



Collective worship policy

GEORGE STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL
"Where Learning Comes Alive"

Approved by
Head Teacher: Angela Hughes

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT GEORGE STREET SCHOOL

BACKGROUND TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT OUR SCHOOL

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”.

George Street Primary School is a multicultural and inclusive school with children from all faiths and children of no faith. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

We would ask any parent considering withdrawing their child from daily worship to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education. Any children who are withdrawn will be supervised by an adult, however this may not be their own teacher or TA. Staff may also withdraw from worship.

Collective Worship at George Street Primary is first and foremost for the educational and spiritual benefit of its pupils. It is a shared activity, which allows a variety of responses. It is an inclusive activity, which builds with the broad dimensions of the curriculum. The creation of atmosphere is assisted by appropriate music, visual foci and symbols. Opportunity for reflection and responses, prayer, story, drama and art are also used to appeal to the pupils’ imagination.

SOME DEFINITIONS

Collective worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring “collective” not “corporate” worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

Worship of a broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character”, and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

VALUES AND AIMS

We believe at George Street Primary that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in everyday situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus

- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship at George Street Primary develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

OBJECTIVES

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....;
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

PLANNING

In George Street Primary we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework to develop children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Assemblies will take place in the hall as a whole or using an online method such as a google classroom. KS1 & KS2 join together in assemblies each day of the week with children from the EYFS encouraged to take part in some collective worship during the summer term.

Day	KS1	KS2
Monday	Whole School Assembly led by Head Teacher/Visitor	
Tuesday	Whole School Assembly SLT/Andrew masters	
Wednesday	Whole school Assembly led by Class Teachers	
Thursday	Whole School Singing Assembly with Music Curriculum Leader	
Friday	Whole School Celebration Assembly - Parents are invited to these assemblies	

The headteacher usually leads the whole school worship on a Monday and a Friday, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. The Headteacher is responsible for identifying a focus for each assembly to develop children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness and staff and children take an active role in the planning process.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship. All visitors are issued with this policy and, unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the SMSC focus for the assembly. We have people who visit us regularly to lead worship including making links with the local Church, St Mary's, and religious representatives from the local community.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

At this school we evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- A sense of occasion
- Good order
- Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

Songs/music

Songs/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. We are careful with our songs to recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We have changed the words of some songs to make them more inclusive. We select our songs/music carefully, often linking our singing to the half termly SEAL focus or current religious/secular celebrations.

Every Thursday we have a singing practice. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs or the genre of music and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song. During our assemblies we take time to carefully consider the words of the songs and make this into a worship experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

Our school values

At George Street Primary School, we have broadly linked our school values; ready, respect, safe to Christian beliefs and the British values. Every Friday, in celebration assembly, we celebrate children who have shown these values; giving examples of how they have been ready, respectful and safe.

Prayer

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to our prayers which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well-known Christian/ Hindu/ Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions. The children are encouraged to reflect. It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

British Values

Assemblies are also linked to the British values and this is put on the termly assembly rota. As a school we recognise the importance of teaching our children the British values, therefore each month the children out and explore a particular value. This is through assemblies, discussions and PSHE lessons. We have designed our curriculum so children have many opportunities to learn and practise the British values. Our aim is to ensure that the children at George Street have an appreciation of life in modern Britain