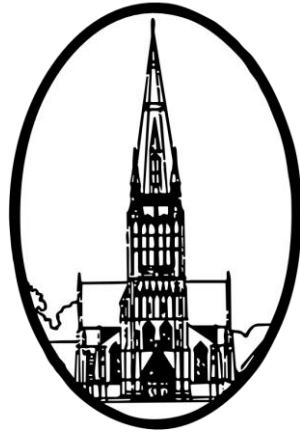


St. Mary's C. of E. Primary School

'Through God's love, we strive to be the best we can be.'



Collective Worship Policy

Revised: October 2016

Review date: October 2019

Mission Statement and Values

“Through God’s love, we strive to be the best we can be.”

St Mary’s is an inspiring and creative school which fosters a love of learning as well as developing skills for life. We strive to enhance every child’s moral, spiritual, intellectual, social and physical well-being and celebrate every child’s gifts.

As a faith school we hold **love** at the centre of all we do. This and the following values reflect the ethos of our school.

Respect – ourselves, each other and our environment

Courage – to stand up for what is right, overcome our fears and embrace new challenges

Truth – in the choices we make and our dealings with family, friends, school and community

Hope – that inspires us to look forward in confidence to a better life for all

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 As a Church School we understand worship to be a special act or occasion, the purpose of which is to show reverence to God. We believe that at the heart of God there is relationship and community (the Trinity). It is this understanding which provides the inspiration for our school values and vision; believing that we are a community in which ‘through God’s love we strive to be the best we can be.’

2. Aims and purpose

- 2.1 Assemblies make a major contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils, which we believe to be the prime goal of Christian education.
- 2.2 Assemblies provide a means of developing an appreciation of living that goes beyond the material world. Through the use of silence, reflection, contemplation, meditation, prayer, song, symbols and imagery, a sense of mystery is encouraged and an appreciation of the spiritual side of life is fostered.
- 2.3 Assemblies enable children to become familiar with religious language and the tradition of the Anglican Church, recognising that children are likely to attend, at the very least, at some point in their lives, a funeral, a wedding or a baptism. They also provide the opportunity for children to gain an awareness of worship practices within faiths other than their own.
- 2.4 Assemblies are a shared experience. Through the holistic experience they offer, children and adults are given an opportunity to draw closer to God through Christ.
- 2.5 Assemblies offer opportunities for co-operation, understanding and the fostering of strong relationships between the school, the local community and the global community. They encourage a concern for others by providing a forum for exploring shared values and a common ethos.

- 2.6 Assemblies contribute towards the children's moral development. They help to equip them in understanding more about themselves and how to cope with transitional times in their lives.

3. Organisation of Assemblies

- 3.1 An assembly is held daily. It can be a whole-school assembly, a separate foundation, KSI and KS2 assembly or a class assembly.
- 3.2 The school has close links with St Mary's church. The clergy lead weekly assemblies at school and lead occasional, special services for the whole school in church. On specific festival days children from the school participate in the main Sunday service at St Mary's church e.g. choir singing at Harvest Festival.
- 3.3 Assemblies are conducted in a respectful way. Children are told that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. They are encouraged to experience it as a special time, to behave in an appropriate way and are invited to participate through prayer, reflection, interaction and song. An appropriate atmosphere is created through the use of music, a candle, signs and symbols to focus the attention of the children. To ensure the correct delivery of assemblies we have devised a checklist – see Appendix A
- 3.4 Assemblies include a period of quiet reflection, prayer, singing and entry/exit music. See Appendix A.
- 3.5 The Assembly themes are defined by the traditions of the Christian faith, especially the major Christian festivals. Key festivals belonging to other faiths are also celebrated. Sometimes the theme is related to a particular topic being taught as part of the school curriculum or is linked to a local, national or global event. In most assemblies the theme is linked back to the teachings of Jesus and the Christian faith.
- 3.6 Assemblies are planned well in advance of the day they take place.
- 3.7 Assemblies are led by:
- Class teachers to whole school– Themes relating to world faiths or pastoral care
 - Head teacher / Deputy – Celebration of achievement and reflection
 - Individual classes to the whole school – show and tell
 - Class teacher to class– Themes relating to Christian values, pastoral care or Bible stories
 - Clergy – teachings of Jesus and local, national or global events
 - Music teacher – Singing linked to events in the Christian calendar
- 3.8 We believe in celebrating the successes of all our children. Therefore, our assemblies include opportunities to reflect on the achievements and learning of the children. Class assemblies encourage children to participate by showing their work to the other children, and by sharing issues that they have discussed and learnt about in their classes. There is a rota to ensure all classes are able to share their good work. Celebration assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued, and all achievements are recognised.
- 3.9 Parents are welcome to attend all our assemblies. We encourage their attendance, as this promotes community spirit, and shows the school and home working together in support of the children's achievements.

4. Right of withdrawal

- 4.1 We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship following a consultation with the Headteacher. If a child is excused from religious worship, the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during

assembly. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

- 4.2 The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from assemblies.

5. Monitoring and review

- 5.1 Monitoring the policy and practice of assemblies is the role of the Headteacher and foundation governors from St Mary's church. The governors concerned liaise with the Headteacher every term and report to the governing body.
Other contributors to the monitoring process include: pupil feedback, LDBS advisors and the SIAMs report.

Appendix A

Checklist for Assemblies

This also applies to class assemblies – modify as appropriate.

- Make sure you are well prepared – do not make it appear you are reading the information/story for the first time.
- Ensure there is music to come into and insist that everyone enters silently and the music is being appreciated.
- Use visual aids and artefacts when introducing concepts or issues as the children may have difficulty imagining them as they may not have experienced them first hand.
- Reflection: this is the most important part of assembly as it signifies the start of the worship element
 - Light the candle and draw children's attention to it.
 - Turn out lights for effect.
 - Ask the children to sit respectfully.
 - Tell them what you want them to reflect upon – draw out the key theme, moral, etc.
 - Pause for effect periodically throughout this period
 - Finish by watching the candle for 15 – 20 seconds in complete silence
 - Complete the reflection by requesting
"Now let's get ready to pray".

Prayer may be made in a variety of ways:

- 1) Children may be invited to put their hands together and close their eyes or
- 2) Bow their head in an act of respect or
- 3) Focus on the lit candle with hands open on their lap

Always bear in mind the range of religions represented in the school.

- 4) Say a prayer or get a child to say or read a prayer
 - the Lord's prayer may also be said if you wish
 - whole school sing a song (try to make it relevant to the theme of the assembly)
 - Blow out the candle
- Dismiss the children to music or singing