

Barcombe CE Primary School Collective Worship Policy



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FRAMEWORK FOR WORSHIP AT Barcombe CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Collective Worship

At Barcombe, we recognise our responsibility to provide the opportunity for collective worship for all pupils and to promote their spiritual, moral and culture development.

As a Church School, our worship is Christian in character.

The arrangements for collective worship at Barcombe CE Primary School are made by the Governing body after consultation with the Executive Head Teacher and Head of School. This ensures that the act of worship is consistent with the purpose of the school.

At Barcombe, the Foundation Governors must, as far as possible, ensure that the school is conducting daily acts of worship in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deed relating to the school. The Foundation Governors have an important role in agreeing the arrangements for collective worship.

The Education Act 1996

“All pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each day take part in an act of collective worship’ unless ‘the parent.....requests that he may be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school”.

The act of worship will take place daily. It may take place with the whole school, in class groups or other groupings of pupils. In accordance with the 1998 Education Act the act of worship may in special occasions take place elsewhere in the school.

The Trust Deed

‘The daily act of worship required by law in the school shall be consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England”.

Barcombe School Commitment to Worship

1. Worship should aim to be central to school life: *good worship focuses in God, the ethos, life and work of the school.*
2. Worship should aim to be educational: *good worship develops children’s ideas about God.*
3. Worship should aim to be curricular: *good worship shows an appropriate links with the curriculum, RE policy and class work.*
4. Worship should aim to be stimulating and reflective: *good worship increases children’s awareness of God through varied experiences.*
5. Worship should aim to be inclusive: *good worship engages everyone present in his/her own way.*

School Worship: Perspectives and Principles

Spiritual and Moral Development NSS 1993

‘Collective worship should offer opportunities to explore and share beliefs; consider the importance of prayer, meditation and silence; consider the relevance of ideas and beliefs to the children’s own lives; think about the needs of others and develop a sense of community; and appreciate the importance of religious beliefs to those who hold them. Collective worship also offers an opportunity to re-affirm, interpret and put into practice the values of the school. It provides a time to celebrate the various achievements of members of the community.

Worship and Spiritual Development at Barcombe School

For worship to contribute to the spiritual development of pupils it should:

1. Celebrate all that is good and lovely and express thankfulness for the joy of being alive.
2. Provide opportunities for pupils to share what is meaningful and significant to them including the ‘darker side of life’.
3. Ensure that the experiences provided are relevant to the age, aptitude and family background of the pupils.
4. Give time when appropriate for silent reflection and exploration of inner space.
5. Illustrate forms of worship that others have found helpful in their spiritual development e.g. silent contemplation, dance, singing. Provide a rich variety of forms of expression e.g. art, drama, story and give pupils the opportunity to experience these at their ‘own level’ rather than teachers simply providing their own interpretations.
6. Take place in an environment that is conducive to worship, which is professionally co-ordinated, and properly resourced.
7. Always invite, never coerce, remembering that children will be at different stages of spiritual development and that they should feel able to respond and participate at their own level.

Features of School Worship

Sense of awe, wonder and mystery

Sense of transience and constant change

Sense of pattern, order and purpose (everything’s all right)

Awareness of personal worth, uniqueness and identity.

Awareness of others as feeling, thinking persons – relationships.

Awareness of community, its demands, values, rituals and celebrations.

Awareness of achievement, celebrations and joy.

Awareness of loss, sadness and suffering.

Awareness that life involves choices: outgoing, selfish, right, wrong, good and evil.

Spirituality at Barcombe – Awe and Wonder in the classroom

1. Helping children to focus on experiences and then to focus at a greater depth.
2. Showing children new facets of their things which they take for granted.
3. Providing children with examples of symbolism in religion.
4. Encouraging children’s amazement through self-questioning e.g. about their bodies or the natural world.
5. Fostering positive attitudes towards living, where no life is considered trivial, expendable or unimportant.
6. Keeping ‘alive’ in children the spontaneity of their childhood.

Setting the Scene

We endeavour to set an atmosphere for school worship that will:

- be warm and welcoming;
- be peaceful and calm, yet vibrant and alive;
- enable all to express and share thoughts and feelings – or choose not to;
- allow for a secure and comfortable knowledge that each person will be valued and respected.

The presence of adults supports a positive message about the importance of worship and underlines the importance of the life of the school. It also enables teachers to ensure that the content is sensitively followed up. The school welcomes visitors to school assemblies and parents are invited to take part in school assemblies and at the special events held in St Mary's Church.

A Space for Worship

The school uses various focuses such as – a cross, a bowl of flowers, a candle, or other artefacts and these are positioned so that all can see.

