

Ely St John's Primary School
Collective Worship Policy

Issue	Date of Issue	Amended by	Notes
1	November 2014	Head	1 st Issue
2			

Ely St John's Primary School aims to ensure our school curriculum matches our ethos and aims.

At Ely St John's we ...

- Provide a caring, friendly school community in which every child and adult feels valued and secure.
- Ensure that all children have equal access to broad, relevant and stimulating teaching.
- Have challenging but realistic expectations of each child.
- Develop open and enquiring minds.
- Promote independence, encouraging children to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- Play a full and developing role in the local and extended community.

Teachers, together with parents and the wider community, play an important part in the development of the whole child.

Collective Worship is an important part of school life (see Appendix 1). It is a part of developing our overall ethos. Assemblies are a key part of reinforcing our Positive Behaviour Code, the EJ Way, which conveys many of the values and principles of Christianity and other world religions as well as basic values held within society generally.

Ely St John's people.....
Look after each other
Are proud to work together
Are excited to learn new things
Know how to share their thoughts and feelings
Are kind to themselves

What is collective worship?

To worship is defined as, 'to give worth to..' and, in a school context, it is *collective* worship (within a mixed group) not *corporate worship* (within a group with shared beliefs) that takes place. It is therefore not the same as the worship that takes place in a church or other place of worship where all members are together because of a shared religion or set of beliefs. The most appropriate opportunity for worship comes in the quiet, reflective times when a thought is shared with everyone and children are encouraged to listen and respond. Children may choose to respond with a prayer or quiet thought of their own. All pupils can be invited to listen to the words of a religious prayer if rooted in the tradition it comes from and may be encouraged to read their own prayers or reflections. The emphasis is on sharing and inviting appropriate response. Collective worship is more than an assembly or a coming together of groups – reflection and thinking. It is about providing the opportunity for all children to respond in the way that is right for them. It is about providing the opportunity for all children to respond in the way that is right for them. Collective worship should be educational, inclusive, engaging and have an atmosphere different to the rest of the day. It should challenge children to think beyond their own lives and broaden perspectives. It should nurture pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.

Aims of collective worship:

- To provide an opportunity for all children to encounter and experience worship ; or have the opportunity to worship or respond according to their own beliefs and to explore a sense of the sacred
- To aid spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (*see appendix 2*)
- To promote a feeling of inclusivity but a respect for the integrity of all individual beliefs

- To foster feelings of awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy
- To encourage reflection, participation, active involvement and response
- To explore and respond to the aesthetic, creative and spiritual
- To promote a community spirit, a common ethos and shared positive values
- To explore the children's own beliefs and encourage respect and understanding for the beliefs of others
- To heighten awareness of ultimate questions and the realities of life

Through the act of collective worship we intend to:

- Give individuals the feeling of being valued members of a caring community with shared values
- Create an atmosphere in which there is opportunity for silent reflection, inner response and active participation
- Provide time to share ideas, experiences and successes
- Celebrate gifts, talents and achievements
- Give opportunity for the expression of hope, thankfulness, love, joy, worry, humility or admission of need
- Increase awareness and response to the natural world and global issues
- Contribute to personal development – social, moral, spiritual and cultural development
- Celebrate the religious diversity of our pupils

Withdrawal from collective worship

Collective worship contributes to the life of the school and all its members by giving opportunities for reflection, contributing to personal, spiritual growth and the development of an awareness of community. It is an expression of the ethos and shared life of the school community. The school ensure that collective worship is conducted in such a way that participation in acts of worship such as prayer is invited and voluntary rather than expected without questioning. Worship is planned to be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family backgrounds of all pupils. However, occasionally a parent may wish to exercise the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. In this case the school will wish to discuss the matter with parents to make sure their request is based on a clear understanding of what school worship involves and also to make arrangements for the supervision of the child.

Teachers/headteachers have similar rights and may withdraw from collective worship on grounds of religious belief.

The legal requirement of the right of withdrawal is mentioned in the school prospectus on the ESJ website.

Organisation of Collective Worship in Assemblies

- Collective worship takes place as part of an assembly. It is "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" but this is often about reflecting the key values of Christian belief, (e.g. forgiveness, compassion and justice), rather than being of specific Christian content. Collective worship must also be daily (though not necessarily whole school) and must be inclusive, having regard to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils. Here at Ely St John's we have children from many different religious and cultural backgrounds. A story reflecting these key Christian values (either a story Jesus told; a religious story from another faith; a parable; a social story), or stimulus may be used and related to the chosen theme and to the children's own experiences.
- The Head teacher and Senior Managers usually take Key Stage assemblies on a Monday. On other days we have a range of assemblies for either different key stages or classroom based assemblies. Some are short but all contain a time of reflection and opportunity for pupils to either pray or reflect on and respond to the needs of others.
- The content of assemblies will focus either on issues of personal development; or religious stories that convey social or moral messages or aspects of religious belief; or celebrate special days, festivals or events.
- Music is played at the beginning, a time of reflection is always included and children are invited to say their own prayers if they wish to.

