



Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed December 2021

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Grade Ruan School is a Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School serving small village communities and their surroundings on the Lizard peninsular. The school, whilst concentrating mainly on Christian worship and education, aims to widen the children's horizons as far as possible with regard to the faiths and experiences of others. We aim to prepare pupils for life not only in their own communities, but also in the wider world.

BACKGROUND TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT OUR SCHOOL

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in a daily act of Collective Worship. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”.

We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the backgrounds that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of our school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

As a Church School, our distinctive Christian Values of respect, wisdom, aspiration and relationships are promoted through the experiences we offer to all our pupils and to give them the knowledge, skills and understanding that they require to lead confident and independent lives as well as to encourage individual spirituality. We promote the teaching and understanding of fundamental British values which prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. We teach the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs and those without faith in order to help our pupils become informed, active and responsible citizens.

The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging daily Collective Worship. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending Collective Worship the school must comply. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from Collective Worship.

SOME DEFINITIONS

Collective Worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring “collective” not “corporate” worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might

encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way Collective Worship is inclusive not exclusive.

Worship of a broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character”, and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in our schools, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

VALUES AND AIMS

We believe at our schools that Collective Worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the values which we place on the development of the whole child, spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

Through Collective Worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in everyday situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school

- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

At Grade-Ruan we also aim:

- To provide an opportunity for all present to worship God, through the figure of Jesus Christ
- To enrich worship by use of aspects of the heritages of the Anglican Church

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of our school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

OBJECTIVES

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

PLANNING

- Responsibility for collective worship lies with the Head Teacher. All staff use the Values for Life Scheme. The programme is designed to cover a wide range of themes, to complement the R.E. syllabus and to reflect the Christian year. A copy of the rolling programme can be found in the information for parents section.
- At Grade Ruan class teachers organise their own programme of class assemblies, linked to the Values for Life Scheme.

Daily worship is provided by the following means:

- In a typical week at Grade Ruan, each child may take part in three school assemblies and one class assembly led by the class teacher or children. Whole school assemblies are approximately 15 minutes long. The children also take part in services held in the Parish Church on alternate Fridays as well as special End of term Services, held in the local Church.
- The children also take part in services held in their local Churches throughout the year.
- In addition there is one session of hymn practice/ musical praise each week.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

FORMS OF WORSHIP

A typical act of worship will include many of the following features:

- The school Worship Team prepare for the school to come together by ringing the school bell, lighting a candle and opening the service. Music begins and ends the service, and children are encouraged to listen and reflect.
- Hymns or other suitable songs are sung.
- Stories play an important part: Bible stories, stories from other faiths, of great religious figures, of ordinary people, from the leader's own experience, fables and moral tales, etc. The moral aspect focuses on the positive.
- Poems, pictures, beautiful objects or any suitable visual or aural stimuli.
- Opportunities for children to ask questions or take an active part in the proceedings.
- Topical issues.
- At Grade Ruan assemblies are not generally used for administrative announcements or organisational matters, but things which fit naturally into the atmosphere of worship may be included, referred to, celebrated, and prayed about. Prayers are said. Important Christian prayers are used frequently. Children's own prayers are also used, and there are times for silent, private prayer.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions and reflective thinkings
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence

- Visitors

Songs/music

Songs and music are very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and help unify and uplift the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise with the songs we sing. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme.

Prayer

We feel that prayer is a positive way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to prayer which gives the children the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian/ Hindu/ Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship.

THEMES AND SUBJECT MATTER

- Bible stories
- Christian teaching
- The particular contributions of the Anglican Church and of other Christian denominations
- Consideration of the lives of leaders of other religions
- Reflection on the mysteries and wonders of the universe, and of man's relationship to the environment
- Looking at our relationships with others, and our responsibilities to them
- Consideration of school issues where appropriate
- Topical themes: local, national or international
- Aspects of our own local community
- Learning about the experiences and achievements of others
- Celebration of achievement, both inside and outside school
- Expressing and sharing sadness, disappointments, etc. when appropriate

It is expected that the development of values for life will be reinforced and further enhanced through each of the curriculum areas and the extra-curricular life of the school.

