



WORSHIP POLICY

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Northbourne CE Primary School

Cockcroft Road,
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Worship Policy

At Northbourne CE Primary School we aspire to ensure that worship is “truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifies the principles of Christian hospitality”. In line with guidance from the Church of England, we aim to meet the needs of all, “wherever they may be on their journey of faith and belief”, and to provide experiences of worship that are inclusive, invitational and inspiring (*Collective Worship in Church of England Schools Guidance Document: Inclusive Invitational Inspiring*).

Inclusive:

- Our worship involves meeting, exploring, questioning and responding to others and, for some, to God.
- It is inclusive of, and accessible to, all – of different faith backgrounds and of none.
- Worship provides time and space to think and ask question, to reflect and to consider.
- Language used does not assume faith.
- Worship is not ‘done to’, but involves meaningful contributions from the school community, including pupils. Through the worship cycle, we aim to involve children in planning, leading and evaluating worship.

Invitational:

- Participants are not compelled to ‘do anything’ in worship; instead, this provides the opportunity for everyone to engage, irrespective of faith and belief.
- A clear Christian message is at the heart of worship, and participants interact with this to the degree they feel comfortable.
- Prayer is always invitational, and accompanied by the option to reflect.

Inspiring:

- Worship is formational and transformational, providing opportunities to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do.
- Worship aims to motivate pupils and adults into action, inspiring them to be courageous advocates of causes.
- Participants are encouraged to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and convictions.

1.1 Aims of worship

At Northbourne CE Primary School, worship is an integral part of the life of the school. It reflects the Christian ethos of the school, the Anglican tradition of Christianity and values and develops our links to St. Peter’s Church. As such, and in line with guidance from the Church of England, we aim to ensure that worship:

- Explores the school’s vision and how this underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it reflects on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation, and develops virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.
- Helps pupils and adults appreciate the relevance of faith in today’s world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example, using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enables pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

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
- Ensure parents understand they may withdraw their children from all or any part of collective worship.

The right of parents to withdraw pupils from the daily act of collective worship was established in the Education Act 1944, and re-enacted in the Education Reform Act 1988. Parents wishing to withdraw a child from worship should, in the first instance, contact the school office to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher.

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. Where possible, and on recovery from the pandemic, parents are invited to participate in some acts of worship.

To meet our aims of ensuring worship is inclusive, invitational and inspirational 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	Whole-school Worship ²	Headteacher / pupils	Whole school (9:05am)
Tuesday	God's Storyteller ¹	Rev Hannah Reynolds	Whole school (9:05am)
Wednesday	Singing	Paul Shaughnessy / Charlotte Rawcliffe / Caroline Johnston	Whole school (9:05am)
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 Monday 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. Some Monday assemblies are 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 sessions of worship of each term tend to be linked to the core Christian value which is the focus for the term, and the Jigsaw PSHE focus.

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.