

**SINGLETON C.E. PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

**POLICY FOR
COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Reviewed: Summer 2011

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INTRODUCTION AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

It is a legal requirement that all registered pupils attending maintained schools should take part in daily collective worship, although parents have a right to ask that a pupil should be wholly, or partly, excused from attending religious worship at school.

As a voluntary school we have foundation governors who are appointed 'for the purpose of securing as far as is practicable ... that the school is conducted in accordance with the provisions of any trust deed relating' to the school.

THE TRUST DEED

This is a conveyance document, setting up the school.

The majority of Church schools were in union with the National Society and the Terms of Union still apply. They have been revised over the years to reflect changes in the law and now say:

'The daily act of collective worship required by law in the school shall be consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England'

The Education Reform Act, 1988 and the Education Act, 1993 stated that collective worship organised by a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School is to be wholly Christian.

WHEN AND WHERE WORSHIP TAKES PLACE

The act of worship need not take place with the whole school together, but may take place in class groups or other grouping of pupils. The 1998 Education Act allows schools, on special occasions, to hold their daily act of worship elsewhere than in school.

The whole school takes part in collective worship every day, usually in the school hall. The Headteacher, class teachers and the Rector lead the school in collective worship each day, according to a rota.

One day a week a class assembly takes place.

The local Church is used as the venue for the celebration of major Christian festivals. The church holds a monthly family celebration service on the 4th Sunday of the month to which all children are invited.

Parents are invited to join us in celebrating specific acts of worship during the school year, i.e. Harvest, Easter and Christmas.

THE PARENTS' RIGHT TO WITHDRAW THEIR CHILDREN FROM WORSHIP

Singleton is a Church of England School. The pupils, in the main, come from a practising or non-practising Christian background and the school has strong links with the Church, but children of any religious belief are welcomed and integrated into all aspects of the school. Any request to withdraw a child from attending collective worship, as is the parents' right, will be discussed with the Headteacher.

SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO WORSHIP

Introducing children to Christian worship and providing for their involvement

Providing opportunities for spiritual development

Providing an atmosphere of trust and free response from all

Celebrating and developing the school's values and ethos

Enabling adults and children to worship together

Five main principles can be seen at the heart of the school worship, and consideration is given to the understanding and aims within each one.

1. Worship should aim to be inclusive: *good worship engages everyone present in his/her own way.*
2. Worship should aim to be linked to pupil learning: *good worship shows appropriate links with the curriculum, RE policy and class work.*
3. Worship should aim to be educational: *good worship develops children's ideas about God.*
4. Worship should aim to be stimulating and reflective: *good worship increases children's awareness of God through varied experiences.*
5. Worship should aim to be central in school life: *good worship gathers together and offers to God, the ethos, life and work of the school.*

SETTING THE SCENE

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR SCHOOL WORSHIP is very important and this will aim to include, at various times:

be welcoming

be peaceful and calm

be vibrant and alive

enable all to express and share thoughts and feelings - if they so choose;

allow for a secure and comfortable knowledge that each person will be valued and respected.

The atmosphere for collective worship has its roots in the school's ethos.

THE PRESENCE OF ADULTS participating with children in worship gives a positive message and underlines its importance in the life of the school. This enables teachers who are present to ensure the content is sensitively followed up.

THE SPACE FOR WORSHIP gives clear messages about the special nature of the occasion. A focal point - a cross, a bowl of flowers, a candle or other artefact can be used. We have an assembly board and a cross in the hall.

STILLNESS AND QUIET are important parts of worship, and children are expected to enter quietly while music is playing. The children need to develop an understanding that this time together is complementary to the activities of the classroom, and to appreciate the reflective nature of the worship. A period of silence during worship enables those present to make their own conversation with God.

WORSHIP AND ASSEMBLY HAVE different purposes and are distinct from one another. We have a clear change in style for the various assembly items, e.g. notices to be given out, or the school reminded of behaviour expectations.

THE ANGLICAN TRADITION

The following areas are explored in worship during the child's time at school:

- using the Bible as a source of inspiration and learning;
- reflecting on Christian symbols and their use in worship;
- observing the cycle of the Church's year and the holy days;
- using the parish church and its priest as resources;
- making a collection of prayers and hymns, thus creating a framework for worship in school;
- providing opportunities to discover the value of meditation and silence within worship;
- recognising our strong commitment to ecumenism (e.g. inviting members of other Christian denominations to lead worship);

- welcoming all pupils of whatever faith and celebrating shared values and beliefs.

THE BIBLE IN SCHOOL WORSHIP

For Christians the use of the Bible is central to worship.

Examples of the ways in which the Bible is used are:

- individual verses chosen and carefully explained to the children
- particular bible characters and stories selected to exemplify a specific focus
- verses committed to memory
- selected readings linked to the Church Calendar or to a theme

The inclusion of a Bible passage in worship can be included for a variety of reasons:

- to enrich worship
- to enhance the theme
- to give context to the worship
- e.g. a passage from the Psalms used to illustrate the purpose of worship
- to develop an awareness of how Christians use the Bible

At different points in school worship the use of a Bible passage has a variety of potential values:

- at the beginning, to set context and give meaning and/or focus to the worship
- in the middle, to expand the focus of worship or to change the pace or the atmosphere and refocus the children's minds
- at the end, to encapsulate and draw together the threads of worship.

THE EUCHARIST IN SINGLETON C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

The majority of our pupils, families and staff do not attend Church regularly.

Bearing this in mind and the very young age range of our pupils, we have agreed, as a staff, that it is inappropriate to include celebrations of The Eucharist in our **whole school** worship.

