

St John's Upper Holloway CE Primary School



Worship policy

June 2022

Worship Policy
2022-2023

Vision statement

Our Vision

Jesus said: 'Love each other as I have loved you'. John 15:12

As we are loved, so we shall love.

As we are taught, so we shall teach.

As we are nurtured, so we shall flourish.

Our Mission

St John's is a small, caring Church of England Primary School. It is committed to supporting our pupils to be happy, successful and fulfilled throughout their lives. We believe that everyone is unique and valued by God. We aspire to be a high achieving school that provides an outstanding education:

- ❖ promoting the highest standards of teaching and learning, with excellent leadership
- ❖ being inclusive, celebrating diversity and valuing all religions, faiths, cultures and backgrounds
- ❖ providing a rich and stimulating curriculum that will inspire and challenge
- ❖ being a happy, healthy and safe place
- ❖ providing excellent care, guidance and support with a strong partnership between school, parents and the community.

We seek to promote six Christian values of creativity, thankfulness, truthfulness, friendship, perseverance and courage, each linked by our core value of love. We believe this helps to prepare our children for a successful and fulfilling life, so being:

- ❖ considerate and respectful with excellent manners
- ❖ confident, happy, independent and self-motivated
- ❖ co-operative and collaborative
- ❖ honest and trustworthy
- ❖ resilient, hardworking and determined
- ❖ highly principled with moral, spiritual, cultural and social awareness, including shared British Values.

School aims of worship

"The Church school offers a distinctive language for understanding life and interpreting human experience. As a community of faith, the Church school should, in its best expression, reflect the nature of the Trinity, a life shared and defined by reference to others. Here we can begin to discover who we are, why we are, and – perhaps most importantly – what we might be"

*(The Way Ahead: Church of England schools in the new millennium
Archbishop's Council
2001)*

Worship in our school

The school holds a daily act of collective worship. Our acts of worship are planned in advance and reflect the Christian year (see termly 'Worship Programme' plans). We acknowledge that Christians worship in a variety of ways and at St John's Upper Holloway we recognise this diversity of practice. Our policy celebrates God as Creator, Jesus as the Son of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. The importance of the Bible and the Church as the foundations of Christianity are also celebrated. Shared values such as love, responsibility, kindness,

forgiveness, honesty and justice enrich the daily act of worship. In the entrance foyer, visitors, parents and children are welcomed by a display – specifically related to the themes of worship for that term.

There is a whole school act of worship held on Mondays and Wednesdays, taken by the Head teacher and one of the clergy respectively. Key stage acts of worship are held on Thursdays and reflect the theme of the week. A singing practice is held every Tuesday. A class act of worship is taken on designated Fridays, mapped into the worship timetable when the children celebrate their achievements as a class, by sharing them with staff, parents/ carers and the whole school. A whole school act of celebration is held every Friday. This is a time to share and celebrate those mentioned in the Brilliant Book, Merit Card Certificates, special mention certificates, Times Tables Certificates and attendance awards.

While St John's Upper Holloway is a Church of England school, we are committed to respecting individual beliefs. Upon entrance to the school, parents/ carers are made aware of the Christian basis of our teaching. It is therefore unlikely that parents/ carers would wish to exercise their legal right of withdrawal. However, should such a case arise, the parents/ carers concerned should consult the Head teacher.

We celebrate the cultural diversity of all the members of our school and have a cohesive community. Whilst collective worship will always reflect the Christian ethos of our school, we respect and acknowledge the variety of religious observances which are represented in our school and within the wider community.

We also celebrate the major Christian festivals throughout the year. Parents/ carers are invited to join us, either at school, or at our Parish Church; St John's Upper Holloway. These include Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week/ Easter.

Procedures

Children are expected to come into the school hall in silence, whilst appropriate music is played. The act of worship is seen as providing a period of calm and reflection within the school day, for the whole school (and its wider community when appropriate). A hymn, or age-appropriate song, is sung during assembly. These are varied so as to ensure all age groups can participate. We have a resource of hymns and songs, which are practised regularly every Tuesday and displayed on a projector during assembly. Our worship structure includes lighting a candle to signify that this is a time for reflection and calmness. When the clergy is present, a liturgical greeting is used and a final blessing given. The table at the front of the hall is covered in the appropriate liturgical colour. This is explained to the children. A prayer is said at the end and the children are invited either to join in by saying "Amen" at the end, or reflecting on the mood of the assembly by being "still on the inside and still on the outside". The Lord's Prayer or the School Prayer is also said together. The children leave assembly in silence, again accompanied by music.

