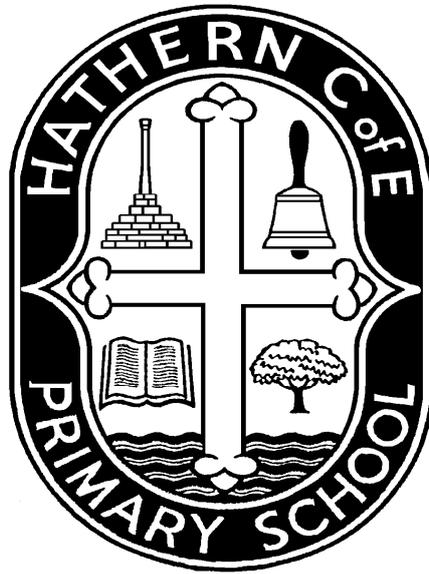


Hathern Church of England
Primary School



Collective Worship
Policy

At Hathern Church of England Primary School, we believe in
'Learning and Caring Together'

This Policy is carried out within the context and spirit of the school's Mission Statement. It supports and reinforces the aims of Hathern Church of England School, valuing all children equally.

*Our school's Mission Statement is **Learning and Caring Together**.*

The ethos of the school, encompassing all that we stand for, is reflected in and expressed through Collective Worship; it derives from the Christian tradition and seeks to activate our beliefs and values which are set out, clearly, in the School Prospectus.

Collective Worship, within a Christian context, plays an important part in the life of our school. It is an oasis in the school day when children meet together with members of staff in a calm and peaceful atmosphere and where all present are given the opportunity to reflect and participate. It is regarded as 'quality' time and represents something special or separate from ordinary school routine.

"Praise, prayer, silence, a sense of community, common ideal, the power of the spoken word, ritual, and an awareness of important experiences all contribute to worship."

DEFINITIONS

Worship: can be defined as paying homage to (revering) that which is of worth ("Worth-ship.") Religious Worship is the acknowledgement of 'worth' which is attributable to a supreme being. Worth can also be registered in other people and in values and attitudes.

School Assembly: is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself.

Corporate Worship: is a gathering of a body ('corpus') of believers and pre-supposes a particular religious commitment.

Collective Worship: is a gathering of a 'collection' of people of diverse, religious, agnostic and non-religious backgrounds and does not pre-suppose any particular religious commitment.

NB: We note that Collective Worship and Assembly are not one and the same thing. They are, in essence, different from each other, but in practice they often overlap.

RATIONALE – LEGAL

- Collective Worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school which encourages the promotion of education in the principles of the established church. This requires worship to be consistent with the principles and practices of the Church of England and will, therefore, be wholly Christian in character.
- The 1988 Education Reform Act states that Collective Worship should be part of a broad and balanced curriculum, which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and society.
- All maintained schools – including church schools – must provide a daily act of Collective Worship for all registered pupils.

The Right of Withdrawal

Teachers' Rights:

- *In community schools* teachers cannot be required to attend or lead collective worship, but do not have a right to withdraw from the non-worship part of assembly (a reasonable requirement because of the need to supervise pupils)
 - teachers cannot be required to teach RE unless their contract shows they have been explicitly employed to teach it;
 - teachers cannot be disadvantaged in their employment because of their religious opinions or the fact that they do not attend religious worship;
 - Under the *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document*, teachers are required to undertake their professional duties under the reasonable direction of the head teacher.
- *In voluntary controlled and foundation schools with a religious character* up to one fifth of their teaching staff can be "reserved teachers". These are teachers who are chosen for their competence to provide RE in accordance with the school's religious ethos. All other staff at these schools will have the same safeguards as those in community schools (as stated above).

Parents have the right to have their children excused from worship in any state-funded school. However, many decide not to, fearing that their child may feel different from classmates, and may miss important elements of assembly if the worship element is not kept clearly apart from secular spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, and from notices.

Those who take school assemblies should keep the two elements distinct and separate, and allow time for pupils (and teachers) to leave the room when worship takes place.

These exemptions are covered by Section 71 of the *School Standards and Framework Act 1998*.

