Welwyn St Mary's Primary School

Believe and Achieve

Collective Worship Policy

Frequency of review (unless there are changes to legislation)	Every 4 years
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Welwyn St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Our Vision – Believe and Achieve: 'With God, all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26)

At Welwyn St Mary's our school vision is 'Believe and Achieve' taken from St Matthew's gospel (Chapter 19, Verse 26 – 'With God, all things are possible'). By this, we aspire that all members of our community will flourish and be inspired to be the best that we can be by believing in ourselves, each other and in the teachings of Jesus. Believing in ourselves will give us the confidence to succeed. Believing in each other will empower others to do their best and by following the teaching of Jesus shows that His teaching drives all aspects of school life.

This vision is embodied and rooted in the Bible story of ***'The Miracle Catch of Fish'*** *(Luke 5: 4-11)*. It exemplifies our aspirations for our pupils and the importance our school places on believing in oneself (even when things may appear impossible or when solutions seem exhausted), in believing in each other and in putting one's trust and faith in God to give us the spiritual support, encouragement and determination to continue trying our very best to achieve, what may first appear unreachable, aspirational goals.

Introduction

Daily collective worship provides an important part in the life of the school, bringing together children and staff in an act of worship which is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Opportunities are given for children to engage, think and reflect. The children are made aware of the importance of major world faiths to enable them to take their place in the wider world in which we live. The acts of Collective Worship link to one of our school's Christian values and play an important role in promoting the ethos of the school and its vision.

Collective worship is a special time at Welwyn St Mary's and is rooted in the Christian and Anglican foundation of the school. We use the Bible as a source for inspiration and learning and offer pupils a chance to become familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and verses of scripture. Our acts of collective worship are opportunities for us to share and celebrate our beliefs and values, and occasions which reflect and nurture the ethos of our school.

They also provide an opportunity for personal reflection and spirituality and for a response to matters of significance, value and concern. At Welwyn St Mary's, collective worship is:

- **Inclusive**: everyone can take part and feel welcomed, regardless of faith or belief.
- **Invitational**: pupils are invited, not compelled, to engage in prayer, reflection or worship.
- **Inspiring**: worship should inspire, challenge, and encourage pupils to reflect on life's big questions and values.

Acts of collective worship are held daily at Welwyn St Mary's and services at least termly at St Mary's Church. We also recognise and value major world faiths, world viewpoints and religious traditions and we wish to encourage spiritual growth in every child by enabling pupils to learn about, understand and respect a range of beliefs and practices. We also enjoy building links with the wider community by inviting visitors to our worship.

The importance we attach to worship as a church school is explained to parents during initial school tours, open mornings and during the admissions phase, and is recognised in Categories 6 and 7 of our determined admissions arrangements. We hope that parents and children will understand that our school worship is an inclusive occasion when each individual's integrity and viewpoints are respected. It should be noted, however, that parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship, if they wish.

We have a member of school staff, who has recently been ordained as a Priest, and is fully involved in embedding the Christian vision in our school. They support Collective Worship in a number of ways, including support in planning and delivering cohesive and well-thought through collective worship short-, medium- and long-term plans, and by offering God's blessing and prayers to close worship and in leading a pupil-focused Worship Group.

Aims

At Welwyn St Mary's School, we aim to:

- foster a sense of fellowship by bringing pupils together to celebrate the shared Christian values of the school.
- foster a concern for the needs of other people.
- provide an opportunity for celebration and thanksgiving and sharing.
- develop an awareness of the presence of God and an understanding of the Christian and major world faiths.
- foster a sense of curiosity about spirituality and awe and wonder at the beauty, mystery and power of the world.
- encourage reflection on the fundamental questions of life and on the varied dimensions of human experience.
- provide opportunities to praise God through singing and listening to music.
- experience times of prayer, silence and reflection.
- provide a time for sharing successes in personal, school and community life.

Policy Statement

As a Church school, worship is an affirmation and celebration of our Christian ethos where children have the opportunity to learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. Worship in our school is not simply a statutory duty, it is an important, foundational part of school life – a time to gather together, reaffirm our vision and associated Christian values.

Our acts of collective worship reflect the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and recognise and follow the Christian 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.

The aims and purpose of Collective Worship as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs
- To encourage participation and response
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes

The Legal Requirements

We seek to comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
- The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.

- All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for worship such as the whole school, year groups, tutor groups, classes, or other combinations.
- Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
- The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but all schools are able to hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.
- Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England school rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Headteacher.

