



EARL STERNDALE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARL STERNDALE

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Autumn 2024

At Earl Sterndale CE Primary School, the daily act of Collective Worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life and involves and is valued by the whole school community – the heartbeat of the school day which enables us to live life to its fullest (John 10:10). Through this and in the general ethos of the school we seek to promote and explore our vision ‘Making Good Decisions Together’. It is a time where the school community, from a range of backgrounds, beliefs and ages, meets together at the start of day.

Worship in the school is based on promoting Christian values and the teachings of Jesus – forgiveness, tolerance, kindness, honesty, respect, compassion, humility, thankfulness, reconciliation – which permeate the ethos of the school as well as studying the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. However, children and adults from a range of beliefs and none welcome the opportunity to reflect, sing, listen and celebrate as a school community and all contributions are welcome.

We aim to blend Christian teaching and values in order to create opportunities for all children to develop physically, emotionally, personally, socially, mentally and intelligently so that their self-esteem and well-being is sound and supported by ever-growing emotional intelligence; leading to an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens.

Purpose of Collective Worship

At Earl Sterndale CE Primary School the purpose of Collective Worship is manifold and includes the following aims:

- To reflect on the significant features of human life;
- To be invitational, inspirational and inclusive;
- To promote resilience, perseverance and creativity and ultimately aid academic progress;

- To explore our responses to the world in which we live, developing a sense of awe and wonder;
- To learn about the Christian beliefs, the holy trinity and traditions upon which our society is based;
- To enable us to better understand and appreciate the religious beliefs of others;
- To enable us to develop our own response to the spiritual side of life through thought, prayer, stillness and reflection;
- To promote the development of wisdom;
- To have a pivotal place in the life of the school;
- To support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth;
- To provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey;
- To help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience and appreciate faith;
- To offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school Worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading Worship;
- To provide a language that can be used in times of joy and in times of grief, creating a sense of belonging and cohesion;
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God;
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events;
- Share each other's joys and challenges;
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar.

We also aim to make our Worship inclusive, inspirational and inspiring. Our aim is to make Worship accessible to all and we have regular points through the school year where we invite parents to join us in our Collective Worship. We aim to include our whole school community to engage, think, ask questions, contribute and participate regardless of a person's background and their place in their spiritual journey. We also invite external agencies to come and share their vision of faith.

We are clear that everyone has the freedom to engage, reflect and contribute in whatever way they see fit – the door is open and the fire is warm.

Furthermore we aim to inspire our children and our whole school community, whether it's inspiring them to become actively involved in the Collective Worship, asking questions about faith or providing the courage to think about their own belief.

Religious Affiliation

The school is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. This means that we have Foundation Governors from the Parochial Church Council, one of whom should normally be the Vicar.

We aim to have several special School Services in the parish church each year, and that the Vicar would normally conduct the school assembly on a regular basis.

Collective Worship and the Law

We acknowledge the obligation for our collective Worship to be mainly Anglican in nature and we aspire to build on the rich and inspiring Anglican traditions to produce Worship that is dynamic, evolving and empowering.

Withdrawal from Worship

It is hoped that the Worship at Earl Sterndale School is of a kind that includes everyone. However, the law allows parents to withdraw their children from Worship (and Religious Education lessons). Teachers are also allowed to withdraw from Worship, but are encouraged to play an active role in all acts of Collective Worship.

Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As Collective Worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this is made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within Collective Worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from Collective Worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents

wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the head teacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of Worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part;
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas;
- The practical implications of withdrawal;
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such Worship, and if so, how much.

Where parents have withdrawn their children from Collective Worship and request religious Worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school;
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts.

If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious Worship at the school, then the school must comply.

Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

We ensure that the principles for Collective Worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing;

- SMSC and PSHE;
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development;
- Care, guidance and support;
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions;
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians;
- Working with the wider community.
- We also ensure that information about Collective Worship is included on the school website.

Leadership

The organisation of Collective Worship is the responsibility of the head teacher but all teachers lead Worship regularly and the children lead Worship also. We also welcome appropriately vetted visitors into school

to lead Worship from time to time including the vicar when we have one, the local Methodist minister and a local assembly team.

Planning

Worship is planned termly and involves allocating staff to days and times and reflects the Christian nature of the school. Bible stories are an integral part of the planning. Children leading Worship are given guidance on what to include. We always try to listen to music and sing a song as part of our Collective Worship.

During the school week there is a pattern of different formats, including 'Our News', current affairs, Bible stories and singing.

There are various key points during the school year when Worship involves inviting a larger audience to join us in church – Harvest, Christmas, Easter and our Leavers' Service.

Staff use a range of resources to enhance the Worship experience including websites, artefacts, stories, drama, music, songs, film clips and focal points like candles or pictures.

The children are encouraged to take an active part, eg with their own prayers, using the prayer box or by preparing and delivering an assembly themselves. They also wrote the school prayer which is displayed prominently in Class 2 and can be seen by all the children at Collective Worship time.

There are opportunities for spiritual growth through prayer, reflection and stillness.

Organisation

Collective Worship normally happens in the morning and involves the whole school and takes place in one of the classrooms, though we occasionally go outside or into the church.

Roles and Responsibilities

The head teacher, with the support of the Governors, is responsible for ensuring all policy and practise around Collective Worship is in place and understood. Pupils are supported by all staff when they choose to lead Collective Worship.

Collective Worship and Growing Faith

In line with the vision of Joshua Watson, ‘growing faith’ is an expression used to describe the partnership among school, church and the local community.

Three principles exemplify this approach:

- Connected Communities
- Encounters with God
- Imaginative practices

This policy is reviewed every two years or to take into account national or regional changes. Governors review the policy and will come into school to observe Worship and report back to the FGB.

All appropriate checks are taken for visitors.

Date of last review: 23.09.24

Headteacher signed: Daniel Holden

Date: 23.09.24

Chair of Governors signed: Paul Swindell

Date: 23.09.24