RATIONALE – RELIGIOUS/EDUCATIONAL

Collective Worship:-

- gives children the opportunity to enter into experiences which lie at the heart of religion. These experiences help them to learn about religious worship and provide a framework for later understanding.
- fosters a reverential attitude to God.
- encourages pupils to consider fundamental questions about the purpose of being and about moral and ethical stances.
- provides an opportunity, for those who can use it, to participate in religious worship.
- allows us to learn and celebrate values we hold to be important and share them with parents and the wider community.
- brings children together, enabling them to experience the security of belonging to a community with an identity of its own.

- is the source of much interesting and thought provoking knowledge.
- offers pleasurable expression through literature, art, music and drama.
- makes an important, though not exclusive, contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

“Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.” (DfEE – Circular 1/94)

The following principles guide our approach to Collective Worship at Hathern Church of England School.

- Collective Worship should have a sense of occasion.
- Collective Worship should provide experiences within which pupils’ spiritual development may flourish.
- Collective Worship should be a means of expressing the ethos and values of the school.
- Collective Worship should be educational and should contribute to the Religious Education of all pupils.
- Collective Worship should be shaped to the needs of the school, (time, place, content, style etc.)
- We should provide a varied pattern of worship to broaden pupils’ experience of its different forms.
- Collective Worship should recognise that the school includes children from different religious and non-religious backgrounds.
- During Collective Worship some will be worshipping and some will be experiencing something approaching worship; others will be finding out what it is like to worship by being with those who are.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Collective Worship are to:-

- affirm the Christian faith and the Christian status of Jesus as Son of God.
- introduce pupils to the practice of religious worship through music, art, story, poetry, movement and prayer.
- create a warm, caring and respectful atmosphere in assemblies, conducive to worship; including the manner of entry and exit.
- encourage, in children, a thoughtful and reflective attitude.
- help pupils experience a sense of awe, wonder, reverence and inner stillness.
- enable pupils to use silence for reflection and contemplation.
- raise pupil’s curiosity about the ultimate mysteries of life.
- enable pupils to learn about and consider in depth Christian teaching, Christian festivals and biblical material.
- help pupils appreciate that we are ‘stewards’ of God’s world.
- enable pupils to reflect upon their own beliefs in relation to those of others.

- enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- guide children towards the spiritual and religious options open to them.
- help children distinguish between right and wrong.
- affirm pupils' personal worth and responsibility.
- celebrate individual and collective achievements.
- develop a sense of community within the school.
- celebrate religious festivals and special occasions with specified worship.

MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Foundation of the school is honoured and that the worship policy is firmly based upon the intentions set down in the Trust Deed.
- Ensuring that the Collective Worship Policy is put into practice and monitored by the appropriate Governor(s)
- Engaging an appropriate inspector to carry out the Section 48 Inspection of a church school alongside the OFSTED Inspection.

The Collective Worship Co-coordinator has responsibility for managing the worship on a day to day basis, ensuring that all legal requirements are complied with. The co-coordinator also keeps in touch with national developments in school worship and acts in an advisory capacity, supporting colleagues.

Monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship is an on-going process and arrangements for its monitoring and evaluation are set out in the Annual Curriculum Action Plan (ACAP) for Collective Worship

ORGANISATION

- Acts of Collective Worship take place daily
- All teachers are involved in Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship times are planned in consultation with the whole staff.
- The content of each act of Collective Worship is at the discretion of the teacher and is supported by the structured planning which reflects the diocesan guidelines.
- It can include music, a song of praise, a story or talk, a reading from the Bible, a period of reflection, a prayer or the Lord's Prayer.
- Outside speakers who comply with our Collective Worship Policy will be welcomed.
- The school will Endeavour to hold an act of Collective Worship in church wherever possible such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP

“There are times when worship will be quiet, contemplative and serene and others when laughter, music and dance will be the appropriate form of expression.”

Atmosphere is all-important in creating the right foundation for Collective Worship. Quiet, orderly behaviour and respectful attitudes on entering, leaving and throughout the assembly are expected. Staff enhance the atmosphere by their presence and participation. A focal point of a table with a Bible and a candle help to set the scene.

Music is played at the beginning and end of the assembly. One piece is selected each week. Pupils’ attention may be drawn to it and a simple explanation given.

Stories and talks are carefully chosen to fulfill the objectives of Collective Worship. Stories of a religious or secular nature may be used whilst personal anecdote from pupils, teachers and visitors is effective in expressing that which is important in our own lives. Particular emphasis is laid upon helping children to understand themselves better, to develop empathy and to face up to moral issues.

