



WORSHIP POLICY

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Northbourne CE (A) Primary School

Cockcroft Road,
Didcot
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Worship Policy

1.1 Aims of worship

At Northbourne CE (A) Primary School we believe that worship should be an integral part of the life of the school, reflecting the Christian ethos of the school, the Anglican tradition of Christianity and valuing and developing our links to St. Peter's Church. As such, we strive to ensure that worship is an important and valuable part of each school day by ensuring it:

- Strives to be uplifting
- Has high status and value
Worship will be carefully planned and organised, coherent with the school's vision and mission statement and take place in an environment conducive to worship
- Is an educational experience
As such, worship takes account of the ages and family backgrounds of pupils, extends learning opportunities offered to pupils and reflects learning which takes place across the whole curriculum
- Is inclusive
- Invites, rather than coerces, response and participation from pupils and staff
The organisation and language of collective worship allows for different levels of response, in acknowledgement that pupils will have widely differing experiences of worship
- Contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (see appendix 1)

Collective worship at Northbourne includes material from faiths other than Christianity; for example, the major festivals of other faiths may be used as starting points for worship. We believe that this is a key part of the general religious and cultural education of other pupils, and provides ways of growing understanding and valuing members of other faiths in school and wider society.

1.2 Statutory requirements

Arrangements for collective worship in schools are the responsibility of the governors in consultation with the headteacher. Church schools must fulfil three main legal requirements for collective worship:

- Provide an act of worship for all pupils every day
- Ensure that collective worship is in accordance with the trust deed of the school
- Include a statement in the school prospectus that makes it clear that parents may withdraw their children from all or any part of collective worship.

We acknowledge the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from collective worship.

1.3 Worship in practice

Worship takes place in a variety of groupings and is led by a range of people. The headteacher has responsibility for the overall management of this. Children are involved in worship in a range of ways, including through taking part in demonstrations or activities, through leading prayer, by asking questions, by helping the headteacher or other leader of worship evaluate the success of the session, or by planning and leading whole sessions themselves (see note 1 below). Assemblies are also used to share and celebrate the achievements and work of children, and parents are invited to join us for some of these.

To meet our aim of ensuring worship is an educational experience, sessions are carefully planned to be relevant, appropriate and engaging for the age groups involved. Records of this planning, showing the themes and content covered, are available for governors and parents on request.

We strive to ensure we create a sense of purpose and atmosphere conducive to worship. To enable this, worship contains a range of experiences, typically including time for reflection, for prayer, music, a hymn and other engaging stories or stimuli.

	Assembly	Led by	Attended by
Monday	God's Storyteller ¹	Rev Hannah Reynolds	Whole school (9:05am)
Tuesday	Whole-school Worship ²	Headteacher / pupils	Whole school (2:35pm)
Wednesday	Singing / Sharing assembly	Paul Shaughnessy Individual classes	Whole school (9:05am / 9:10am) (parents are invited to join us for sharing assemblies)
Thursday	Classroom worship, linked to God's Storyteller and current values	Class teachers	Individual classes
Friday	Celebration assembly	Senior Leadership Team	Whole school (2:25pm)
End of each term (except term 3)	Service at St. Peters' Church	Church leaders	Whole school

¹God's Storyteller is a 4-year cycle of stories, written by Edward Carter, each of which is, in essence, a parable about God and the events in the Bible. Each term has an ongoing story, a theme and a Bible verse, and each story encourages children to think about their own values in light of the adventures of the characters in the story.

²Whole school worship on Tuesday generally takes the previous episode of God's Storyteller as a starting point, following on from and developing either the themes or the stories introduced during worship the previous week. Pupils are invited to lead this worship by nominating themselves and working with the Headteacher to develop their ideas into a plan. In addition, throughout each term some Monday assemblies will instead be based on themes and festivals from other religions which may complement the concepts and stories in God's Storyteller or which may act as more discrete acts of reflection to tie in with national or international events. The first worship of each term tends to be linked to the core Christian value which is the focus for the term, and this remains a focus for worship throughout the rest of the term.

1.4 Evaluating worship

Whole-school worship is evaluated weekly, after each session. This is in the form of notes which are recorded by the person leading the session. This evaluation frequently involves children and staff, and is based on reflections around whether the worship was effective in helping meet any aims of the individual session as well as the broader aims of worship (section 1.1).

The cycle of worship, including its planning and organisation, is evaluated by the Senior Leadership Team on an annual basis, with any resulting changes to cycle of delivery taking effect from the start of each academic year. As such, this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it reflects any changes to the cycle of worship.

Appendix 1

In order to contribute as fully as possible to pupils' *spiritual, moral, social and cultural development*, worship at Northbourne:

- Has a sense of occasion
- Invites participation
- Is concerned with the worship of God
- Provides an opportunity for pupils to explore their feelings
- Provides opportunities for individuals and the community to share what is of importance to them
- Celebrates beliefs, values and ideals
- Respects the integrity of all individuals, valuing everyone as a child of God
- Promotes Christian moral values
- Promotes the moral code of the school and explores the rationale for them
- Promotes personal qualities such as thoughtfulness, fairness, respect and honesty
- Reflects on models of moral virtue in literature, the lives of contemporary people and those in the past
- Fosters a sense of community and belonging
- Is varied in style and includes different forms of expression for example art, music, story, dance
- Celebrates pupils' talents
- Makes use of symbols and imagery

As a Church of England school, we aim to reflect some of the essential features of Anglican worship. Elements of *Anglican heritage* drawn on in worship over a period of time typically include:

- Use of the Bible as a source book for inspiration and learning
- Reflection on Christian symbols and their use in worship
- Observation of the cycle of the Anglican year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost
- Providing opportunities to discover the value of meditation and silence within the context of Christian worship
- Experiencing the bond of community which encompasses gender, age, race and religious affiliation. This could be expressed through a range of visitors invited to attend or contribute to worship
- Sharing in a commitment to engage in dialogue with other faiths, shown in the welcome we offer to all pupils and the celebration of shared values and beliefs.