Principles of collective worship

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality (*cf. Church of England's Collective Worship Guidance: Inclusive Invitational Inspiring*). 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.

Organisation

Acts of collective worship are planned according to a termly and weekly theme and follow a set format throughout the week:

Day	Act of Worship	Led By	Theme
Monday	Collective Worship – Christian Value	Headteacher/Worship Group/Pupil-led School Council/Green Group/Diversity Group	Linked to our half-termly Christian value
Tuesday	Clergy-led Worship	Reverend David Munchin Reverend Nicky Jackson	Linked to our half-termly Christian value
Wednesday	Key Stage/House/Class-based Worship	SLT/House Captains/Class-based worship led by teachers	Half-termly Christian value or current events
Thursday	Singing Worship	Collective Worship Lead	Hymns linked to our half-termly Christian value/season
Friday	Celebrations Assembly Worship	Headteacher and all teachers	Celebration of achievements linked to our vision aims and values

We observe the cycle of the Anglican year, including celebrations of the major Christian festivals. We use aspects of Anglican liturgy to create a framework for worship and use the model of GERS (Gather, Engage, Respond and Send) to structure our worship:

Gathering: We gather together and greet each other as we come to play a part in this community and prepare to meet God.

Engaging: We engage with the big things and the little things in life and encounter Jesus and the stories of the Bible. We listen for God's message for us and consider how we will share God's message.

Responding: We respond to what we have heard and seen together and as individuals. There may be a practical response or opportunity for reflection.

Sending: After special words of blessing, we are then sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the world, dismissed with God's blessing.

At Welwyn St Mary's, we aim to provide a worship space which is attractive and well prepared with appropriate thought having been given to colour, space, seating, ambience and music.

We foster links with St Mary's Church, involving the Vicar of St Mary's Church in leading weekly collective worship in school and providing coherence between worship in church and school, visiting at least termly, including Harvest Festival, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' Eucharist as part of the Christian calendar.

We recognise that different members of our school community spiritually reflect in different ways: music, story, silence, prayer, drama and other approaches are incorporated within a varied collective worship offer.

The Christian values each half term provide a focus for planning and a context for recognising and reflecting on important issues. This theme may link with school events, religious festivals or special days. Inspirational quotes, based on the Christian values, are displayed around school and referred to in worship. The Chaplain's blessing also reflects the theme of the week/half term.

Music contributes positively and in various ways to our collective worship. It helps to create an appropriate atmosphere and, whether played or sung, enables participants to express feelings that are not easily put into words. A hymn or song is included in most acts of worship. Pupils enter and leave quietly as a chosen piece of weekly listening music is played. This music is chosen, if possible, to reflect the current Christian value, a range of Christian denominations or major faith backgrounds or none, and the music is introduced by the specialist music teacher, and discussed with the pupils, to enhance the listening experience.

We invite parents to our year group led assemblies to see their children share what they have been learning about. Governors are also welcome to attend acts of worship at any time.

We encourage and facilitate a range of pupil-led worship opportunities, from giving pupils a role in setting up for worship and organising the worship table, to leading liturgical responses to open and close worship. We also offer children the opportunity to lead worship as part of worship group and promote personal reflection and spiritual development through prayer group. In Years 5 and 6, we appoint worship leaders, from a range of faith backgrounds and none, who arrange the worship table, considering church seasonal colours; who help to prepare for church services, setting up church, handing out orders of service, guiding people to their seats and often supporting with Bible readings in church; they plan, deliver and lead entirely pupil-led worship, linked to our current Christian value, and act as role models to others, who may wish to lead a future act of worship; they also take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating collective worship and feedback to the Headteacher on elements they enjoy and areas for improvement.

We use Friday's worship, Celebration Assembly, as an opportunity to share children's work and to celebrate their successes in an assembly. These then culminate in an act of Collective Worship linked to the week's Christian value and play an important role in promoting the ethos of the school and its vision.
Values badges, awards and our prestigious '**Miracle Catch**' award are presented each week.

The rector also leads a school Eucharist during the summer term in which recently confirmed pupils, staff and governors are invited to take communion.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

We recognise that although SMSC development is fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of Collective Worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area also. For example, children are encouraged to reflect on and celebrate the deeper meanings of life, consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness, appreciate the contributions of others and respond to their needs, value their own culture and the cultures of others.

