

Gainford C of E Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

Collective Worship Leader: Mrs. K. Whitaker

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Introduction

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 provides opportunities to nurture wisdom, knowledge and skills, and to inspire hope and aspiration. Through worship, we seek to promote dignity and respect while strengthening our sense of community and deepening understanding of how we can live well together.

In our school, our Christian vision underpins and shapes all that we do. Collective Worship reflects this vision by bringing the whole school community together in reflection, prayer and celebration, supporting the spiritual development of pupils and adults alike.

Our school's vision is '**Rooted in love, flowing together, flourishing for life**' (Psalm 1:3)

This is lived out through our distinctive Christian values, drawn up by our school community.

These values are:

- Love– We show love to God, to others and to ourselves.
- Hope– We believe in ourselves and look forward to the future.
- Respect -We treat everyone with respect and value differences.

Policy Statement

In Gainford C of E 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.

At Gainford, 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 calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

Church of England Guidance

Collective Worship policy at Gainford C of E Primary School draws on guidance from the Church of England. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that Collective Worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

Guiding Principles

Collective Worship in Gainford C of E 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.

How Collective Worship is Organised

Planning

- The Headteacher is responsible for the planning of the whole school Collective Worship timetable. This is then shared with the local clergy and Children, Youth and Families Missioner and all staff in school. The plan makes explicit links between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school.
- Collective Worship reflects the cycle of the Church year and the liturgical colours of the seasons of the Church year.
- Pupils are supported by the Children, Youth and Families Missioner and the Worship Leader to plan and lead acts of worship.

- The structure of our Collective Worship is as follows:
 - Gather
 - Engage
 - Reflect
 - Respond

- A range and variety of materials are used, including websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle.

Anglican Tradition

As a Church of England Primary School, we include the following Christian elements of Collective Worship:

- Using the Bible, either as a source book, or as an inspiration for themes and stories
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year -Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saints Days etc.
- Learning and saying traditional prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and simple responses.
- Singing a wide variety of hymns, from traditional to modern.
- Experiencing 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, silence and reflection.
- Using Psalms with simple responses.

Organisation

We hold a daily act of Collective Worship in our school (usually at 10.30am) either as a whole school or in classes. At the time of worship, a candle will be lit as a clear visual focus for the children to reflect upon. Lunchtime prayers are said in classes before dismissal for lunch. Home time prayers are observed in all classes prior to dismissal at the end of the school day.

The structure of Collective Worship varies but usually includes a song, questions, times of silence and prayer. Children are actively encouraged to develop their spiritual growth through prayer, stillness and reflection.

Special Occasions

Harvest Festival

- Whole School along with parents/families.
- Date decided by the Headteacher and Vicar of St Mary's Church.
- Held at St Mary's Church.
- Order of Service prepared by Headteacher and Worship Leader.

Remembrance Service

- Held at St Mary's Church, Gainford.
- Headteacher / Pupils are invited to join the local community and lay the wreath on behalf of the school during the service.

Carol Service

- Whole School, along with parents/families.
- Takes place in the final week of the Autumn term.
- Held in St Mary's Church.
- Order of Service prepared by Headteacher and Worship Leader.

Nativity

- Early Years and Key Stage 1, along with parents/families.
- Held in school along with parents/families.
- Takes place one morning and one afternoon in the final two weeks of the Autumn term.

Easter Service

- Whole School along with parents/families
- Takes place in the final week of the Spring term
- Held at St Mary's Church
- Order of Service prepared by Headteacher and Worship Leader

Leavers

- Year 6 organised by the Class Teacher.
- Takes place in the final week of the Summer term
- Held in school or church along with parents/families.
- Order of Service prepared by Headteacher and Class teacher.
- Pupils are also invited in June to the Y6 Durham Leavers Service at Durham Cathedral which is co-ordinated by Durham Children's Ministry Team.

Legal Requirements

The law requires the Headteacher and Academy Council (Governing Body) of every school to provide a daily act of Collective Worship. Collective Worship is regarded as an essential part of the development of the whole child and as such is recognised by staff and Academy Councillors as an important part of daily learning. Worship in Gainford C of E Primary School is distinctly Christian and reflects Anglican traditions.

The Academy Council have 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

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

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.

Teachers have the right to withdraw from Collective Worship, as a Controlled School, however it is expected that teachers will take part in worship.

Disseminating the policy

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

Monitoring and Review/Evaluation

The acts of worship will be evaluated by the Headteacher, Collective Worship leader, RE Leader, Academy Councillors, staff and children on a regular basis.

Worship will be monitored to ensure that:

- Agreed and planned content is being covered
- A variety of approaches and methodology are used
- High standards and quality are maintained
- Collective Worship has been led by a variety of leaders
- Evaluation of parent and pupils' reactions