

Collective Worship Policy

We believe:

Windrush C of E Primary is an inclusive, creative community that builds understanding, respect and empathy. Pupils, staff and parents of all faiths (or none) are welcome. Windrush School is a community which celebrates religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and encourages dialogue and understanding. We believe that we can all learn from each other and that collective worship is an educational entitlement for all. In worship, we create the opportunity to explore the place of faith in each of our lives, and in the communities in which we live. This worship can occur at various times of day and with a mixture of grouping of pupils. In regular acts of formal worship the school community has the opportunity of offering thanksgiving and praise to God through a range of liturgical patterns.

Legal Requirements

"Worship will be - appropriate to the age, aptitude and family backgrounds of pupils, - provided in a variety of settings, groupings and timings, with a variety of leaders." (DFES)

Our daily Act of Collective Worship is in accordance with the religious character of Windrush School as a Church of England School.

Windrush School aspires to live out in practice the following statement from Stephen, Bishop of Dorchester (February 2006) -

"..to witness to the inclusivity of God; embody God's love and service to all in the community; tell the story of God's love as it is revealed in Jesus Christ; and nurture an understanding of human well-being that includes the spiritual".

Collective Worship plays a significant part in this aspiration and is central to the life of our school community.

Principles of Collective Worship

There are three fundamental principles underlying the provision of our acts of Collective Worship. These principles are:

1. Collective worship contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
2. Collective worship is accessible to all.
3. Collective worship is educational entitlement for all.

1. Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural

Acts of collective worship will:

- nurture reflection, meditation and prayer;
- be inspirational;
- encourage a sense of awe and wonder and provide pupils with opportunities to

- explore the spiritual dimension of their lives;
- nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in human beings through working for social justice and encouraging students to consider the needs of others through charitable service;
 - contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the whole school community;
 - foster the sense of belonging and bond of community which is inclusive of age, race, gender and religious faith and in shared values and beliefs;
 - provide an opportunity to sense God's presence;
 - provide a sense of occasion that separates them from the rest of the school day;
 - foster an appreciation of the natural created world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it;
 - develop clear partnerships between worship and the wider community.

Accessibility

Christianity is an inclusive faith which mirrors the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. Windrush School welcomes children and staff of all faiths, or none. Through their Christian character our acts of collective worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, life styles and faiths which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for every student and staff member to attend;
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the school community;
- foster active roles of pupils, parents and members of the local community – in preparation, participation and leadership.

Educational

Our acts of collective worship will aim to provide wider opportunities to:

- reflect the aims of the school, and foster wide ownership of our core values;
- assist children to have increased awareness and to reflect upon fundamental issues about life;
- enhance, complement and extend curricular work;
- develop children's understanding of the Christian faith and Anglican practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content;
- identify opportunities for Christian celebration which can be associated with other main school events;
- celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of pupils.

Our assemblies are of a clearly Christian character and provide occasions when pupils meet together in larger, more formal settings where a positive tone and focus for the day can be established. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on relevant Christian, moral and spiritual issues, drawn from a variety of sources, thereby enriching their experience of life.

There is a focus on a different value each month, planned on a two-year cycle around the rhythm of the school year and the church calendar, with a suitable Bible verse chosen and used for each month. Monday's act of Collective Worship predominantly follows the Anglican Lectionary and links with the Value of the Month.

Staff have a key role in the delivery of collective worship. The headteacher, Vicar and RE subject leader have a key role in ensuring that Acts of Collective Worship are of high quality, well-coordinated and delivered effectively, in line with this policy.

Assemblies are an essential means both of recognising and celebrating school values and children's achievements in their broadest sense. Within assemblies both individual and groups of students are recognised for their personal achievement, both school based and in the community.

At the end of each day there is a time of reflection in every classroom which will finish with the opportunity for extemporary prayer, reading a previously written/chosen prayer and/or saying the school prayer as a class. The school day may also start with a prayer in class or a short opportunity for reflection. A cross and candle are the focal point for class reflection.

Children are encouraged to play an active role in planning, preparing, delivering and responding to assemblies, thereby giving them a platform for positively contributing to the ethos of the school and for providing role models for other pupils. The involvement of pupils in assemblies, irrespective of race, gender, age or ability, is an effective vehicle for developing their self-confidence and for encouraging co-operation, respect and tolerance amongst all pupils.

(i) Collective worship will:

- have a clear message,
- be accessible to the whole community,
- include a variety of elements at different times,
- involve the children,
- have a dedicated focus, which signifies what is being reflected upon,
- provide a dedicated opportunity for children to reflect/respond to the input,
- provide an opportunity to attend to the divine,
- be interspersed with reflection, silence or discussion,
- highlight consequences of worship, for example moral and ethical values renewed and directed.

(ii) In achieving a meaningful act of worship, it is important to distinguish between worship and ritual. Rituals are a means of enabling worship and include:

- stories and readings,
- songs, hymns and music,
- dance and drama,
- prayer, meditations,
- creative silence,
- sacred/secular readings,
- artifacts and natural materials,
- students' contributions.

As part of our collective worship students will have the opportunity to be quiet and reflect on what has been shared. Children and/or adults will lead prayer.

Music and song play a central role in all Collective Worship and a variety of appropriate songs are chosen in consultation with the Music Subject leader. Children are involved in singing and playing musical instruments as part of Collective Worship across the year.

Music conducive to reflection and worship plays as the children enter the hall for worship, with a cross, Bible and candles on a central display. The candles are lit at the start of worship, with a child or the worship leader reminding us that they symbolise God's presence.

(iii) We expect children to -

- be respectful,
- act in an appropriate manner,
- have the daily opportunity for a sense of togetherness which engenders a sense of belonging,
- have an understanding that worship is not done just for them, but is an experience for all who attend.

Children are not expected to -

- repeat a prayer if they do not wish to do so,
- join their hands if they do not wish to do so,
- say 'Amen' if they do not wish to do so.

(iv) We expect staff to -

- lead where applicable in the agreed manner, including class assemblies,
- respond to collective worship in an appropriate manner,
- develop links with faith groups and at times, offer them the opportunity to contribute to collective worship in the agreed format.

Rights of withdrawal

At Windrush School we seek to be an inclusive community. However, we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children for Collective Worship. This school expects that withdrawal will only be made following parental discussion with the Headteacher/Governors followed by written confirmation of withdrawal.

The school will ensure that appropriate provision is made for children who are withdrawn from Collective Worship with particular emphasis placed on preserving the child's dignity.

It is expected that all staff will uphold the Christian ethos and values of the school and act in accordance with the contract made with the Governors on their appointment to the school. (Paragraph 12 – teacher contract and Paragraph 11 – support staff contract)

Windrush School is sensitive to the needs of children from different faith backgrounds and value their perspectives and knowledge. We endeavour to make them feel included in the distinctly Christian ethos.