Reflection and the Practice Opportunities of Prayer

Opportunities are provided for individual reflection. These include closing the eyes to help concentration, lighting a candle to focus attention or using natural objects to think about the beauty of the world. This is often facilitated by a purposeful silence. These moments of quietness enable pupils to approach the threshold of worship through their own thoughts and meditation and the children may be invited to pray quietly to themselves. Often, a prayer may be said, and pupils are invited to make the words of the prayer their own by saying Amen or other words of response such as in an intercession. It is recognised that there may be a variety of responses to prayer. Children often write their own prayers routinely.

Pupils are invited to say a prayer before lunchtime and at the end of the day (see below). Circle Time, prayer tables, songs and class prayers offer a variety of opportunities for children and the adults in those classes to learn about, explore and reflect on the Christian faith, their own faith and also their own praises and thanksgivings, needs, hurts and concerns.

A proportion of children and adults are also members of other Christian communities and we seek to reflect those communities in the worship that we offer in school. Children know that many adults in school pray themselves and are able to discuss the place of prayer and worship in their lives together.

Pupils will learn about the Lord's Prayer and its importance in Christian belief and practice.

In addition we have a range of school prayers (but classes often choose from a greater range or use prayers written by the pupils themselves):

Welwyn St Mary's School Prayer (developed by the pupils)

Dear God,
Thank you for our caring school.
Help us to understand **fairness** in every way and to grow in love and **compassion**.
Teach us to **trust** in you and to be **truthful**.
Help us to be **generous** and **forgiving friends**,
And give us the **courage** and **perseverance** to **believe and achieve**.
Surround St Mary's with your blessings and hold us safely in your loving hands.
Amen.

Lunchtime Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for the food we eat,
And for the friends we share it with.
Amen.

End of the Day Prayer

God, our Father, I come to say,
Thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family,
And all the friends you give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night,
And in the morning send your light.
Amen.

Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths

The Anglican Communion sees itself as part of a global church and promotes ecumenism. At Welwyn St Mary's Primary School, we work to promote links with our local church and others, and Christian organisations, and welcome clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of collective worship. We recognise that while some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, many worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which the integrity of those present is not compromised, where everyone finds something positive for themselves and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

Rights and Responsibilities

As established by the 1944 Act and reinforced through this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, having chosen to send their child to Welwyn St Mary's, it is hoped that they will support the Christian ethos of the school and that no one will exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements will be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act.

Management and Coordination

The task of organising and managing collective worship at Welwyn St Mary's Primary School is the responsibility of the Collective Worship Lead. The Lead is responsible for:

- the school policy statement on collective worship
- the structure of worship in the school
- planning
- resources
- visitors to worship
- monitoring and recording, evaluating and reviewing, involving pupils, staff and governors
- involving children actively in our worship (for example: Worship Group, Worship Leaders, individual classes, Year 6 monitors, prayer writing and reading).

Our Collective Worship file contains a record of worship themes of whole-school worship throughout the year. The Collective Worship Lead and DSL liaise with any visitors to worship to ensure they link to our Christian values, actively promote our British values and do not present any extremist points of view or attempt to radicalise members of the school community.

The Headteacher meets regularly with the Collective Worship Lead, the Rector, our School Chaplain and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers to plan and evaluate worship.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We monitor and evaluate the impact of our Collective Worship and keep records of our acts of worship, also gathering pupil and staff voice, so as to gain their views on its effectiveness. We utilise Worship Leader pupil monitoring, SLT monitoring and Governor visits to Collective Worship to gain a holistic view on the strengths and areas for development of our worship offer. We use clear criteria to assess the effectiveness and impact of worship in school, and this supports both the monitoring of and the development of those who plan and lead worship. The Headteacher, Collective Worship Lead, foundation governors, pupil Worship Leaders and others will routinely observe and monitor acts of Collective Worship in line with these criteria. The Headteacher, Collective Worship Lead and foundation governors regularly report back to the whole Governing Body and to the Curriculum & Standards committee.

Inclusion

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs, when appropriate.

Implementation of Policy

Together with the Headteacher, the Collective Worship Lead is responsible for this policy, which will be monitored regularly and formally reviewed every four years. Collective Worship is planned, alongside involvement with the RE Subject Leader, with support from the Diocese and the school's chaplain and vicar. Its implementation is the responsibility of all those planning and leading Collective Worship.

Links to other policies and documents

- WSM vision statement
- Spirituality at WSM
- RE Policy
- Prevent Policy