

Christ Church CE School Worship Policy



June 2015

Christ Church
CE Primary School
Regents Park
NW1 4BD

Christ Church Primary School

Worship Policy

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Christ Church C of E Primary School
Worship Policy

Mission Statement

The Christian Faith is at the heart of our school community. At Christ Church we care for each other and learn together.

Christ Church is a small, caring school which is committed to a broad, balanced curriculum and to a continual raising of standards. We aim to contribute to the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical needs of every individual.

We are a Church of England school, with a strong commitment to the teaching of Christianity whilst supporting a multi-faith approach to the curriculum. We recognise, value and celebrate the rich cultural diversity that exists in our school.

The Christian ethos of the school is reflected in our positive, disciplined and calm atmosphere. We believe that effective learning takes place when children work in a purposeful and stimulating environment that supports a wide range of learning styles. Mutual respect between adults and children promotes excellent behaviour and well developed social skills. With this approach we seek to achieve high academic standards.

We aim to cater for each individual, taking particular account of any specific needs or abilities. We endeavour to ensure that all our children fulfil their potential and, within this context, we emphasise health and safety, enjoyment and achievement and the beginnings of responsibility for themselves and others. These skills will be carried forward to the next phase of education and throughout life.

The whole school community is committed to a collective responsibility for the implementation of the values inherent in this statement.

Our School Aims - Every Child Matters

The Ethos of the School

The school aims to provide a positive, disciplined, purposeful environment, within a Christian context. We aim to teach children to be caring, to exhibit good behaviour and appropriate social skills and to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others.

The Values of the School

The School aims to value every child and to contribute to the Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Mental and Physical well being of our whole school community. We value the diversity of our community and we aim to promote the health and safety of everyone.

The Standards of the School

The School aims to teach a balanced Curriculum and to ensure that each child fulfils his or her potential. We aim to provide teaching and learning of a high standard. We believe that this is achieved when pupils are highly motivated, enjoy coming to school, and are appropriately challenged.

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Date of policy: June 2015

Review date: June 2017

School aims of worship

"The Church school offers a distinctive language for understanding life and interpreting human experience. As a community of faith, the Church school should, in its best expression, reflect the nature of the Trinity, a life shared and defined by reference to others. Here we can begin to discover who we are, why we are, and - perhaps most importantly - what we might be"

*(The Way Ahead: Church of England schools in the new millennium
Archbishop's Council
2001)*

Worship in our school

The school holds a daily act of collective worship. Our acts of worship are planned in advance and reflect the Christian year. We acknowledge that Christians worship in a variety of ways and at Christ Church we recognise this diversity of practice. Our policy celebrates God as Creator, Jesus as the Son of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. The importance of the Bible and the Church as the foundations of Christianity are also celebrated. Shared values such as love, responsibility, kindness, forgiveness, honesty and justice enrich the daily act of worship.

There is a whole school act of worship held on Mondays and Wednesday taken by the Head teacher and our Parish Priest (usually the incumbent of St Mary Magdalene Munster Square) respectively. Key stage acts of worship are held on Tuesday and Thursdays and reflect the theme of the week. A whole school act of celebration is held every Friday. This is a time to share and celebrate merit certificates, kindness awards, birthdays and attendance awards, however this always concludes with a prayer of thanks.

While Christ Church is a Church of England school, we are committed to respecting individual beliefs. Upon entrance to the school, parents/ carers are made aware of the Christian basis of our teaching. It is therefore unlikely that parents/ carers would wish to exercise their legal right of withdrawal. However, should such a case arise, the parents/ carers concerned should consult the Head teacher.

We celebrate the cultural diversity of all the members of our school and have a cohesive community. Whilst collective worship will always reflect the Christian ethos of our school, we respect and acknowledge the variety of religious observances which are represented in our school and within the wider community.

We celebrate the religious beliefs of our Muslim children through Eid assemblies, to which parents, carers and families are invited. During

these assemblies, some of our Muslim children talk about their Eid celebrations, demonstrate their prayers and some of our Muslim parents and carers talk about the significance of Eid. We finish the Eid assembly with a collective meal, which is provided by parents, carers and school staff. This provides the opportunity to recognise that the other main religion in the school is also embraced and those followers of that religion have their spiritual needs met.

We also celebrate the major Christian festivals throughout the year. Parents/ carers are invited to join us, either at school, or at our Parish Church; St Mary Magdalene's. These include Harvest, Christmas and Holy Week/ Easter.

Our Parish Priest is usually a school governor and with the RE subject leader and head teacher, normally leads the development and delivery of worship in the school.

We regularly invite a qualified sign language practitioner to come and carry out Makaton assemblies. These comprise a bible story being told in Makaton, and then time for the children to learn some key signs from the story. These assemblies end with the whole school saying the school prayer, using Makaton.

Procedures

Children are expected to come into the school hall in silence, whilst appropriate music is played. The act of worship is seen as providing a period of calm and reflection within the school day, for the whole school (and its wider community when appropriate). A hymn, or age-appropriate song, is sung during assembly. These are varied to ensure all age groups can participate. We have a resource of hymns which are displayed on an Interactive Whiteboard during assembly.

Singing is a significant part of our worship, and our music coordinator teaches the children a range of hymns during whole school hymn practice, which are then sung during whole school and key stage worship assemblies. Music and signing play a significant role in whole school worship.

Our worship structure includes lighting a candle to signify that this is a time for reflection and calmness. When a member of the clergy is present, a liturgical greeting is sometimes used and a final blessing given. A prayer is said at the end and the children are invited either to join in by saying "Amen" at the end, or reflecting on the mood of the assembly by being "still on the inside and still on the outside". The children leave assembly in silence, again accompanied by music.

Prayer

As an inclusive school, we teach the children Makaton, which is a form of sign language. We have a school Makaton prayer, which all the children know by heart and which is said at the end of the Monday whole school assembly.

Our Parish Priest leads a prayer during the Wednesday whole school assembly and the children say grace at lunchtime.

We believe that prayer should come from the heart, but we also know that it has to be taught by example. It is corporate or individual and at its heart it is communication between a believer and God.

There is a prayer box in the entrance hall, which provides our parent prayer group with prayers and reflections from the children. Each week, a class from Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 will write their own personal prayers for the prayer box. The children understand that this procedure is another channel for communicating their thoughts to God.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Spiritual and Moral Development is a life-long process and in the life of the children, is shared between parents/ carers, the school and the wider community. We acknowledge the variety of beliefs that make up our community; however our Policy reflects the Christian focus of our school. Therefore we seek to foster values and morals based on Christian teaching. Key ideas and words that have been identified as being particularly appropriate when exploring spiritual and moral concepts include the following:

- Life, birth, creation, death
- Sleep, refreshment, renewal
- Friendship, fidelity, love, passion, patience
- Imagination, inspiration, enlightenment
- Elation, delight, joy, gladness, laughter
- Sorrow, sadness, grief, reconciliation, forgiveness, self control
- Injustice, pain, suffering, anger, courage, shame, guilt
- Kindness, gratefulness
- Pity, compassion
- Wonder, awe, reverence, adoration
- Splendour, beauty, perfection
- Stillness, calm, peace, silence, tranquillity, harmony
- Light, darkness
- Eternity, mystery, infinity
- Hope, dream, fact, fantasy
- Insight, intuition, belief, faith, trust
- Truth, certainty, uncertainty, proof

Poems, stories, Godly Play, paintings, photographs, natural objects, and music are some of the ways that children can be encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective.

Outdoor reflection area

All children have access to the outdoor reflection area for quiet prayer and reflection. Class teachers also utilise this area during RE lessons.

Resources

Resources for acts of worship are kept centrally in the worship cupboard in the staff room. The resources are specifically chosen to deliver the relevant themes from the acts of worship overview. Class teachers may access these at any time to plan and prepare to lead their act of worship.

Cross-curricular links

Worship in the school has close links with themes from the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum. Many of the themes from the acts of worship are taught to the children in conjunction with PSHE and Citizenship to allow them to reflect upon concepts and relate them to their own experiences.

Worship tables

Each class has a worship table, which includes a Bible, candle, copy of the school prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

Planning for Worship

The acts of worship inform members of staff of the themes for each week and are agreed between the Head teacher, our Parish Priest and RE/ Worship leader.

Monitoring and Record Keeping

- ❖ Acts of worship are evaluated termly by the Head teacher, our Parish Priest and RE/ Worship leader. Themes of worship are evaluated annually. RE books are monitored twice a year by the head, RE subject leader and normally by our Parish priest.

Communion and Confirmation

The school aims to hold twice-termly communion assembly and children and adults who are confirmed are invited to receive communion at the end of the assembly. Children learn the meaning of confirmation and the process by which they might be confirmed at the church is explained.

Our Parish Priest usually holds confirmation classes for pupils who wish to be confirmed.

Leavers

Each year, a special service for Leavers takes place. Leavers are invited to reflect upon their time at Christ Church. They are also reminded that the Church (as well as the school) will continue to be there for them in the years that lie ahead.

Rationale for Themes of Worship

Our acts of worship cover the following themes:

Autumn term

We focus on Newness and Creation, reflecting a new school year, Biblical creation stories and Harvest (celebrated in church). We then move on to look at the Old Testament and Prophecy. This leads to the theme of the Coming of Jesus, which is explored in some depth, building up to Christmas (celebrated in church).

Spring term

We focus throughout the term on the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus. In the first half of the term we look at His early life, including His baptism, temptation and the calling of the disciples. In the second half of the term we focus on His teaching and miracles, the Passion narratives, leading up to our Holy Week and Easter service, which is held in the church.

Summer term

In the first half of the Summer term we concentrate on the Resurrection appearances of Jesus, culminating in the Ascension and Pentecost. We then move on to looking closely at the Lord's Prayer and its significance to Christians. In the second half of the term we look closely at the sacraments, including baptism and confirmation.