- An appropriate song is usually sung to encourage key values, or sense of community.
- Invited visitors are encouraged to attend where appropriate and these visitors enrich awareness of our multi cultural community as well as heightening awareness of global issues or personal development issues. Visitors from Christian or other faith groups come to share with the children how aspects of their religion or belief affect their own lives. Parents will be informed of any visitors using the usual communication channels *e.g. dates in the newsletter*.
- Friday whole school assembly is a time for sharing and celebration. This is organised vertically across the school to give a chance for younger and older children to meet together. Parents are encouraged to attend celebration assemblies and classes present some of their achievements from class work as part of this. Achievements, effort, good work and behaviour are celebrated in line with our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Collective worship is in accordance with the requirements prescribed in the 1944, 1988 and 1993 Education Acts and in line with the Children's Services guidance booklet, 'Guidelines for Schools: Collective Worship in Cambridgeshire'. The Governing Body is responsible for implementing the requirements for collective worship in the Education Acts. Reference has also been made to, 'Collective Worship Revisited' – NASACRE / AREIAC.

See Appendix 1 for The law regarding Collective Worship

See Appendix 2 for information about Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Development.

This policy was ratified by the Governing Body on 27th November 2014.

Appendix 1

The Law for maintained, county schools

What is now required?

- The basic requirements for collective worship as prescribed in the 1944 , 1988 and 1993 Education Acts:

1. Which pupils?

- All pupils are required to take part in an act of collective worship on each school day
- Nursery schools and nursery classes are not required to participate
- Special schools are not exempt. Every pupil in a special school should attend collective worship (unless withdrawn by their parents) so far as is practicable.
- Sixth form pupils are included though they can withdraw voluntarily.
- There may be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups.
- The school groups described above are those in which the pupils are organised for school purposes, they are not seen as groups which reflect particular religious beliefs.
- special provision for groups with particular religious beliefs can only be made by application to the Cambridgeshire SACRE.

2. Time and place

- Worship may be held at any time during the school day.
- All acts of collective worship should take place on the school premises.
- Governing bodies of aided schools have the discretion to organize collective worship elsewhere on special occasions.
- County and controlled schools may hold acts of collective worship off the school premises provided that these are in addition to the statutory act of worship on the school premises.

3. Requirements for the character of school worship in county schools

- In a county school the majority of acts of worship in a school term must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character"
- An act of worship which is "broadly Christian" need not contain only Christian material provided that, taken as a whole, it reflects the traditions of Christian belief.
- Collective worship should not be distinctive of any particular Christian or other religious denomination (but this should not be taken as preventing school worship from being distinctive of any particular faith).
- Collective worship must be appropriate having regard to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils.
- If a headteacher of a county school considers that the above requirements for the character of collective worship cannot be reconciled, then he or she may apply to the Cambridgeshire SACRE for permission to arrange worship, for some or all of the pupils, which is not wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. If the request is accepted the change is termed a determination.
- Such decisions or determinations will only apply for a maximum period of five years unless renewed by the SACRE.

4. Whose responsibility?

- It is the duty of the L.A. and the governing body to exercise their functions with a view to ensuring that all pupils in attendance at a school take part in the daily collective worship (except those pupils withdrawn by their parents)
- It is the legal responsibility of the county school headteacher, after consultation with the governing body, to implement the requirements for collective worship in the Education Acts.
- This responsibility does not remove the right of the headteacher (county and controlled school) to withdraw from collective worship).
- In the case of a voluntary school, collective worship is the responsibility of the governing body after consultation with the headteacher.
- In making such arrangements headteachers and governors will need to keep in mind their obligations under Section 1 (2) of the 1988 Education Reform Act to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and also that schools should promote respect and understanding for those who adhere to different faiths.
- Also in making arrangements for collective worship headteachers and governors should keep in mind their responsibility for the health and safety of all pupils. Circular 1/94 para. 149 stresses that "nothing overrides the school's responsibility in relation to the health and safety of pupils."
- Where there are insufficient teachers in a county school able or prepared to lead collective worship in accordance with Section 7 (1988 Act) + Section 138 (1993 Act), the headteacher must take all reasonable steps to find other responsible people who are competent and willing to do so. The headteacher will also need to bear in mind the possible implications of cost.

5. Teachers' rights

- Teachers (including headteachers) in county and controlled schools continue to have the right to withdraw from collective worship on grounds of religious belief.
- The right of withdrawal from collective worship does not extend to teachers in aided schools (see section 8 1988 Act))
- One of the duties incorporated into the contracts of all teachers by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document is attending assemblies (as opposed to collective worship). A headteacher may require any teacher to attend parts of a school assembly when collective worship is not taking place.

