

Policy for Collective Worship

Vision Statement and Introduction

This policy is implemented in the context and spirit of the Vision Statement of Market Harborough Church of England Academy, which values all members of the community equally and respects them as individuals.

“In the Christian Faith, giving of our best, growing in knowledge and kindness.”

The ethos of the school, encompassing all that we stand for, is reflected in and expressed through Collective Worship; it is based firmly on the Christian tradition and seeks to support and enhance our beliefs and values. Collective Worship plays an important part in the life of our school. It is an oasis in the busy school day when children meet together with members of staff, in a calm and peaceful atmosphere, and where all present are given the opportunity to reflect and take part. It is regarded as ‘quality’ time and represents something special and distinct from ordinary school routines.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of collective worship are to:

- ❖ foster a reverential attitude towards God, the Divine and the transcendent
- ❖ encourage children to consider fundamental issues about the purpose of being and about spiritual and moral issues
- ❖ enable children to explore their own beliefs
- ❖ enable everyone to learn about and celebrate values which we hold to be important
- ❖ encourage participation and response
- ❖ develop a sense of community spirit, in children and adults
- ❖ promote a common ethos, with shared values, and to reinforce positive attitudes
- ❖ teach children how to worship and enable them to take part in experiences which lie at the heart of religion; prayer, praise, reflection, belief
- ❖ celebrate outward manifestations of Christian belief

Collective worship

We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in the assembly.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our assemblies on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.

While most acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect the traditions of other religions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Organisation of collective worship

We hold a daily act of collective worship. This forms part of each morning assembly, which can be a whole-school assembly, separate key stage assemblies or a class assembly.

We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time, and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, and sometimes other objects such as the cross and the candle, to focus the attention of the children.

At Market Harborough C of E Academy ministers from different churches are encouraged to lead collective worship, as well as the Headteacher, who takes a prominent role. All teachers are involved in leading key stage and class assemblies and pupil-led worship is encouraged.

We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith, and we observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies are related to topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum, but they are taken predominantly from the framework suggested by the Diocesan Board of Education.

Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in the assemblies by showing their work to the other children, and by raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. 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. Market Harborough C of E Academy is a successful school, and we shall continue to celebrate the successes of all our children and the adults who work with them, in our assemblies.

We frequently invite parents to attend our assemblies, whether at special times of the year - Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, End of Year – for class assemblies, and when individual children are celebrated for something they have achieved as an individual. Governors' attendance at our assemblies is always welcome.

We also provide other opportunities for reflection and prayer for example by having a prayer window, during Jim Jams (a Christian club for children of all ages), by taking part in shared Diocesan events and during classroom assemblies.

Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the 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.

The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of the Headteacher with the help of the senior management team and the RE subject leader.

This policy will be reviewed after a minimum of three years.

Signed:

Date: Summer 2012