Songs are chosen from a wide variety of traditional and modern hymns and choruses. One is used at each assembly and there is sometimes percussion accompaniment provided by the children. Hymns and songs create the opportunity for children to express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to put into words; and they provide a real source of pleasure.

Prayer and reflection are the most personal part of an act of worship. Collective Worship in school should provide opportunities for children to be taken to the threshold of prayer, and to cross it if they wish, in a way that respects the integrity of all present. Participation in prayer can never be imposed but we stress the need for stillness, reflection and respect for others. Silence, written prayers, impromptu prayers, The Lord’s Prayer and children’s prayers are all used as part of the Prayer process. A large candle is lit and provides a focus for pupils’ thoughts. Reflection and thinking time are given some direction by the leader in order to concentrate pupils’ response.

Scripture sentences may be quoted from the Bible and, where appropriate, from sacred books and writings of other world faiths. Longer passages may be used as readings.

Presentation sets the tone within the act of worship. In keeping with the reverent atmosphere, use is also made of visual aids, artefacts, drama and demonstration.

CONTENT

Planning for Collective Worship is the responsibility of the Co-coordinator for Collective Worship and the Head, the plans and schedules are made available to the Governing Body. Suggestions and requests from staff are welcomed, whilst input and guidance from the incumbent on the selection of themes is valued.

Themes.

- Guidance on selecting themes is available through the Co-coordinator and Collective Worship resources.
- Themes are closely related to the school community and areas to which staff have a personal commitment.
- Themes may be related to the school CARE code.

Links with R.E. and the Curriculum are incorporated if possible and if relevant. Common themes may link R.E. and Collective Worship; the apt choice of story can link worship with current topic work e.g. 'Caring' = 'Florence Nightingale' = 'Victorians'. Assemblies can be followed up in the classroom by further discussion and emphasis throughout the day. There is often an overlap between Collective Worship and Personal and Social Education, and Citizenship.

RESOURCES

These are located in our Resources cupboard and in the Head Teacher's Office.

RECORDS AND ASSESSMENT

Themes for Collective Worship are agreed at the beginning of each term.

The Collective Worship Coordinator has the responsibility of providing Collective Worship Plans/guidance material each week to the Class Teachers.

At least 3 weeks worth of Collective Worship is evaluated each term, and the Coordinator provides the necessary proformas for this process to occur. Individual teachers fill in the evaluation forms with the pupils.

Assessment of Collective Worship is carried out jointly by the Head Teacher and the Co-coordinator and may be through:-

- checking that practice matches aims and objectives.
- observation of children's attentiveness and level of interest.
- classroom feedback from pupils, both written and verbal.
- comments from parents. Visitors and governors.
- the extent of the influence upon pupils' attitude and behavior though out the school day.
- Self evaluation/comment by the teacher, on the daily planning sheet.

Staff meetings are used for discussion and the update of information as and when necessary.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All pupils have equal opportunity to take part in Collective Worship and to benefit from the experience. The school prospectus informs parents of their right to withdraw pupils from Collective Worship. Such pupils are fully supervised in another part of the school.

MULTICULTURALISM

A variety of multicultural material is available throughout the school. Stories are shared and festivals celebrated and tolerance and understanding of other religions is encouraged.

SPECIAL ASSEMBLIES AND VISITORS

Within a Christian context, special assemblies are held for Harvest, Christmas, Easter and End of the School Year. Parents, Governors and visitors are especially welcome to attend. Occasionally outside speakers, such as representatives from charitable organizations and the local Church will lead these assemblies.

ROLE OF CO-ORDINATOR

- To write the school's policy for Collective Worship in consultation with the head teacher and foundation governors.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of and use the policy document.
- To review the policy on a regular basis.
- To plan an overall balanced programme of worship for the year.
- To draw up assembly rotas.
- To involve colleagues, pupils and visitors in worship.
- To advise on planning, ideas and resources.
- To be responsible for ordering, maintaining and displaying resources.
- To administer the budget for Collective Worship.
- To ensure that Collective Worship maintains a high profile in the School Development Plan.
- To monitor and evaluate, with others, Collective Worship in all its forms.
- To report to the head teacher and governors.
- To arrange INSET for staff.
- To keep up to date with recent publications, attend Diocesan courses and disseminate information and feedback to staff.
- To liaise with the incumbent, governing body and Diocesan officers on matters relating to Collective Worship.