



Offwell Church of England VC Primary School

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Our Core Values: Honesty, Loyalty, Caring, Sharing, Forgiveness and Compassion

Reviewed: January 2022

Next review: January 2025

Introduction

At Offwell Church of England VC Primary we believe that Collective Worship plays a very important role in the life of our school. It is an opportunity to celebrate all aspects of school life to support our curriculum and to provide an opportunity for stillness and reflection in what is often a very busy, active day for our children.

There is a daily act of Christian worship at Offwell School which reflects the customs and traditions of the Church of England and hence the Trust Deed by which the school was originally founded.

Rationale

The fundamental principles and ideals of the Christian faith underpin and enhance the spiritual and moral development of our pupils and all that we do in our school life. School worship is an inclusive, invitational, inspiring activity which affirms and celebrates the Christian values, vision and ethos of the school.

At Offwell, collective worship is seen as more than a daily 'awe and wonder' moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about (for those who wish, with) God, both as individuals and together. In this respect, it reflects the Church of England's vision for education which enables pupils to flourish and 'live life in all its fullness' John 10:10.

At Offwell CE Primary we have developed a range of themes and topics through which collective worship takes place. Key themes could be based around the core values of: are caring, sharing, loyalty, honesty, forgiveness and compassion, as well as other key Christian concepts, such as 'Fruits of the Spirits' Galatians chapter 5, verses 22-23. We believe these themes are clearly Christian in nature but are universal in their application. We recognise that in our school we have children from a variety of faith backgrounds and that some children and their families have no faith background at all. Great care is taken in our collective worship to ensure that all children feel valued and special and that their integrity as human beings is consistently upheld. Collective Worship at Offwell is an inclusive, invitational and inspiring activity.

Aims

The central aims of Collective Worship at Offwell C of E Primary are to:

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation; and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.

- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

School worship should reflect and respond to children's own experiences, and give opportunities for reflection, reverence, joy, sorrow, praise, thankfulness, compassion and peace. There is a planned programme (developed by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator) but there is also a flexibility of approach. There should be opportunity for response, involvement and participation. The language and content must be appropriate but also challenging.

The Legal Position

The 1988 Education Reform Act states that collective worship must be on a daily basis for all registered pupils. Furthermore, acts of worship "must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, i.e. reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief." Parents do have the right of withdrawal from Collective Worship. Parents who have any concerns about the provision and practice of our Collective Worship are strongly encouraged to contact the Headteacher, Mrs Legg.

Context of Collective worship

In order to promote children's learning, our acts of worship vary in format. The pattern of collective worship during the course of most weeks (at time of writing) is set out below:

Monday		Class Worship lead by individual teachers to introduce the topic of the week; guidance from CW coordinator -
Tuesday	-	Key stage Worship – led by teacher from each key stage
Wednesday	-	Whole school led by CW Coordinator.
Thursday	-	Theme developed in St Mary's Church, CW coordinator.
Friday	-	Whole school (conclusion of theme involving pupil's participation as appropriate) led by headteacher or visiting vicar followed by weekly awards/celebrations.

Visitors play an important part in the life of our school and regularly contribute to acts of worship (Open the Book – monthly visits). We have developed a range of resources to enhance children's learning. These include stories, music, slides, poems, pictures and posters and DVDs - all of which we hope contribute to a stimulating and thoughtful time for our children.

Other information:

- All staff attend Collective Worship; to be involved with all aspects of the theme, so that it can be developed as appropriate in classes / around school during the week. This also demonstrates the importance of Collective Worship. Although staff do have a right of withdrawal.
- Grace is said every lunchtime and every school day finishes with a prayer
- Children assess and respond to collective worship, on occasions during the school year
- Governors, parents and community have an opportunity to evaluate collective worship (by completing a questionnaire) at appropriate times during the year – see school self- evaluating and monitoring plan
- Our Ethos Group monitors all assessments (by children, staff, Governors, parents & others) and meets termly to discuss planning of Collective Worship
- Each class has a Collective Worship box – all resources in these were purchased by funds raised by the community (candle, Bible etc)
- Special Collective Worship display in main building – for whole school CW
- There is a Collective Worship budget for provision of resources /INSET as identified in action plan (found in School Development Plan)
- The Benefice Group has purchased Bibles through a charity.

The unique nature of collective worship

Assemblies are notably different in their content to collective worship which acknowledges a time to gather as a faith community, to pray, celebrate, sing, learn and develop as a school family. Assemblies may be held at other times to consider communication of events and messages which are not linked to the Christian character of the school. The term 'assembly' should not be used to describe the daily worship act which should be referred to as 'collective worship' or 'worship'. Collective worship is not corporate worship (which assumes a group of people with shared beliefs) but a gathering of people who recognise the differing experiences, background and commitment of a group of people gathered in a school community. In some collective worship sessions, there may be a focus on singing or celebrating however, all collective worship will include time for prayer and reflection distinct to our Christian vision and values.

Conclusion

Collective Worship plays a very important role in our school as we seek to develop our children in the skills of reflection and empathy, to encourage and celebrate their talents and to promote their spiritual and moral development.

January 2022

Headteacher: Mrs L Legg

Collective Worship Co-ordinator: Mr C Thomas

Chair of Governors: Ian Wallace

Foundation Governor is governor with responsibility for Collective Worship