



*With faith and nurture we flourish*

St Thomas à Becket CE (Aided) Primary School

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY**

Policy agreed	9.9.19
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Next review date	September 2022
Approved by	Head Teacher and Foundation governors

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

At St Thomas à Becket CEVA Primary School with wisdom and inspiration, rooted in our Christian Values, we nurture all to flourish.

‘Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

## Policy Statement

In St Thomas à Becket CEVA Primary School worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At St Thomas à Becket CEVA Primary School collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*)<sup>1</sup> calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.<sup>2</sup>

## Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils (other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school). This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, "that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", is not relevant. Worship in St Thomas à Becket CEVA Primary School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

<sup>2</sup> "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

The governing body has the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

### **The right of withdrawal**

In St Thomas à Becket CEVA Primary School there may be children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

*(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)*

## **Guiding Principles**

Collective worship in St Thomas à Becket CEVA Primary School aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

## **Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation**

This policy was written based on guidance from the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education in consultation with governors and staff at St Thomas à Becket CEVA Primary School.

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

## **How Collective worship is organised**

Worship is held every day, generally at the start of the day, and lasts approximately twenty minutes. Every week we hold four whole school acts of worship, emphasising the unity of the school, and one class based act of worship led by class teachers and tailored more to the specific needs of different age groups. Our local Church of England vicar leads one of the weekly acts of worship and others are led by the head teacher or other members of staff. Children are also encouraged to lead all or part of the worship or may contribute with readings or prayers.

Whole school worship is held three times a week in Kestrel Classroom, where there is a wooden cross as a focal point and candles are lit to represent the Trinity at the start of each worship. Music is played as children enter and leave the hall to encourage an atmosphere of reflection. Similarly, in Class Worship the teacher designates a focal point with a small wooden cross and candles. The Lord's Prayer is recited regularly, along with our school prayer. A wide range of approaches are used in worship, including drama, discussion, reflection, reading, singing and prayer. Once a week, worship is led in the church by a member of the clergy.

The children also attend four services in Church each year: at Christmas, Harvest Festival, Easter and at the end of the school year, led by the local vicar.

## Themes

We have six core Christian values originating from the Bible which form the basis of our worship and wider school life.

- Friendship
- Respect
- Truth
- Forgiveness
- Thankfulness
- Perseverance

These are taught as the Collective Worship themes over the year. The following values are taught in subsequent years so that each year we revise the core values but with a different emphasis to include the others.

Core value (year 1: 2018 – 19)	Emphasis on core value (year 2: 2019 – 20)	Emphasis on core value (year 3: 2020 – 21)
Friendship	Trust	Community
Respect	Service	Dignity
Truth	Justice	Hope
Forgiveness	Compassion	Peace
Thankfulness	Generosity	Joy
Perseverance	Courage	Wisdom

Each value is explored for a term and worship is planned around this value, as well as being promoted throughout the school. Care is taken to ensure that understanding of each value is rooted in the Bible and the example of Jesus.

We also include significant dates in the Christian year and days of particular importance such as Remembrance Day. We are also able to respond to local, national or world events (or a need from the children), that merit reflection and prayers.

A range of resources are available to all staff, including the Church of England 'Values for Life' packs and 'Roots and Fruits'. At the end of each term the children complete a 'Windows, Mirrors, Doors' reflection sheet. Classes all have a special worship box that includes age appropriate Bibles and prayer books as well as a small wooden cross, candle and other helpful resources and artefacts.

## **The Collective Worship Co-ordinator**

The co-ordinator is responsible for supporting staff in their planning of worship where necessary. The co-ordinator is also responsible for organising and replenishing resources and for monitoring all aspects of worship within the school.

### **Staff development and training**

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The co-ordinator monitors whole school and class acts of worship throughout the year, alongside the head teacher and governors. From time to time parents and pupils are asked for their opinions through a questionnaire, in discussion groups and their views are taken into account in future planning of worship.

### **Disseminating the policy**

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.