Stillness and Quiet

Music is played as the children enter the hall. This music is sometimes recorded and sometimes live. The children are expected to enter in silence and this time is regarded as a time of thought and reflection. A period of silence during worship enables those present to make their own conversation with God.

The Bible in School Worship

For Christians the use of the Bible is central to worship.

The Bible can be used in various ways:

- individual verses chosen and carefully explained to the children;
- particular Bible characters and stories selected to exemplify a specific focus;
- verses committed to memory;
- selected readings to the Church Calendar or to a theme.

The inclusion of a Bible passage can:

- enrich worship;
- enhance a theme;
- give context to a theme;
- develop an awareness of how Christians use the Bible. The Bible passage can be used at different points in the school worship:
 - at the beginning to set the context and give meaning and/or focus to the worship;
 - in the middle to expand the focus of the worship or change the pace or the atmosphere and refocus the children's minds;
 - at the end to encapsulate and draw together the threads of the worship.

Prayers

‘The Lord is near, have no anxiety, but in everything make your requests known to God in prayer and petition with thanksgiving’. Philippians 4:6

It is hoped that through prayer children develop a sense of trust and recognition that Christians put their lives, and those for whom they intercede, in the hands of God.

At Barcombe, the children are encouraged and helped to make links between everyday life and prayer.

Children are encouraged to use different methods of prayer:

- arrow prayers can be used anywhere, anytime and anyhow;
- prayer, music and repetition such as Taize chants;
- prayer and silence; prayer of listening alone and the use of a time of quiet;
- posture for prayer – hands together or hands on laps

The Lord’s Prayer will be taught and talked about regularly. It will be displayed for all to see.

A collection of prayers is available which include those written by children, set prayers, graces used before lunch, and prayers used by classes at the end of the day.

Prayers will be said daily in the school during the act of worship and sometimes when appropriate in other areas of the school day/life.

Hymns and Music

‘He who sings prays twice’ St Augustine.

Various areas should be considered when selecting the hymns and songs:

- singing during worship allows children to become involved rather than passive observers of the worship;
- the repertoire of hymns/songs must be carefully considered to include a variety from all traditions of Christian worship;
- the music should be selected to match the age range of the children and their vocal abilities;
- special consideration needs to be given to the use of choruses or hymns with refrains for Key Stage 1 children or non-readers;
- regular practice and learning of songs/hymns should be built into the school timetable in order to prepare for quality worship;
- an understanding and enjoyment of music adds to the success of the worship.

Music is carefully considered from a variety of all traditions. It helps enhance the atmosphere of worship.

- build on the repertoire and lists of suitable music;
- use both recorded and live music;
- visiting musicians can add to the variety of musical expression;
- pupils play entrance and exit music to accompanying songs or hymns;

A computer file and a file of OHP sheets of hymns and songs which the children know is kept. It is also important to keep adding new songs/hymns to the file.

Hymn practice takes place weekly. Time during the practice is set aside to include a reading, reflection and a prayer to complement the hymns being practiced.

There is a selection of recorded music that can be used. These are stored in the hall ready for use. A theme is used for each half-term and children learn about the music, composers and instruments being played. Information is displayed so that children can reflect on the music.

Dance and Drama

Dance and drama is often used to retell and interpret passages from the Bible and other stories. It is also a powerful way of conveying feelings, attitudes, information and symbols. The dance and drama must be well planned and an integral part of the worship theme. Preparation will vary depending on the situation. Church services usually have dance and drama and particularly at Christmas time.

The following points need to be considered if used in the act of worship:

- Dance and drama is clearly part of the act of worship and does not become a 'performance' or 'play' e.g. do we have a 'nativity service' or a 'nativity play'?
- The dance or drama is suitable for the place of worship.
- Words and actions are clear and visible so that those watching can follow the message. Microphones may be needed.

Worship Themes

The themes act as an imaginative trigger to a range of ideas and approaches that can enhance a child's spiritual development. The themes are not restrictive and allow the leader to respond to local and national situations and deviate if they believe the situation warrants it.

The following need to be considered when selecting the themes.

- **The invitation to reflect.**

Does it open up opportunities for prayer and for children to develop Christian values?

- **The relevance of the situation.**

Does it connect with the church, school, local or national calendar and events?

- **The appropriateness.**

Can it be understood by children and excite their interests?

A whole school approach

Who is involved?

Everyone is involved in the life and work of the school and has a part to play.

Governors-are required to set aims and policies of the school and should actively promote values and expectations

Head teacher – must advise the governing body on the educational provision within the school and account for the impact of that provision on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils:

Teaching staff - must ensure that the aims and values of the school are promoted through every aspect of the school life:

Non-teaching staff – should be aware of the values and expectations of the school and promote them to pupils:

Pupils – should know what is expected of them and how they can contribute;

Parents – should be encouraged to show commitment and loyalty to the school through the home-school agreement/partnership.

