, response, or communication. Prayers should be appropriate, may be expressed by the children, may be silent, may be musical.

### **Music**

Adds an extra dimension to Worship and helps to create an appropriate atmosphere. Music will be changed regularly and be illustrated on a hall board. Music helps the children to be involved, children can respond physically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually. There are many books of hymns/songs. We mainly use "Come and Praise 1 and 2"/Mission Praise which include contemporary and traditional Christian hymns suitable for children.

### **Multifaith Worship**

The content could be enriched by using material from different cultural and religious traditions. Our Acts of Worship are inclusive and educational, we would therefore value each of our children whatever religious group and would wish to acknowledge and share their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs. Using multi-faith material will help the children to recognise and respect, reflect on, and respond to the multi-faith society in which we live. WE do not offer other faiths acts of Worship but may share in aspects of other faiths.

The school will invite faith leaders from different cultural and religious traditions to share in our worship and speak to the children about their faith in a way which would breakdown prejudices and misunderstanding which builds walls between communities of different faiths.

### **Resources**

A wide variety of resources are available in the staffroom and in the library.

### **Worship Book**

Children from Year 6 will keep a worship record using photos and reflective notes as a record of the range of worship.

### **Evaluation Sheet**

Visiting Foundation Governors may use some of the following questions when evaluating the quality of the worship showed.

### **Preparation**

- Was the purpose of act of Worship clear to all?
- Was the theme developed effectively?
- Were the artefacts/visual aids etc. of good quality?
- Were the artefacts/visual aids able to be seen?

### **Spiritual Development**

Would this Act of Worship contribute to the spiritual development of those taking part?

Were the opportunities for prayer/reflection/quiet, effective?

### **Integrity**

Was there a sense of respect for the integrity of individuals?

Was there openness or compulsion in invitation taken to pray or sing?

Did the participants feel at ease or feel discomfort?

### **Atmosphere**

Was there a sense of order on entry and leaving?

Was the focus appropriate?

Was the recorded music appropriate?

### **Participation**

Was there opportunity for participation?

Was the delivery appropriate for ages, ability of children?

### **Staff/Visitors**

Were they present?

What part did they play?

### **Close**

Was the timing good?

Did the children/adults gain something?

