



Stoke Canon Church of England Primary School

Worship Policy

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

Our vision of **‘Nurture and Grow’ Through Compassion, Integrity and Kindness** is underpinned by the Parable of the Sower.

‘But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields’

Parable of the Sower: Matthew (13:23)

As a small rural village primary school, we are surrounded by the amazing landscape of the Devon countryside. Planting and harvesting are part of our daily lives so therefore we use the Parable of the Sower from Matthew 13 to show our pupils that if we nurture each other and give each other the right support to grow as individuals then we will develop love, honesty and respect for each other and everyone in our global community.

We talk to the children about what the parable means so they recognise its deeper meaning and how difficulties in our lives and negative influences impact on us.

¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of



wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

We feel that the Parable of the Sower is profoundly relevant to our Christian School Community as it encapsulates the fundamental beliefs and ideas about faith, growth and the reception of God’s word.

Firstly, it teaches us about the necessity of a receptive and prepared heart. Just as good soil is essential for seeds to flourish, a heart open to God’s Word and values is crucial for spiritual growth.

Secondly, the parable highlights the challenges and distractions that can hinder our spiritual development. The rocky ground, thorns and paths represent various obstacles that can hinder spiritual growth and can affect the development of key values.

Lastly, the parable inspires us with the promise that if we nurture our spiritual lives and values that we will not only experience personal growth, but we will impact collectively as a community.

‘Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

Policy Statement

In Stoke Canon Church of England Primary School worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school’s vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Stoke Canon C of E Primary School collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals



of the Christian (*and other faiths*¹) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.²

Church of England Guidance

Collective worship policy at Stoke Canon C of E Primary draws on guidance from the Church of England³. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. Worship in Stoke Canon C of E Primary distinctly Christian and reflects Anglican traditions but includes acts of worship that look at other World Views, Religions and Special events.

The Governing body school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

The right of withdrawal

In Stoke Canon C of E Primary School there are children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non- religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, then it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

¹ Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

² "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

³ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>



On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

Guiding Principles

Collective worship in Stoke Canon C of E Primary School aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.



- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

Planning

Our worship lead develops a rolling programme based on the scheme of 'Roots and Fruits' and shares this with all involved in worship. We do use other resources in school to support worship such as the BBC resources and SPCK. Values are highlighted in the school calendar, so everyone is aware of what we are currently reflecting upon. We have all the relevant materials and posters to support the scheme and materials that support the EYFS. Explicit links are made between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school. Our pattern of worship reflects the Anglican tradition.

At the beginning of every act of worship we light a candle. In class acts of worship and Key stage acts of worship we may have an object, battery operated candle or picture to focus on.

At the end of the act of worship there is time for reflection and an invitation to pray.



Our rolling programme reflects the cycle of the Church year, and we use a range and variety of materials used, including websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle. We develop spiritual growth through prayer, stillness and reflection is nurtured (See Spirituality Policy)

Leading and Organisation

Our Monday and Tuesday acts of Worship are led by the Executive Headteacher. This is supported by worship monitors in Year 6.

On Wednesday we have class worship which is led by staff and pupils. This focusses on Spirituality and Big Questions.

On Thursday we have acts of worship in Key Stages which focus on looking at World Religions and world Views as well as special events in the calendar.

On Friday we have a Celebration Assembly that is led by the Head of School and focusses on the achievements of pupils.

Members of the clergy support the school by leading acts of worship at least once a term and supporting our termly 'Prayer Spaces'

We also have visiting Speakers and visitors who do acts of worship on a range of different topics.

Collective Worship can take place in the church, the hall, the classroom, outside in the playground or anywhere where we can be together as a school community.

Roles and Responsibilities

All the following stakeholders have a duty to uphold the worship policy

- The governing body
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team
- Clergy and church partners

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. We have in-house training, and we are also supported by the Exeter Diocese. Our Worship lead has completed the training on 'inspirational, invitational and inclusive'



Monitoring and evaluation

- We monitor and evaluating the impact of worship through a number of ways e.g. Ethos group, children, staff, link/foundation governors, clergy
- Evidence to show how the monitoring and evaluation of worship has led to its strengthening and development over time

Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

Other Useful Documents: (can be found on the diocesan website⁴)

Date of last review: July 24

Headteacher signed: *L.J. Herbert* Date: July 24

Chair of Governors signed: *T. Smith* Date: August 24