

Whitley Chapel Church of England First School Worship policy

'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you.' Matt 6 v 33

Whitley Chapel is a Church of England school serving a rural community.

Our aim is to provide an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice, in a happy, secure and well-disciplined environment.

We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promote Christian values through the experience we offer to all our pupils.

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Collective worship, developing an awareness of God's love and truth and how it plays out in our lives, is at the heart of everything we do at Whitley Chapel First School. Every day starts with an act of worship or reflection, and children become aware of the importance of committing the day to God through the act of prayer very early on in their school lives.

Acts of Collective Worship seek to focus this awareness in different ways every day, through prayer and praise, through silence and reflection, through reading the Bible and applying it to our lives. Each act of worship is of approximately fifteen minutes duration.

Our aim is to promote spiritual development in this Christian context, to create a sense of belonging in a community of faith and to encourage the practice of the Christian values of forgiveness, respect, tolerance, love, joy and peace.

Acts of Collective Worship at Whitley Chapel C of E First School are entirely Christian in nature. At other times, there may be assemblies that demonstrate how other religions engage in worship and what other religions believe. But our daily acts of worship are of an Anglican character, and are entirely Christian in content.

How Collective Worship is organised

Themes for Collective Worship are planned at the beginning of each term by the Head teacher. These are based around the Church Calendar, and mark the key events of the Church year, but are also supplemented with themes for reflection or Bible themes based on particular Christian values, characters or stories, often using the Worship series by Margaret Cooling, or resources by Scripture Union.

Worship through song plays an important part in our school. Pupils love to praise God, or learn scripture through song, and take an active part in interpreting worship in movement and actions, in a range of songs from a variety of different Christian settings and cultures.

Active involvement is a very important part of our Collective worship; pupils take part in acting out Bible stories, but particularly enjoy contributing items of news, concern and celebration for Family Prayers, which is led weekly by our Chair of Governors, Reverend Andrew Patterson. We join daily in saying together the Lord's prayer, and care is taken to ensure that the Lord's prayer appears in a regular cycle of worship themes, so that all pupils understand what they are saying. However, pupils are also made aware that prayer is an agreement together, and that joining in is a choice if they can understand and support what is being shared. Once a term, each year group is invited to help plan an act of Collective worship based on the theme for that week. They work together with a

Teaching assistant to put together prayers, dramas or reflections to share with the rest of school. These will take place at the end of the day on a Friday so that parents who are coming to collect their children at the end of the day can also attend if they wish.

Collective worship is an important part of developing the ethos of the Christian family in our small school. We celebrate together weekly special achievements and birthdays. We also share core values through weekly PSHE assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to reflect on the way in which their actions demonstrate love and understanding towards others.

Our school hall is planned to reflect a sense of worship, with a display board which celebrates a particular aspect of RE that has been covered recently, and an artwork designed by past pupils to reflect the glory of God with the help of an artist in residence.

- Children enter the hall generally in silence or singing.
- Music is played
- The theme is introduced and talked about
- A song is shared
- Pupils are invited to reflect on the theme or contribute items for family prayer
- Collective prayers are said, followed by the Lord's Prayer

The school holds acts of worship in the church of St Helen's Whitley Chapel for the special festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Pupils also help to lead services for Lent and Remembrance Day. Parents and members of the local church community are encouraged to attend these events.

Weekly overview

Monday Whole School: 09:15 This worship time introduces the week's theme. It is led by the Head teacher. Pupils are invited to share reflections or to participate in acting out Bible stories. Readings are taken from the Good News Bible. Pupils are invited to reflect on the theme through prayer, and say together the Lord's Prayer.	Tuesday Whole School: 09:15 Family prayers, led by Rev Andrew Patterson. This worship time allows further development of the theme/Bible passage and time for singing, drama and reflection, and gives opportunities for pupils to share news, concerns and items for collective prayer.	Wednesday Whole School: 09:15 This worship time focuses on the important aspect of singing in the life of a Church school. Children have opportunities to lead and learn new worship songs and use familiar songs as a way of praising God together.	Thursday Whole School: 9.15 Values Assembly led by Mrs Hilton (Class 2) or Mrs Bowyer (EYFS). The children also share and discuss any family / community or world issues they wish to pray for. Reflection time is included and children share in prayers for others.	Friday Whole School: 2.45 Children's work and achievements are celebrated within a Christian context. Special Class Led Worship is also timetabled, and parents are invited to attend and join in with worship.
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Prayer also takes place at lunchtimes, to express gratitude for God's provision, and at home time, to ask for his care and keeping throughout the rest of the day. It is an important part of the rhythm of daily school life.

Prayer and Reflection space

The size of the building makes it difficult to include a prayer space in every classroom. For this reason, we have set aside a special area in the corridor leading off the hall, where children can come with a teaching assistant or on their own to spend a few minutes in quiet reflection. This space is also used for sitting together to plan class prayers, and for reading Bible or other reflective stories in groups, and for special Prayer Space activities, such as making artefacts to encourage prayer, and special communal displays.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Whitley Chapel C of E First School is an inclusive school and acts of worship reflect this. We incorporate a global dimension into worship and ensure visual images represent our diverse heritage, and choose songs from across all continents.

Our worship is drawn from the traditions and liturgy of the Anglican Communion worldwide, and we seek to be ecumenical, to include people from all the Christian denominations and all cultures. People of other faiths are also welcome to participate as they wish.

We seek to include every child in acts of Christian worship. We recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their child from any act of worship and this is respected.

January 2019.