

St Lawrence C of E (Aided) Junior School

Collective Worship Policy

Introduction

St Lawrence is a Church of England Voluntary Aided school which represents a partnership between Surrey Local Authority and the Anglican Diocese of Guildford. The school serves the community of Molesey and is supported in its work by the Anglican churches of St Paul's and St Mary's. Collective worship is well supported by the clergy of both churches and the Community Minister of St Mary's currently acts as voluntary School Chaplain (see below). The school also has some links with other Christian denominations in Molesey and Walton on Thames.

Life at St Lawrence has its foundation in Christian beliefs and values and, whilst children of all faiths or none are welcomed and their beliefs honoured and respected, the Christian faith is central to the school's daily routine and ethos.

Collective Christian worship is central to the life of the school forming the focus of a daily school assembly. Collective worship is either held for the whole school in the hall or conducted in class groups in the classroom.

Aims and purpose of collective worship

- To contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
 - providing an opportunity for children to participate in the worship of God in and through a variety of styles and approaches
 - encouraging a reflective approach to life by providing times of stillness and prayer
 - enabling children to examine their own beliefs and listen to beliefs expressed by others
 - enabling children to consider spiritual and moral issues in a Christian context

- To express the life of a Christian school community by:
 - promotion of a Christian ethos with shared values based on respect, reconciliation, resilience, redemption and righteousness as modelled and taught by Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Bible.
 - enabling all members of the school to involve God in their daily work by exploring how faith may enhance human life and activity
 - encouraging active participation by all members of the school in worship
 - considering local and world issues and learning how to play a part as a global citizen

Collective worship

Collective worship forms the central focus of school assembly. Its purpose is to facilitate reverence for and relationship with God and respect for each other. Collective worship at St. Lawrence involves all members of the school coming together and all children and teaching staff are expected to regularly take an active part.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, assemblies are based on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian church, notably the Church of England.

While the majority of acts of worship in the school are Christian, occasionally assemblies are held that express the beliefs and values of other faiths. The key festivals and traditions of other religions are recognised and celebrated and reflect the diversity of the school family and the wider community.

Organization of collective worship

Daily acts of collective worship are usually held in the school hall and form part of morning assembly. From Monday to Thursday whole school assemblies are held mid-morning after break from 11.15 – 11.30am. On Friday collective worship is held at 9.00am. Once a year on a Friday, each class plans, prepares and leads an assembly to which their parents and the governors are invited. This may be on a theme of the class’s choice and often backs up their recent learning. On other Fridays, collective worship is held in the classroom and led by the class teacher and pupils. These acts are planned in line with the themed daily acts of worship. Each class prepares a Class Assembly Book to contain reflections, prayers and images to represent class worship.

All assemblies are conducted in a dignified and respectful way. Children understand that assembly time is a period of calm reflection and the children’s behaviour reflects this. Children are expected to participate by listening, responding to questions, taking part in drama or improvised role play, singing and prayer. Pupils from Year 6 act as volunteer Worship Leaders by leading the opening introductory greeting and candle lighting ceremonies and closing the act of worship. Year 6 pupils manage the audio visual and sound system for worship and set up the assembly hall with the worship table and cross and candle.

Worship themes are planned by the Collective Worship co-ordinator in liaison with the deputy Head teacher on a four year rolling programme. Themes take account of the major Christian festivals, the Anglican church’s calendar and other faith festivals and community events. Key aspects of Anglican practice are covered e.g. The Lord’s Prayer to ensure pupils are familiarised with such traditions and school’s distinctively Christian values. Themes also link with the broader curriculum, particularly supporting PHSE as it pertains to moral and social issues.

Assemblies are valuable in recognising the achievements and effort of pupils, rewarding those who have met targets and acted as positive role models. Children are encouraged to show their work and celebrate sporting and other successes. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward pupils’ achievements and play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievement is recognised.

Weekly pattern of collective worship

Monday:	Worship led by a member of SLT on a rota basis.
Tuesday:	Worship led by clergy or the Open the Book* team.
Wednesday:	Worship led by Music Leader with singing
Thursday:	Whole School Celebration of achievements
Friday:	Assembly led by a whole class or class based assembly.

***Open the Book**

The Open the Book initiative aims to encourage local church members to take stories from the Bible into primary schools. Each session enacts a scripted Bible story through drama and includes an introductory thought and final reflection and prayer. Adults from St Paul's, St Mary's and Walton Baptist Church are involved in this and their commitment is much appreciated by both pupils and staff alike.

School Chaplain

The chaplain supports the spiritual life of the school through leading collective worship, pastoral drop-in sessions and a Christian after school club called Living Water Club. Additionally he heads up the Open the Book team. He is available to be involved in special events such as RE Days and Christian festival services or celebrations.

Links with the local church

The clergy and lay members of St Paul's and St Mary's play an important role in the worshipping life of St. Lawrence. At Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Easter and summer time, special services are held in St Paul's Church. These services are planned and led by staff and pupils and are attended by parents and members of the church community. Children are encouraged to attend other acts of Christian worship such as Messy Church once a month, summer holiday clubs, Refresh in the Park and other family fun days and events for which publicity is often distributed through the school network.

Practices and procedures

All those involved in leading acts of worship are required to adhere to the Christian foundation of the school together with the school's equal opportunities policy. The language and content used in worship are appropriate for the age and aptitude of the children and respect the beliefs of the broad range of children attending the school. Leaders of worship understand the need to provide a creative and participative act of Christian worship through the use of drama, music, visual activities and creative prayer so that the needs of all learners are met. A sound system supports those with hearing impairment.

Monitoring

Programmes of themes to be used in assemblies are prepared and monitored by the Collective Worship co-ordinator to ensure variety through the effective and balanced use of scripture, music and prayer. Governors occasionally attend collective worship and are encouraged to provide feedback to the Head teacher.

Inclusion

Assemblies are planned to meet the needs of all children by providing resources that reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping. A range of teaching strategies are employed to ensure accessibility by all children regardless of special educational need, mother tongue or disability. A radio microphone system is installed in the school hall to ensure children with hearing impairment can fully access all teaching and worship conducted in the hall.

The Right to Withdraw

Whilst it is expected that all children will participate in collective worship at St Lawrence and derive benefit from it, the 1988 Education Reform Act provides for parents to withdraw their child from acts of worship if they so wish. In compliance with the Act, parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. Any parent wishing to exercise this right should do so in consultation with the Head Teacher.

Reviewed July 2016

Next review date July 2019