

ELLEL ST JOHN'S COFE PRIMARY SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY



'Loving, living and learning in the light of Christ.'

Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. ~ Matthew 5:16

At Ellel St John's, children thrive socially and emotionally in a stimulating environment that nurtures every child with learning at the heart of all we do. We are committed to providing an excellent education where children achieve their full potential and our academic standards are consistently very high. Through our strong Christian ethos and pastoral care, we help our children develop into caring, confident, responsible and reliable young people.

Ellel Statement of Intent: We believe each child is known, unique, special and made in the image of God. Our children will discover a love of learning for life through an inspiring curriculum full of opportunity. Our school family is a welcoming, friendly community that builds compassionate and resilient children ready to take their place in the world.

Ellel St. John's provides an engaging and memorable place-based curriculum, relevant to each individual child in their locality. Every child is entitled to a diverse curriculum which builds on and develops their life experiences, ensuring that they are offered equality of opportunity.

Our curriculum ensures that it develops the whole child: their spirituality; their social and emotional mental health and well-being; their physical health; their academic success and their creativity and innovation. These aspects contribute to our children becoming local, national and global citizens for the future.

All the policies of the school embody the key words in our mission statement: **love, live and learn** and, as such, we believe we are here to:

Love. "I give you a new commandment. Love each other just as much as I have loved you." We **love** because God first loved us and we seek to demonstrate that love to all members of our community. This also links to our Bible verse ***Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. ~ Matthew 5:16*** – every member of our school community is unique and special in God's eyes and as such, should be valued, included and encouraged to be the best that they can be, shining their light in all that they do.

Live well together. We serve the community of our village and our families from further afield who are part of our community. We treat each other with empathy and justice and listen to each other in order to **live** and flourish together.

Learn. We strive to establish and foster a love of learning, aiming for the highest educational standards. As a Church School it is our shared belief that education is far more than learning facts or achieving a standard. To educate effectively, we develop the whole child (spiritually, morally, socially, culturally, mentally, physically and emotionally) and as such, Worship, RE, the outdoor and all elements of the Arts are vital strands of our educational offer.

Introduction

This policy has been prepared by the governors and headteacher with the assistance of the Incumbent. Diocesan guidelines for collective worship have been referred to.

At Ellel St John's Church of England Primary school, collective worship is in conformity with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England as laid down in the Trust Deeds.

Collective Worship contributes to our Mission Statement and the aims and ethos of the school and therefore to the Christian Education we provide. It also contributes to the celebration and exploration of the values of our school.

Collective Worship is at the heart of our school life and the Governors see it as an essential part of all our pupils' education. The worship and prayer life of the school is not limited to the legally required daily acts of worship. Regular opportunities will be taken to use prayer at other times and in a range of places around our school.

A varied range of approaches to worship will be used whilst remaining true to our Trust Deeds. As well as drawing on our denominational heritage, we also occasionally expect to draw on the rich tapestry of practices in the world-wide Christian Church.

We expect that pupils will be introduced to the key beliefs and aspects of the Christian faith and helped to explore them. These would include:

- The nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- The nature of human beings as children of God;
- Jesus as the Son of God;
- The central values of forgiveness, selfless love, redemption, goodness, compassion and charity;
- The central place of the Bible as a source of knowledge about God and Jesus and as a source of inspiration and guidance;
- The importance of prayer;
- The central symbols of Christianity;

- The cycle of the Church year.

Each half term our worship follows the theme of our Gospel Values and the liturgical year.

We see worship as an expression of a relationship with God and a desire to serve and love others.

We are very fortunate in having close links with St John's Parish Church. There are regular occasions when the Church worships in the school and the school worships in the Church.

Worship in the school, will take into account the levels of development of the pupils.

The provision of Collective Worship conforms to Diocesan policy.

Children are helped to understand the meaning of Christian worship and we hope that believers will be able to share in it and that others of no faith are helped to reflect at a deeper level.

