

"Prayer turns our hearts towards God." *St. Augustine*

**"I know the only way to see the world, is to see it through His eyes. This is why I pray."
*Henri Nouwen***

Rationale

The staff and governors of Jesson's Church of England Primary School see our main purpose as providing a broad educational experience, and enabling our children to achieve excellence, both academic and social, within a secure Christian context:

"Helping children be the best they can be"

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." *Joshua 1:9*

Subject to its physical capacity, our school welcomes all children from the immediate neighbourhood and beyond, whatever their family faith, if parents wish an education in a Christian context for their children.

Purpose

The definition of worship which we have evolved at Jesson's is the gathering together of our school community to learn about and to praise God, and to reflect on our own individual spiritual journeys.

Worship therefore involves us gathering together to express feelings of respect and love; for ourselves, for others, for our local community and our world, as gifts from God.

"For where two or three gather in My name, there am I with them." *Matthew 18:20*

Aims

In accordance with statutory requirements and the Aided nature of our school, we aim to place collective worship at the centre of our school's daily life.

- We aim to worship in a **Christian context** while **respecting** the faiths of others, and those with no faith.
- We aim to provide worship opportunities that pay due regard to our children's **family backgrounds**, to their **ages**, their **aptitudes** and their **interests**.
- We aim to **excite** children about religion and spirituality; to foster **awe and wonder**; to **challenge** and **provoke**; to stimulate **curiosity** and **reflection**; to promote **love**; and to help children feel that **all faith is relevant** to daily life.

Objectives

We try to meet our aims by the way in which we organise and deliver collective worship in our school.

- We put collective worship at the **centre** of school life by having an act of worship **every single day**. This is usually in one of the **halls**, but children also enjoy **classroom assemblies**, involving smaller numbers and therefore feeling more intimate in nature.
- We always show respect for, and knowledge of, **all faiths**, drawing links when possible, and using stories from a variety of sources.
- We base our worship on a rolling programme of **Core Christian Values**, a different value each half term, over a two-year period.

Pattern for Worship

"A tree is known by its fruit."

Matthew 12:33

Our assemblies follow the same overall pattern, as prescribed in the "Roots and Fruits" (Collective Worship for Primary Schools) programme:

WELCOME, LEARNING, REFLECTING, RESPONDING.

Children are **invited** to join in prayers, and if they agree with them, saying 'Amen' at the end. They are encouraged to bow their heads, but can hold their hands in whatever position is appropriate for their faith/belief. Children of no faith can simply rest their hands in their laps.

Forms of Collective Worship

Assemblies are held on a **daily basis** in various forms (*as outlined above in the Objectives*). Assemblies are mostly led by the **Head teacher, Deputy head and Assistant heads**, with **Phase heads** also leading weekly Phase assemblies.

On Tuesdays we have a rota of regular, well-loved **visitors**; these invariably include involvement of the pupils themselves.

Class assemblies (*led by the children*) take place on **Fridays** throughout the year. **Parents** are invited along with the other classes in the phase.

Sometimes our Collective Worship includes learning new **songs and hymns**. Our children love learning new songs, and are very enthusiastic singers!

Weekly classroom assemblies make use of **ISingPOP**, an online worship resource. Singing, stories and prayers are included, as well as optional follow-up activities.

Another of the ways in which we fulfil the Christian character of our school is by having **services**, led by our **KS2** children, in our local church of St. James the Great*. (*Beginning of Year, Harvest, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Leavers' Service*)

The **current incumbent** of the church is always invited to attend and take part, as are **parents and governors**.

KS1 children have their own special Collective Worship in the large school hall to celebrate these events.

**With the imminent closure of the church, we are looking at ways we can continue with our services in the future.*

It must be stressed that, as our school is the centre of an inclusive community, our Collective Worship must also reflect all the different faiths and world views within it.*

**including Atheism and Humanism*

As a school, we hope that the way we conduct our worship helps the children become aware of what it means to be part of a community, committed to serving and caring for each other, God and our world.

We hope to create an atmosphere in which pupils:

- are **invited** rather than **compelled** to explore issues for themselves;
- **reflect** upon and learn from their own experiences and the experiences of others;
- develop their **spirituality**: a sense of wonder, awe and mystery for the world of which they are a part.

The governors believe in actively encouraging all children and staff to take part in daily worship. However, the right to withdraw does exist, even if rarely exercised.

Monitoring and Recording

Acts of worship are arranged into **half-termly themes** (as outlined previously), with diversions for special days. These are reported to the Governing Body in the **Head teacher's termly report**.

Visitors and church services are also monitored in this way.

Governors and parents have a **standing invitation** to attend any act of worship, which they often do; in this way they can experience for themselves the way in which this policy is put into practice.

Equal Opportunities

"Central to Christian theology is the truth that every single one of us is made in the image of God. Every one of us is loved unconditionally by God...Church of England schools offer a community where everyone is a person known and loved by God..." regardless of race, religion, gender or sexuality.

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury 2018

Our school collective worship is about sharing what is **meaningful** and **significant** in our lives. It is about sharing our common **beliefs** and **responsibilities**, and developing **positive attitudes and values**.

It is about affirming the **equality** of each individual in God's sight, valuing **all** God's children (VAGC).

Resources

There are many resources for Collective Worship in school. These are found primarily in the Head's, Deputy's and the RE Co-ordinator's offices.

Our main resources are the **'Values for Life'** and the **'Roots and Shoots'** worship programmes, though other resources are widely available.

Regular visitors include the Bible Society's **'Open the Book'** group.

Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed by key staff of the school in conjunction with the Curriculum Committee of the Governors. Any changes to its content which this group recommends, will require the consent of the full Governing Body.