

St Matthew's High Brooms CE Primary School

Powder Mill Lane
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Collective Worship Policy

Headteacher: Mrs Carolyn Pollard
Chair of Governors: Mrs Karen Stevenson

Ratified: Nov 23
Next Review: Nov 26

Policy written by: Carolyn Pollard & Nicola Deacon (based on The Diocese of Rochester model policy)

Fulfilling God-given potential

*Distinctive Christian values-
Honesty, Kindness, Respect, Responsibility*

Fulfilling God-given potential

Our vision

At St Matthew's we believe that each of us is made in the image of God. God loves each and every one of us. We value every member of our community, and support them to do their best. "See how very much our father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!" (1 John 3 v1, New Living Translation)

We welcome everyone to our school community, whether of Christian faith, other faith or of no faith at all. We recognise that each person has unique gifts and seek to enable them to fulfil their God-given potential.

Education is a relational activity and since relationships are crucial to Christianity it is highly appropriate that we, at St Matthew's High Brooms CE Primary School, see our vision in terms of an accompanied journey of growth and discovery that is ongoing and life-giving.

The journey involves both a long-term view and also determined small steps to get there. Community is at the heart of the school. Success will look different for each person and involves every aspect of our humanity. Everyone is flourishing.

We believe that St Matthew's school is a beacon for the community and a place where people are loved and valued. We encourage each and every member of the school community to embrace their God-given potential and to develop as life-long learners.

Our School Values

Our 4 school values are responsibility, kindness, honesty and respect. We make sure that every child, regardless of their age, learns what each value means and how they can demonstrate that value at home, at school and in the wider world.

Introduction

As a Church of England school, collective worship is the beating heart of our school life. It brings and gives life to all we do. Collective worship is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather together as a school family.

Our Collective Worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of responsibility, kindness, honesty and respect and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in our community.

Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, reflecting in particular the Anglican tradition of St Matthew's Church and recognises and follows the Church's liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

Our aspiration is that each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.
- **Invitational** – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship will provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions.

Collective Worship gives pupils and school staff the opportunity to:

- Gather together to share sacred moments of joy, challenge, grief and love.
- Explore the school's distinctive Christian vision and values in action
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still, pray and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Explore Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar

In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship:

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection, whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
- b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection.
- c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of Christian beliefs.
- d) Enables pupils and adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school's provision for collective worship.

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship through invitational and inclusive language:

- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost
- Saying prayers from different sources, including the Lord's Prayer
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship

Implementation

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors in consultation with the collective worship leader.

This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using Rochester Diocesan Collective Worship planning

<https://www.rdbe.org.uk/page/?title=Year+by+Year+Planning+for+Collective+Worship&pid=47>, which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

In a typical week we meet in the school hall:

Monday – Whole School Worship– led by Headteacher

Tuesday – KS Choral Worship – led by teachers

Wednesday – KS worships – led by KS leaders

Thursday – KS worships – led by Deputy Head

Friday – Celebration worship – led by teachers

Chris Wicks, the vicar of St Matt’s Church visits the school regularly to lead worship and uses the Rochester Diocese plans to fit with the school collective worship planning.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. These include: music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT.

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – we welcome the community, with music, and the lighting of a candle
‘Peace be with you’
‘And also with you’
- **Engage** – we share, for example, *(a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message)*
- **Respond** – pupils, for example, *(discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing)*
- **Send** – we share, for example, *(the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle)*

We close with

‘Go in Peace’

‘We go in Peace’

‘Go in Joy’

‘We go in Joy’

‘Go in Love’

‘We go in Love- Amen’

Expectations of pupils

In St Matthew’s CE Primary school, there is an expectation that all pupils will be involved within worship on a regular basis. This may be opportunities planned ahead of time (*eg Christmas*) or unplanned through questioning, asking for volunteers or simply responding to moments of spontaneity.

Pupils reflect on worship and record these thoughts in a class worship book.

Leading Lights are chosen by the class as representatives who contribute to worship.

Developing worship

Parents, pupils and adults in St Matthew's CE Primary school are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a Church School context.

Therefore, all those leading worship, including clergy, should have access to regular Diocesan led training.

The leader for collective worship will:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements.
- Ensure that collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.
- Will attend diocesan training
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with the SLT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of collective worship across the school.
- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning and joining worship.
- Join those who are leading worship to provide supportive feedback on how worship could be developed.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources, to help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited to lead collective worship.
- Meet with and encourage pupil leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

Visitors leading worship

Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies: <https://st-matthews-school.org/our-school/policies>

This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of the collective worship leader and senior leaders to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and our school's vision. They will be supported and monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation process of worship.

Self-assessment and Inspection

Our school evaluates acts of collective worship and the impact they have on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop.

The impact of collective worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).

Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time in our school day where we gather as a school family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, collective worship is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity. We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship, so would welcome the opportunity to discuss this decision with them. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw children from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.