Statement of broad aims

Collective worship should:

Explore those questions which are important to everyone

- Explore the teachings of the Bible, prayer and value of truth and love
- Explore what worship is and what it means to have faith
- Explore what it means to put God at the heart of the school life

Encounter a faith which is alive

- Encounter the awe and wonder of God and His creation
- Encounter creative silence and up lifting praise
- Encounter God through the sacrament

Experience the joy of celebrating God's love

- Enjoy worship and being in church and part of the church family
- Participate in leading acts of worship
- Experience being part of the school family
- Experience and understand the central place of the Eucharist / Communion in the life of the Church.

Further Aims

- To contribute to the Mission Statement and aims of the school.
- To create an environment in which children and adults have the opportunity to worship and to develop spiritually.
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith.
- To develop links with the local Church and introduce pupils to the worship heritage of the Church of England.
- To worship God through Jesus.
- To contribute to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff.
- To celebrate and build up the life of the school in the presence of God.
- To explore the beliefs of others.

Organisation and Delivery

At Ellel, we follow a programme of worship based on Christian Values. At times, there is a set pattern to the chosen value depending on the time of year but sometimes, the value is chosen to reflect what is going on locally or in the wider world.

The focus for Worship often reflects the liturgical calendar through themes such as: Lent, Advent, Easter and an appropriate value supports this such as: perseverance, hope, service.

The weekly structure of worship is as follows:

Monday - Whole school Worship led by the Headteacher

Tuesday – Class Worship led by class teachers

Wednesday - Hymn Practice – whole school

Thursday – Whole school Worship led on a rota basis by class teachers

Friday - Whole school Worship led by the Vicar

The theme for each half term is developed in all the worships that take place.

Pupils will be involved in leading worship in their classes and when we meet together as a whole school in a range of ways. The Worship Council will be involved in the planning of worship and will lead one whole-school worship per half term. We welcome a range of visitors to lead worship and these are added to the rota as appropriate (e.g. NISCU/ Sportsreach/representatives from Blackburn Diocese/visitors from Lancaster University/visitors from a range of charities etc)

The approximate length of collective worship will be 25 minutes.

Though worship is not designated as curriculum time under current DfE regulations, it is a major aspect of the whole curriculum provided by the school. Worship is a vehicle for exploring aspects of the National Curriculum and Religious Education and frequently involves teaching and learning activities such as discussion and question and answer. Pupils may be read to or instructed or they may be asked to listen to readings or to think about and respond to a stimulus such as a work of art.

Worship is also concerned with the celebration of the curriculum, with pupils displaying or recounting details of what they have learnt. Frequently pupils are involved in leading worship or performing through dance, drama or music.

When any such activities occur, they may be counted as teaching time even though they take place within worship. It is appropriate that, in a Church school, worship and learning is seen as a seamless whole even though, for the purposes of recording teaching time, we distinguish between the two."

Parents, family and governors may be invited to attend worship when we join together in church and for special assemblies / acts of worship in school. The size of the school hall is, unfortunately, a limiting factor in inviting them more often.

A worshipful atmosphere is created and sustained by:

- Playing appropriate music for the children to come and leave the hall to (a selection of classics / worship songs / world music will be used
- Times of reflections and silence will be built in to the worship
- A lit candle accompanied by our school liturgy indicates the start of worship with the Grace and/or a prayer indicating the end of worship time
- A worship table with a Bible, candle and other objects is always a focal point in the hall for worship
- Modern technologies are used to present the gospel to the children in a variety of ways and provide clear stimuli for reflection and prayer
- Displays are placed on the worship table to aid worship
- The Christian colours of the Church Year are used on the altar cloths

Worship will be distinguished from notices and other 'assembly' activities by the lighting and blowing out of the candle, saying our liturgy together and saying the Grace and/or praying.

