

## **Worship Policy**

### **Rationale**

Collective worship is central to the life of St Thomas' C.E ( V.A) Primary School. It offers an opportunity for the whole school community to explore together the distinctive Christian beliefs and narrative that underpins our Christian character within the Church of England, as expressed by our Parish Church St Thomas' Kidsgrove but also allows those present to experience and participate in wider living expressions of Christian worship that are God centred, affirm Christian beliefs and introduce those present to Jesus as Saviour. Together we celebrate our Christian values, vision and ethos and reflect upon their contribution to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of all participants. Worship is inclusive, rooted in the Christian faith, but accessible to all member of the school community. It values and honours every individual's unique contribution, regardless of age, gender, ability, background or beliefs.

### **Aims**

1. Explore and develop an understanding of Christianity with a strong focus on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with Jesus as Saviour
2. Enable learners to develop an understanding of the person of Jesus Christ and the central position He plays in the Christian faith
3. Foster a reverential attitude to God and contribute to learners' understanding of Christian theological concepts and beliefs at an appropriate level
4. Create an atmosphere in which faith in God is recognised and respected
5. Offer a range of experiences that enhance the spiritual development and response of the school community that are grounded in distinctively Christian teaching and ensure all feel valued
6. Seek to make a difference to the lives of all members of the school community by engaging, challenging, encouraging and inspiring in a relevant way
7. Foster a thought-provoking atmosphere that allows for spiritual reflection and response
8. Learn about and reflect upon Christian Teaching, Biblical material and Christian festivals, in a way that relates to the pupils' experience and to living together in community
9. Worship will uphold the school's motto of 'Learning for Life with Jesus' and our first Golden rule of to 'Follow Jesus' example'. As such we will honour the Traditional British Values of: Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

## **A Week of Worship**

The school starts and ends the week with whole school worship, rooting our work within the aims of this policy. A further whole school assembly is held which also contains an element of worship time. Parents are invited to weekly worship ( usually on Fridays and there is a facility to stop behind for an informal chat over coffee etc). Key stages will meet together once per week and then class worship takes place for individual classes or two classes may join together for the 5<sup>th</sup> worship session in the week. Timetable variations may occasionally alter the format of worship if necessary.

## **Worship throughout the Year**

1. Worship will take place in the Church on at least 2 occasions during the year and parents will be invited e.g Easter Service and Carol services.
2. Each class will lead whole school worship once per year which celebrates the work of the children, and delivers a Christian message. Parents are invited and the children share refreshments with their family and staff afterwards.

## **Leading Worship**

- All staff will lead worship as appropriate
- Local Christians will be invited to lead worship from time to time to enrich the children's experiences in differing styles of worship
- Children will be encouraged to assist with leading worship through readings, prayers and use of resources
- Children progress to leading worship themselves, usually in class groups when they feel confident
- Classes lead worship once per year, where all children are involved in some way, assisted by staff as appropriate
- Leaders are asked to give more emphasis to songs which honour and praise God and Jesus Christ, above those which require the singer to express a personal response or commitment. Such songs may be included if introduced as such but should not be the predominant choice. Pupils should always be encouraged to listen and reflect or to join in as they feel appropriate.

## **Elements of Worship**

- Worship will usually include the following: songs/ music, movement/ dance, Bible teaching, prayer and application to the lives of those present for the greater good of society and an individual's spiritual journey and development, and a time for reflection.
- There should be a balance of lively praise and stimulating engagement and also reflection and stillness to suit the ages and abilities of the children
- There is a rolling programme of worship themes which also links to those of PSHE and various Christian festivals and topical events
- Children will enter and leave the hall quietly whilst music is being played to create a worshipful atmosphere. However, as worship music is playing and the children wish to spontaneously join in they may do so as an expression of individual worship and praise. The children have the freedom to choose their method of reflection in this way. Staff will encourage worshipful and reflective behaviour from the children.

## **Evaluating Worship**

Periodically children will be asked their views of worship through questionnaire or discussion with Head or Coordinator; staff are also asked to evaluate worship, usually through staff meeting time or discussions with coordinator and parents are also given opportunities to give their views, usually by questionnaire but informally, after Friday worship, often gives direct feedback to the staff involved. Periodically, Inset time is also used to discuss the effectiveness of worship, involving governors and parent representatives All comments from all stakeholders, through whatever method, are used to inform future planning and improve the experiences of those present.

## **Withdrawal**

The school recognises the right to request withdrawal of their child. The Headteacher would discuss these arrangements with the parents and come to an agreed procedure.

Reviewed June 2015