Planning for School Worship

The nature and forms of worship must be closely related to the needs, experiences and development of the children if it is to convey any meaning. We aim to plan our worship round themes with the children's participation. Within such planning, there is a place for children to be introduced to quiet times, prayers of 'thank you', hymns and songs appropriate to their age and to the worship patterns. Planning is important. Spiritual and moral messages cannot be fully conveyed at any one meeting. As they are building bricks in other areas of the curriculum, so it is with collective worship.

We aim to maintain a 4-year cycle of themes, but will also be responsive to local and national circumstances. We will draw upon the expertise and interest of visiting speakers. We will therefore hope to achieve a balance over time.

Long Term Planning

This will include a programme of worship themes, based on The Church of England 'Values for Life' resource which ensures a balanced and informed approach. It will take into account special occasions and/or services we at Barcombe wish to mark. We will use the church calendar to plan, taking into consideration the composition of the group, place of worship and the leadership of the worship times. It will also link up with the schools planning for Religious Education.

Medium Term Planning

This will include a breakdown of the weekly learning intentions; possible hymns and music that could be included; visitors to be invited to take part; and the involvement of the children. Suggestions of relevant prayers will be listed under each theme.

This will be kept in the Staff Handbook and a copy will be available in the staff room.

Short Term Planning

These will be developed by individuals and information will be added to the staff room copy. This is important so that staff can communicate with children at relevant times as part of the follow up process.

Evaluation and Monitoring

The Headteacher and Foundation Governors will be responsible for talking to staff and bringing new ideas to the planning group. The Foundation Governors play an important part in monitoring and supporting the act of worship. There will be an annual visit made and this will be reported to the full Governors. Governors are also encouraged to visit at other times to share in the act of worship and take part in the special celebrations of the school.

Children evaluate the assemblies on a weekly basis. They discuss their responses to the questions

Was the weekly theme clear?

Was there a link to the Bible?

Was there an appropriate hymn or song?

Were you involved in the Acts of Worship eg answering questions?

Did you have time to pause and reflect on the message?

The following areas for monitoring:

- The planning file
- the themes
- the balance of the regular weekly provision
- a balance of leadership
- use of stimulus to enhance the atmosphere
- the encouragement children are given to worship
- the community involvement
- the music and hymns used
- the finances available to develop worship
- the resources

The school will be inspected regularly by an accredited section 23 inspector when it receives its Ofsted Inspection. This will assist in the monitoring process.

Organisation

We have daily acts of worship that take place each morning. These take the form of whole school and Key Stage groupings.

Timetable Please see Staffroom timetable for times of collective worship

Leader

Monday - Mrs Tomsett - Hymn Practice

Tuesday - Executive Head Teacher –Christian Values (Values for Life)

Wednesday - Rev James Hollingsworth, Paul Mundy, visiting speakers

Thursday Whole School - Class teacher (Rota)

Friday Whole School Celebration Head of School or Deputy Head of School

Worship

Worship has to do with worth and worthiness. It is the recognition, affirmation and celebration of the worthiness of certain realities and values held to be of central value to a particular community. In our school, worship will express and affirm values, which are significant within our whole school community. These values are expressed in our vision statement and our Teaching and Learning Policy. The children can experience and respond to a sense of mystery, wonder, beauty, rightness, truth, joy and peace by sharing, imagining and reflecting on their experiences.

These, together with encouragement to make their own responses, can enable assembly to bring children to the threshold of worship. Indeed, collective worship implies the scope for a variety of responses e.g.

- when prayers are said, some may participate, others may listen in order to better understand what prayer means to those participating.

The nature and form of worship must closely relate to, but go beyond the needs, experiences and capacities of the children.

The basic content could be experiencing and expressing wonder and delight in the natural world, or reflecting on human experiences of birth, growth, love, suffering, death. Etc. With the right content and presentation, reflection and celebration will feed back into the children's lives, affecting both the kind and quality of experience.

We aim to show children that worship is not a peculiar custom observed in the reverent gloom of places dusty with age, but is a living part in which they can involve themselves naturally and with daily enjoyment.

Assembly

Assembly is a gathering without essential spiritual accent. Assemblies can:

1. Bring the children together as a community and encourage them to experience the security of belonging.
2. Provide an opportunity for sharing, reflecting on and celebrating achievements and experiences.
3. Provide a forum for promoting awareness of human issues and possible responses.
4. Encourage recognition of the educational work of the school and of the personal concerns, values and vision for which it stands.