Prayer

We believe that prayer should encompass the following:

- P Praise
- S Sorry – for the things done wrong by us and others
- A Asking for things – for others and ourselves
- L Listening – to God
- M Meditating on the mystery of God and the wonder of Creation

We believe that prayer should come from the heart, but we also know that it has to be taught by example. It is corporate or individual and at its heart it is communication between a believer and God.

Key Stage acts of worship are conducted by different class teachers each Thursday. The acts of worship follow the theme of the week (see termly 'Worship Programme' plans). The candle is lit and a prayer is said. Each class has a Bible, which is matched to the age/ needs of the children and given appropriate respect in the classroom.

In both Key Stages, all children are encouraged to write their own prayers, as appropriate to the RE topic and the ability of the child. These prayers are then stuck into the class prayer book and also posted into the school prayer box. Once a week a small group of parents, led by the school's vicar, meet to pray for the needs of the school, including reading and praying the prayers the children have written.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Spiritual and moral development is a life-long process and in the life of the children, is shared between parents/ carers, the school and the wider community. We acknowledge the wide variety of beliefs that make up our community; however our Policy reflects the Christian focus of our school. Therefore we seek to foster values and morals based on Christian teaching, which are also shared by the major world faiths. Key ideas and words that have been identified as being particularly appropriate when exploring spiritual and moral concepts and include the following:

- Life, birth, creation, death
- Sleep, refreshment, renewal
- Friendship, fidelity, love, passion, patience
- Imagination, inspiration, enlightenment
- Elation, delight, joy, gladness, laughter
- Sorrow, sadness, grief, reconciliation, forgiveness, self control
- Injustice, pain, suffering, anger, courage, shame, guilt
- Kindness, gratefulness
- Pity, compassion
- Wonder, awe, reverence, adoration
- Splendour, beauty, perfection
- Stillness, calm, peace, silence, tranquillity, harmony
- Light, darkness
- Eternity, mystery, infinity
- Hope, dream, fact, fantasy
- Insight, intuition, belief, faith, trust
- Truth, certainty, uncertainty, proof

Poems, stories, paintings, photographs, natural objects, and music are some of the ways that children can be encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective.

Resources

Resources for acts of worship are kept centrally stored. The resources are specifically chosen to deliver the relevant themes from the acts of worship overview. In addition, each class teacher has a year appropriate RE & Worship folder, in which specific resources to aid leading Key Stage acts of worship can be found. Class teachers may access these at any time to plan and prepare to lead their act of worship.

Planning for Worship

The worship plan informs members of staff of the themes for each week and is agreed between the Head teacher, the parish Vicar and RE/ Worship lead.

Monitoring and Record Keeping

Acts of worship are evaluated termly by the Head teacher, the parish vicar and RE/ Worship lead. We also have a worship team, made up of children from years 5-6, who meet termly to evaluate and develop our acts of worship. The Themes of worship are evaluated annually.

Ash Wednesday

Nursery up to year 6 attend the Ash Wednesday service at church as part of the regular congregation. All are invited to come forward to receive an Ash cross and it is underlined clearly that this act is their choice and that they will not be made to come forward.

Leavers

Each year, a special service for leavers takes place. Leavers are invited to “tell their story” and are also presented with a Bible. They are also reminded that the Church (as well as the school) will continue to be there for them in the years that lie ahead.

Rationale for Themes of Worship

Our acts of worship programme explicitly explores six Christian Values (1 value per half term), that we seek to exemplify within the school. These particular Christian Values were chosen specifically for their direct links with our Vision Statement based upon the John 15:12 verse, where Jesus says, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” Our chosen Christian Values are: Creativity, Thankfulness, Truthfulness, Friendship, Perseverance and Courage. These core Christian values also permeate throughout our school, and specifically through our Golden Rules (School Rules) and our Learning Behaviours.

Autumn term

We focus on Creativity and Thankfulness, reflecting a new school year, biblical creation stories and Harvest (celebrated in church). This leads to the theme of the coming of Jesus, which is explored in some depth, building up to Christmas (again, celebrated in church).

Spring term

We focus in the first half of the term upon Truthfulness, as exemplified through the life of Jesus. In the second half of the term we focus on Friendship, with particular emphasis on the Passion narratives, leading up to our Holy Week and Easter service, held in the church.

Summer term

In the first half of the summer term we concentrate on Perseverance. The second half of the term we look closely at Courage thinking about how we as a school seek to apply these values to our daily lives, both now and, for Year 6, in the new environment to which they are about to move.

Reviewed: June 2022

Next review: June 2023

Signed by head teacher _____ date _____

Signed by chair of C&S committee _____ date _____