



Birdham CE Primary School

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Introduction

At Birdham CE (Controlled) Primary School we believe it is important to meet together daily as a community to reinforce community values and to worship together. Our Christian worship is central to the life of the school, and helps us to celebrate all our God-given gifts.

Aims and purpose

The aims and purpose of collective worship are to:

- provide an opportunity for the children to meet together as a whole school;
- provide an opportunity to reflect on life and prayer;
- introduce children to religious worship in a meaningful and honest way;
- enable those children who want to worship God to do so and have opportunities for reflection;
- encourage and develop a sense of community in the school reinforcing the aims and ethos and celebrating the ideals and values of the school;
- teach children how to worship.

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 traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

While the acts of worship in our school are Christian, those with other faiths and none are welcome to join with us.

Organisation of collective worship

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school. This forms part of each daily assembly, which is normally a whole-school assembly, although we also hold separate key stage assemblies.

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 and to listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and sometimes candles or other objects that act as a focal point for the attention of the children. The headteacher or other members of staff normally conduct assemblies. Every other week throughout the school year an assembly is led by Father Jonathan, our rector, and another one by Frank Yorkston, a local visiting RE specialist.

We take the themes of our assemblies from the Anglican traditions of the Christian faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our assemblies as part of a series of themes well in advance of the day they take place.

Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in weekly sharing assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of schools. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised and celebrated.

We invite parents to attend the weekly sharing assembly, as we believe this helps promote the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children. At least once a term we hold an assembly at St James' Church and parents and members of the local community are invited.

We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

A half termly programme of assembly themes is agreed by all staff at a staff meeting. These themes are linked to the Church year and wherever appropriate to the RE curriculum.

Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission from the headteacher, for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. The headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.

Monitoring and review

Our rector is the governor with responsibility to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship and he liaises with the headteacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship.