

# **St Mary's Church of England Primary School**

## **Christian Life of the School Policy**

Policy produced by the school

Adopted by [School](#)-Academic year 2020/21

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Our school is situated within an increasingly diverse community, reflecting a multi-faith and multi-racial community, which we recognise and value. The school aims to reflect the local community while ensuring that the Christian foundations are still maintained.

While our school has a Christian foundation, 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.

### **Vision and Values**

Our Primary School offers a distinctly Christian education in an inclusive environment, welcoming children and staff of all faiths and none.

‘Church schools should nourish Christians in their faith, encourage those of other faiths and challenge those of no faith’

Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury 1980-1991

The distinctive nature of our approach to education can be found in our explicit Christian values, our collective worship, our grounded Christian ethos and in our Religious Education.

We aim to provide excellent learning opportunities, promoting achievement in every area and nurturing social, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Character and resilience are the qualities, the inner resources that we call on to get us through the frustrations and setbacks that are part and parcel of life. We must instil these qualities in our children and make sure that they are ready to make their way in the world as robust and confident individuals.

As our children gain confidence and skills we hope that they will go on to become compassionate, well balanced young people. They will take their place in society as active citizens, economically independent, exemplifying the British values of equality, tolerance, democracy, individual liberty and rule of law.

As a Church school we believe every child is made in the image of God, and therefore we want the best for them. We value our school community as a place where love can flourish.

**The four foundations of our curriculum are**

1. Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills (value link-perseverance)
2. Educating for Hope and Aspiration (value link-forgiveness)
3. Educating for Community and Living Well Together (value link-compassion, responsibility)
4. Educating for Dignity and Respect (value link-integrity, respect)

**Our school motto is based upon Philippians 2:1-16**

**Go, shine in the world and live as Jesus lived, with compassion, honesty and integrity.**

As a community, we have identified **six core values** that are woven in to the very fabric of the school which we expect all members of the school community-pupils, staff, governors, clergy- to model.

**Compassion** A deep awareness and sympathy for another's suffering  
*When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.(Mark 6:34)*

**Integrity** The quality of having strong moral principles eg honesty, decency, fairness, equality  
*Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.(Philippians 4:8)*

**Forgiveness** Excusing a mistake or offence  
*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us (Matt 6:12-15)*

**Perseverance** Keeping on trying even though it may be difficult to succeed, a form of resilience  
*Be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience (Colossians 1:11-12)*

**Respect** Regard highly, value, honour  
*And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them (Luke 6:31)*

**Responsibility** A form of trustworthiness, being responsible for your own actions  
*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self control (Timothy 1:7)*

**We believe that parents and teachers have a responsibility to ensure that children leave school with:**

- good basic skills in English, maths and ICT
- a love of learning
- good social skills
- a sense of responsibility towards society
- the confidence to stand up for themselves
- the knowledge that they are special in God's eyes

**so that they are well equipped for a successful future.**

## **Our Motto**

***Go shine in the world and live as Jesus lived with compassion, honesty and integrity!***

The meaning and significance of this Christian motto is taught explicitly to our children in the following ways...

- An explanation of 'Go Shine In The World and live as Jesus lived with compassion, honesty and integrity' with reference to The Scriptures is displayed prominently in a public area of the school. This includes examples of how pupils might 'shine in the world' in their everyday lives, following the example set by Jesus Christ. This display is explicit about Jesus Christ being the 'Light of the world'.
- Headteacher Special Mention certificates ( given out at the weekly celebration assembly ) refer to 'Go Shine In The World'.
- Praise Postcards (sent home to selected pupils once a term ) refer to 'Go Shine In The World'.
- The motto 'Go Shine In The World' is visible throughout school communal area eg in school lobbies.
- At the end of each communal act of worship, the leader asks pupils to 'Go Shine In The World!'
- During acts of worship, pupils are asked to reflect on and in some cases discuss how the person in the story was 'shining in the world'.
- Younger pupils may receive praise stickers from members of staff explicitly detailing how they have been 'shining in the world'

## **Nurturing spirituality**

Children are capable of deep spiritual experiences from an early age. Before they even find words to express it, they become aware of something other than themselves and their small worlds, something that is inspiring and good. An understanding of God is already within children and we are asked to give them the verbal vocabulary to express what they already experience.

Through liturgy and through everyday experiences, children come to know that they are not alone in their spiritual beliefs and that there are ways of communicating with and about their spiritual nature.

## **What is worship?**

Worship is the giving of honour and praise to God, who is most worthy of it. Worship is a response to our experiences of life. (Some churches use the word *worship* instead of *liturgy*).

## **What is prayer?**

Prayer is communion with God. It involves listening as well as speaking in thanks, praise, petition and blessing. Prayer can be an individual or communal activity. Prayer can use words that others have composed or words of our own. Prayer need not involve any words at all.

## **What is reflection and meditation?**

Reflection and meditation are used to develop our spiritual nature through reflecting on the presence of God in the world and in scripture, whilst encouraging children to silently contemplate their lives.

## **What is liturgy?**

Liturgy always includes prayer, reflection and worship. It involves participation through symbol and action (ritual).

## **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.

We acknowledge that Christians worship in a variety of ways and at our school 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, courage, forgiveness, thankfulness, truthfulness, perseverance, and equality and justice enrich the daily act of worship.

## **The range of opportunities for collective worship in our school**

- Gospel assembly - following up on the gospel teaching in church from the previous Sunday. [These assemblies are held weekly throughout the year.](#)
- Values assemblies – [these are held weekly for the children in the spring term.](#) They focus on one of our core values each week and are related to gospel stories.
- Celebration Worship - this is a time to share and celebrate school and individual achievements e.g. special mention certificates, person of the week certificates and attendance awards, sporting achievements etc.
- [Teacher led reflection – These are held weekly in all year groups, in each classroom in the autumn and summer term.](#)
- Children Leading Worship - this takes place once a week in classrooms in all year groups throughout the school [in the spring term.](#)
- Christian Meditation - this takes place in all year groups every day after morning break times or lunch times.
- Class masses or liturgies - these are led by our parish priest. They take place in the summer term. Parents are invited to join us.

- Whole school mass - whole school mass is led by our priest. This takes place at least once a term at school and sometimes at the church. Parents are invited to join us.
- Daily prayers at the start of the day, before lunch and at the end of the day.

We also celebrate the major Christian festivals throughout the year. Parents/carers are invited to join us at school. These include Advent, Christmas, Lent (which itself includes Ash Wednesday, Holy Week/ Easter), and Harvest.

### **Themes of Worship**

Throughout the school year our themes of worship are divided into two main strands. We follow the current cycle in the liturgical year of the Church and our key stage Acts of Worship reflects the gospel reading of the previous Sunday. In this way the children develop an awareness of the Christian Church traditions and journey, with the wider church, through the life of Christ from birth to Resurrection, the promise of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the Good News. In this way too, the children gain experience of the seasons in the liturgical calendar eg Advent.

The second strand of our themes of worship looks at a range of spiritual and moral issues which the children encounter, at differing levels. Through interactive acts of worship, issues such as sharing, fair and unfair, right and wrong, recognising choices, meeting needs, making a contribution etc are explored and discussed. Children are invited to contribute their ideas and opinions. We also invite outside speakers to address the children on a variety of issues.

In RE lessons, the school follows the LDBS Religious Education scheme and the prayer services held in classrooms throughout the year reflect either the current topic of study or the liturgical year.

### **Conducting an Act of Worship**

Wherever possible, children, school staff, parents, governors and the clergy take part in leading an act of worship together.

If the act of worship is in assembly, 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. Our worship structure includes **turning on a** candle to signify that God is with us and that this is a time for reflection and calmness. A liturgical greeting is used and a final blessing given. The altar **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 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.

A suite of school prayers are in place for class teachers to use with children at the beginning of the school day, before lunch and at the end of the school day.

To support the importance of individual prayer lives, the children have a prayer book that begins in Reception class and is added to termly with the child's own prayers. This book follows the children throughout their time at school and is presented to them when they leave our school.

## **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 in the resources and PPA room. The resources are specifically chosen to deliver the relevant themes from the acts of worship overview. 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, one of the parish clergy and RE/Christian life of the School leader.

## **Children Leading Worship**

Every week in the spring term each class plan and lead an act of worship. The theme of this is related to the liturgical calendar, their Religious Education topic or pertinent current affairs, e.g. remembering the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower fires. The children use the four areas of 'Gather', 'Word', 'Respond' and 'Mission' to structure their act of worship.

## **Year 6 Leavers' service**

Each year, a special service for Year 6 leavers takes place at school. Leavers are invited to "tell their story" and are also presented with a Bible and their school prayer book. 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.

## **Assembly Themes**

### **Autumn Term Assemblies** (whole school or key stage acts of worship)

1. A teacher led reflection in class- we use the structure of Gather, Word, Respond and Mission.
2. Gospel assembly where we listen to the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. A child will always read directly from Scripture and this is then reflected on to support children's understanding of the Gospel and its messages. There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.
3. KS1 Christian Values Assembly – there is a reading from a Scripture story linked to one of our seven Christian values. This is then reflected on to support children's understanding of the Christian value and how it links to their lives. There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.
4. KS2 Christian Values Assembly – there is a reading from Scripture story linked to one of our seven Christian values. This is then reflected on to support children's understanding of the Christian value and how it links to their lives. There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.



5. Celebration Assembly- In this Assembly we celebrate Person of the Week from each class, special mentions and the attendance award. We give out a prize for the newsletter slip, times tables and any trust group nominations. We also say The Lord's Prayer together, hold a silent reflection and sing a song.

### **Spring Term Assemblies**

1. Children leading worship in class - we use the structure of Gather, Word, Respond and Mission. Gather: the children gather together whilst listening to or singing a song (usually in a circle on the carpet around a focus in the middle e.g. a cross and the candle). Word: a short piece of Scripture is chosen by the children (6 children are the leaders for the term). The scripture can come from the Gospel of the previous Sunday or linked to the learning in RE for that week. Response: A prayer or symbolic action e.g. all think about the reading and put a pebble into the middle of the circle, all reflect in silence on the message of the reading. Mission: the children are given 4 options and in they decide (silently) what they will do following on from the Word which will enrich their lives e.g. smile at friends, give Mum a hug, be kinder, pray.
2. Gospel Assembly where we listen to the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. A child will always read directly from Scripture and this is then reflected on to support children's understanding of the Gospel and its messages. There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.
3. KS1 Current Affairs Assembly – in this Assembly the teacher shows the Espresso News bites clips which show worldwide events of the week. The events are discussed and reflected on with the teacher drawing out relevant British Values where appropriate. The responses from the Talk Topic board are read out and discussed. We end with a song and a prayer.
4. KS2 Current Affairs Assembly – in this Assembly the teacher shows the Espresso News bites clips which show worldwide events of the week. The events are discussed and reflected on with the teacher drawing out relevant British Values where appropriate. The responses from the Talk Topic board are read out and discussed. We end with a song and a prayer.
5. Celebration Assembly- In this Assembly we celebrate Person of the Week from each class, special mentions and the attendance award. We give out a prize for the newsletter slip, times tables and any trust group nominations. We also say The Lord's Prayer together, hold a silent reflection and sing a song.

### **Summer Term Assemblies**

1. A teacher led reflection in class- we use the structure of Gather, Word, Respond and Mission.
2. Gospel Assembly where we listen to the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. A child will always read directly from Scripture and this is then reflected on to support children's understanding of the Gospel and its messages. There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.
3. KS1 7 Habits of Happy Kids Assembly. The teacher reads out and discusses a story linked to one of the 7 habits. In talk partners the children are led to reflect on how the habit can help them in their own life. (The habits are repeated in the second half of the term with a different story, but the same habit). There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.

4. KS2 7 Habits of Happy Kids Assembly. The teacher reads out and discusses a story linked to one of the 7 habits. In talk partners the children are led to reflect on how the habit can help them in their own life. (The habits are repeated in the second half of the term with a different story, but the same habit). There is a silent reflection, a prayer and a hymn.
5. Celebration Assembly- In this Assembly we celebrate Person of the Week from each class, special mentions and the attendance award. We give out a prize for the newsletter slip, times tables and any trust group nominations. We also say The Lord's Prayer together, hold a silent reflection and sing a song.

### **At the start of all assemblies...**

Assemblies are led by an adult with two children prayer leaders from Y2-Y6 every week. The same two children lead for every assembly for the whole week. The adult will lead the sign of the cross, with all adults and children joining in. The prayer leaders will say: "The Lord be with you". Response from the whole school: "And also with you." Prayer leaders: "Lift up your hearts." Response: "We lift them up to the Lord. Prayer leaders: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." Response: "It is right to give thanks and praise."

### **Prayer leaves**

These are prayers written by children which are for their own personal intentions. Four children read out a prayer leaf as part of each weekly Gospel assembly and then hang their prayer on the tree. The organisation for these prayers will be: Autumn term Year 3 and Year 4, spring term Year 5 and summer term Year 6. The head of school will give the Year 3 to Year 6 class teachers 30 prayer leaves in the first week of the relevant term. The teachers give their class one session in which to write their prayers and they are then given to the Head of School at the end of that week. The writing of prayer leaves is optional, the children do not have to write one, but are encouraged to write one if they'd like to. When setting up for the Gospel assembly, 4 prayers are chosen at random and those children read out their prayer in the assembly, then hang them on the tree for others to read. At any point, a child can request a prayer leaf from the Head of School and their prayers will be added to the leaves read out.