Worship will take place in Church at least on the following occasions:

- Harvest Festival
- Christingle Services
- Christmas
- Easter
- Leavers Service

Shining Light Assemblies

Each half term, a Shining Light Assembly is held to recognise and celebrate children's achievements. We use this time to recognise, celebrate and praise achievement in school activities and sports and out of school clubs and events. Shining Light certificates are awarded for good work, helpfulness, kindness etc.

School Eucharist

Each half term, we join together in school as a school community for a Eucharist service which is led by the Vicar and one of our classes (Year 1 – Year 6). As well as everyone being offered the opportunity to share in communion, this service also links to the value for the half term or the liturgical calendar.

Class Assemblies

Each class plan and lead by one Class Assembly each school year where they have the opportunity to share the good work they have been doing. Parents and family members are invited to attend this assembly.

Content and Approaches

Worship will include:

- Music
- Singing
- Drama
- Questioning
- Discussion
- Story
- Passages of scripture
- Reflection
- Visual images
- Video clips
- Puppetry
- Accounts of personal experience
- Silence

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

A daily act of collective worship is held for all children regardless of their background of culture or religion. Every effort is made by the school to involve all children unless withdrawn by their parents in accordance with the law.

Special theme days

In order to deepen the children's experiences of prayer we offer special experiences of a Prayer Spaces or Spirituality Day event. These events include volunteers from the congregation of St John's,

Clergy, parents of children in school and other people of faith known to us. They take place at the school, both inside and outside, and also at the Church.

Consultation, Management, Recording and Review

The Collective Worship co-ordinator will ensure:

- there is a half-termly plan in place for the leading of worship
- the links with the incumbent / church are maintained
- visitors are asked to lead worship when appropriate
- there is opportunity for the children to engage in different styles of worship and that the content is varied
- children take an active part in the worship life of the school
- resources are kept up-to-date

Staff development will be provided for the whole staff by the worship coordinator in staff meetings / INSET. The worship co-ordinator (and other staff) will attend any appropriate Diocesan worship training.

Records of acts of worship will be maintained by the Headteachers, either electronically or in a file. Evidence can also be found on our website and Facebook page.

Monitoring and evaluating provision

- The worship coordinator monitors and evaluates the quality and content of Collective Worship. At the end of each half term the half termly plan is evaluated and any areas that need to be considered are used in the planning of the new half termly plan.
- Parent questionnaires are sent home at least annually and these include questions related to the worship life of the school
- Children are asked their opinions about worship and these are taken into account in future planning.
- The headteacher reports to the governing body on a termly basis in relation to school worship and church school distinctiveness. The policy is reviewed annually and updated as required.

The legal requirements for Collective Worship in our school

Legal Basis:

Collective Worship in Church Schools is governed by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as well as by the Trust Deed of the School. The Collective Worship provided by the school is in accordance with the Trust Deed

Daily Worship:

Daily Collective Worship has to be provided for every pupil. This worship may take place in various groupings such as the whole school, separate Key Stage groups, year groups or house groups or in classes or tutor groups, but not in faith groups. Worship may take place at any time in the school day.

Worship in Church:

Worship should normally take place on the school premises, but may take place in Church on special occasions.

Parental Rights of Withdrawal

Parents may withdraw their children from Collective Worship and this provision and its limitations are indicated in the school Brochure. (The form of words given in the Diocesan / District Syllabus is repeated here:

The Worship and Religious Education provided by the school is in accordance with the Church of England / Methodist Foundation. This Foundation is also reflected in the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England / Methodist ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate pupils from the religious life of the school.

Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship

It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Headteacher, in consultation with the Governors, and possibly with advice from the Diocese or District. However, if the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, then formal procedures come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese.

Conclusion

At Ellel St John's CE Primary School collective worship is highly valued and every effort is made to ensure that all children and staff take an active part in a high quality daily act of collective worship that helps them to flourish spiritually. Worship may contain many elements but at this school we seek to specifically ensure that the act of collective worship is an enjoyable learning experience as well as a spiritual encounter.

**Jo FitzGerald – Worship Coordinator Headteacher
Spring 2025**