However, exploration of the important elements within The Eucharist is included in RE lessons for KS2 pupils.

PRAYERS

How we encourage children to explore the experience of prayer is of vital importance as we can influence their perception of faith well into their adult life. It is hoped that through prayer children will develop a sense of trust and recognition that Christians put their lives, and those for whom they intercede, in the hands of God.

Prayer is a natural part of school life and contributes to the whole Community. Children are helped to develop an understanding of prayer by a flexible approach and by recognising that different people pray in different ways.

Prayer is not confined to the acts of worship:-

Grace is said every lunchtime and also prayers are said at the end of every school day. Each class has a collection of prayers which includes prayers composed by the children themselves.

Prayer can often be simple expressions of petition and thanks; it should also include such elements as repentance and the simple sharing of interests and enjoyment. Children can be encouraged to look beyond the recitation of familiar prayers by the use of different methods of prayer:

Prayer and silence; prayer of listening; prayer alone and the use of a time of quiet;

Postures for prayer - hands together or on laps.

There are artefacts in and around the school that act as aids to reflection.

During whole school and small groups worship, the lighting of a candle or the provision of another focal point often enhances prayer and reflection.

SET PRAYERS

During their time in school, children become familiar with a number of the great prayers and appropriate local prayers, such as **the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester**. The traditional format of **the Lord's Prayer** is used. We also have a School Prayer which is usually used to begin whole school worship.

HYMNS AND MUSIC

Music is an important part of the school worship time and can help to create an atmosphere that will lead children to a deeper sense of worship.

The music provided encompasses many forms: listening, performing, singing.

This aspect of worship is planned to complement and contribute appropriately to the cycle of themes.

Various areas are considered when selecting the hymns or songs:

- singing during worship allows children to become involved rather than passive observers of the worship;
- the repertoire of hymns/songs is carefully considered to include a variety from all traditions of Christian worship;
- the music is selected to match the age range of the children and their vocal abilities;
- special consideration is given to the use of choruses or hymns with refrains for Key Stage 1 children and other non-readers;
- regular practice and learning of hymns/songs is built into the school timetable in order to prepare for quality worship;
- an understanding and enjoyment of the music adds to the success of the worship.

A regularly updated list of known hymns is kept to aid the planning process and the copyright arrangements observed.

Hymn practice on its own does not constitute a daily act of worship but time put aside to include a reading, reflection or a prayer to complement the hymns being practised makes this acceptable as fulfilling the daily obligation.

Key Stage 2 pupils have a regular hymn practice, and the whole school practice hymns when needed for special services or events.

Music to be listened to is carefully considered to include a variety from all traditions and to enhance the atmosphere of the worship.

We aim to:-

- build up a repertoire and lists of suitable music;
- use both recorded and live music;
- use visiting musicians to add to the variety of musical expressions and enliven worship;
- use pupils to play entrance and exit music as well as to accompany the singing of hymns.

DRAMA

Drama can provide a rich and meaningful dimension to worship. It is often used to retell and interpret passages from the Bible and other stories, but it can also be a very powerful way to convey feelings, attitudes, information and symbols.

The children involved have an opportunity to express their feelings in a creative and imaginative way. This experience deepens and develops their spiritual understanding. It allows pupils to investigate and reflect upon their own beliefs and values.

For those children watching it provides a focus and inclusive feel to the worship which can develop insight, empathy, inspiration and a search for meaning. Drama provides active learning situations for all present, and allows each one to be totally engaged, both in mind and emotion. The preparation will vary from a spontaneous short practice with a group of children to the more rehearsed worship. The following are considered when drama is used in worship:

- guard that the drama is clearly part of the worship and does not become a 'performance' or 'play';
- ensure that the drama is possible and suitable for the place of worship;
- make sure the words and actions are clear and visible so that those watching are able to follow the message.

Children who take part in the drama should feel a sense of well being and happy to be involved. Teachers should prevent any child feeling threatened or having a loss of self-confidence while taking part in the worship.

Good drama will stimulate the children and they may well need time to talk about the experience afterwards. Teachers may need to follow up worship times with classroom discussion.

At Singleton School, drama is used on special occasions such as Harvest Festival, Mothering Sunday, etc.

PLANNING FOR SCHOOL WORSHIP

The Headteacher undertakes planning for school worship with the help of the Rector and in liaison with other schools in the parishes of the valley.

Plans include:-

- the programme of worship themes which ensures a balanced and informed approach
- the special occasions or services the school wishes to mark
- the use of the Church Calendar
- the leadership of the worship times
- the venues and booking arrangements for special services

Included in these plans will be:-

- the possible hymns and other specific music ideas to allow for the planning of the necessary practices
- visitors to be invited to take part in school worship
- the involvement of children in the various acts of worship

MONITORING

The monitoring of the planning and provision of worship should be done on a regular basis. The foundation governors have a vital part to play in this area, both as a support and as a visitor sharing in school worship.

The following are areas for monitoring:

- the planning file
- the themes
- the balance of leaders of worship
- the use of stimuli to enhance the atmosphere and encourage spiritual development
- the encouragement children are given to worship
- the centrality of worship and how it encompasses other areas of school life
- the community involvement
- the music and hymns used
- the finances available to develop the worship
- the resources

The school worship will be inspected regularly by an accredited Section 48 inspector when it receives an OFSTED inspection. This will assist the school in monitoring.

RESOURCES

Resources of suitable materials can be found in the staff room and R.E. topic boxes to assist with preparation of collective worship.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed according to the timescales of policy reviews in the School Improvement Plan.