6. Parents' rights

- Parents continue to have the right to withdraw their children wholly or partly from collective worship.
- The right extends to alternative forms of collective worship which result from a SACRE determination.
- Parents who withdraw their child from collective worship may arrange for him or her to participate in religious worship elsewhere (i.e. off the school premises), provided that the LA is satisfied that arrangements have been made. Such withdrawal may be for such time as is reasonably necessary.

Appendix 2

Spiritual Development

Definition:

Pupils' spiritual development involves the growth of their sense of self, their **unique potential**, their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and their will to achieve. As their curiosity about themselves and their place in the world increases, they try to answer for themselves some of **life's fundamental questions**. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to foster their own **inner lives** and **non-material wellbeing**.

Spiritual development is shown by children in:

- beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values
- a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible
- the use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- the willingness to reflect on their experiences.

How?

- giving pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they affect people's lives
- where pupils already have religious beliefs, supporting and developing these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them
- encouraging pupils to explore and develop what animates themselves and others
- encouraging pupils to reflect and learn from reflection
- giving pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful
- developing a climate or ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected
- accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals

Moral Development

Definition:

Pupils' moral development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of the **difference between right and wrong** and of moral conflict, a concern for others and the **will to do what is right**. They are able and willing to reflect on the **consequences of their actions** and learn how to forgive themselves and others. They develop the knowledge, skills and understanding, qualities and attitudes they need in order to **make responsible moral decisions and act on them**.

Moral development is shown by children in:

- the ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and their readiness to apply this understanding in their own lives
- the understanding of the consequences of their actions
- an interest in investigating, and offering reasoned views about, moral and ethical issues.

How?

- providing a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school
- promoting measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria
- giving pupils opportunities across the curriculum to explore and develop moral concepts and values – for example: personal rights and responsibilities, truth, justice, equality of opportunity, right and wrong
- developing an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practice moral decision-making
- rewarding expressions of moral insights and good behaviour
- making an issue of breaches of agreed moral codes where they arise – for example: in the press, on television and the internet as well as in school
- modelling, through the quality of relationships and interactions, the principles which they wish to promote – for example: fairness, integrity, respect for people, pupils' welfare, respect for minority interests, resolution of conflict, keeping promises and contracts
- recognising and respecting the codes and morals of the different cultures represented in the school and wider community
- encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions - for example: respect for property, care of the environment, and developing codes of behaviour
- providing models of moral virtue through literature, humanities, sciences, arts, assemblies and acts of worship
- re-inforcing the school's values through images, posters, classroom displays, screensavers, exhibitions

Social Development

Definition:

Pupils' social development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of the **responsibilities** and **rights** of being **members** of families and communities (local, national and global), and an ability **to relate to others** and to work with others for the **common good**. They display a **sense of belonging** and an increasing **willingness to participate**. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to make an active contribution to the **democratic process in each of their communities**.

Social development is shown by children in:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of social settings, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- interest in, and understanding of, the way communities and societies function at a variety of levels.

How?

- identifying key values and principles on which school and community life is based
- fostering a sense of community, with common, inclusive values which ensure that everyone, irrespective of ethnic origin, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation and religion can flourish
- encouraging pupils to work co-operatively
- encouraging pupils to recognise and respect social differences and similarities
- providing positive corporate experiences – for example: through assemblies, team activities, residential experiences, school productions
- helping pupils develop personal qualities which are valued in a civilised society - for example: thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, independence, inter-dependence, self-respect

- helping pupils to challenge, when necessary and in appropriate ways, the values of a group or wider community
- helping pupils resolve tensions between their own aspirations and those of the group or wider society
- providing a conceptual and linguistic framework within which to understand and debate social issues
- providing opportunities for engaging in the democratic process and participating in community life
- providing opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibilities
- providing positive and effective links with the world of work and the wider community

Cultural Development

Definition:

Pupils' cultural development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of **cultural traditions** and ability to appreciate and **respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences**. They acquire a **respect** for their own culture and that of others, an **interest in others'** ways of doing things and **curiosity** about differences. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to understand, appreciate and contribute to culture.

Cultural development is shown by children in:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage
- willingness to participate in, and respond to, for example, artistic, musical, sporting, mathematical, technological, scientific and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, understanding of, and respect for cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

How?

- providing opportunities for pupils to explore their own cultural assumptions and values
- presenting authentic accounts of the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures
- addressing discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria and promoting racial and other forms of equality
- extending pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language
- recognising and nurturing particular gifts and talents
- providing opportunities for pupils to participate in literature, drama, music, art, crafts and other cultural events and encouraging pupils to reflect on their significance
- developing partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to extend pupils' cultural awareness - for example: theatre, museum, concert and gallery visits, resident artists, foreign exchanges
- re-inforcing the school's cultural values through displays, posters, exhibitions, etc