

Introduction:

At Gomersal St. Mary's CE Primary School we are committed to valuing and nurturing our pupils as individuals in the hopes that they will achieve their best and develop an enthusiasm for lifelong learning and personal growth. This vision is summed up in our vision statement:

By being the best we can be, we all shine brightly making our world a better place.

We respect and celebrate everyone's uniqueness, supporting each other so that we can reach our full potential.

We show love for each other through acts of friendship and forgiveness.

We show resilience so that we feel confident to face any challenge.

'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16

This vision underpins all that we do to enable pupils to grow into responsible, caring and fulfilled adults who actively and positively contribute to the society in which they live, and flourish as individuals. We are committed to raising standards, values and self-esteem for all those involved with our school through cultivating a secure, stimulating environment that is positive, supportive, inspiring and enriching.

Our core values – St. Mary's Steps to Success- have been selected through consultation with staff, parents, governors and pupils. They show our commitment to following in Jesus' example. Based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, we seek to create a school community where children, staff, parents, governors and visitors are able to work alongside each other, and witness our core values in action through words, deeds and actions. These core values underpin our school ethos and vision.



Gomersal St. Mary's Steps to Success



Love: We show this by using kind words and doing kind actions.

Respect: We treat everyone and everything with respect.

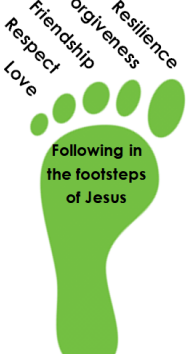
Friendship: We help, support and care for other people.

Forgiveness: We find ways to move on when things go wrong by listening to others and being understanding.

Resilience: We work hard and we don't give up on challenges, ourselves or each other.



Following in the footsteps of Jesus



Love: Jesus said we should love our neighbours and show this love through our actions.

Respect: Jesus said that we should value what God gives us and take care of each other.

Friendship: Jesus wanted us to treat each other as we would want to be treated.

Forgiveness: Jesus said that we should forgive so that when we do wrong, we can be forgiven.

Resilience: Jesus said that we would all have tough times, but that we should believe in ourselves, each other and God.

Our school encourages all:

- Through WORK, to develop his or her full potential as part of the community and as a unique person made in the image and likeness of God
- Through WORSHIP, to learn to know and love God and recognise the person of Christ in themselves and others
- Through WITNESS to celebrate the power of God through the wonders He created.

Our Collective Worship policy fulfils the statutory requirements common to all schools according to the 1988 Education Reform Act (and consolidated in the 1996 Education Act).

At Gomersal ST Mary's CE Primary, Collective Worship is a highly valued part of the school day as it is the time when we gather together to affirm what is important to us, to our school and to our world. Here, the school affirms the claims of Christianity underlying the values of the school, and representing the faith stance of some teachers and children. It provides an opportunity for pupils to worship God, whilst seeking to be relevant to, and inclusive, of all. It reflects our Anglican tradition as well as exploring with pupils and staff a variety of ways in which Christians worship God.

Collective Worship Policy

In acts of Collective Worship in our school it is recognised that in our school community, some members will come from families with a commitment to the Christian faith, others from families with a commitment to another faith and yet others will have no particular commitment to any tradition. Therefore, the content and language of collective worship allows for different levels of response. It invites rather than coerces.

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 The aims and objectives of collective worship are:

- To provide an opportunity for children to worship God;
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- To encourage participation and response;
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit, shared ethos and common values;
- To allow children to explore and understand the importance of British Values, Christian Values and compassionate activism;
- To enrich religious experience;
- To grow in liturgical understanding;
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ;
- To teach children how to worship, to provide opportunities for reflection as outlined in our mission statement;
- To reflect on personal and collective achievement;
- respond to Christian language and symbolism and experience stillness and quiet;
- To experience a variety of forms of prayer and meditation. These might include praise, seeking forgiveness or quiet reflection;
- To begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship;
- To contemplate something of the mystery of God;
- To respond to and celebrate life;
- To make time to 'wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to'.
- To gain a deep, rooted understanding of the school's mission, 'Let your light shine';
- To develop and establish good habits and approaches to keeping well, physically and mentally.

1.2 Whether whole-school, key-stage or class-based, staff-led or pupil-led, our daily acts of collective worship will be rigorously planned. The Worship Team (involving staff, pupils, governors and the church community) meet regularly to create a cohesive, well thought-out schedule to provide worships which are both relevant and inspirational.

The team endeavour to ensure that worships fulfil the following criteria:

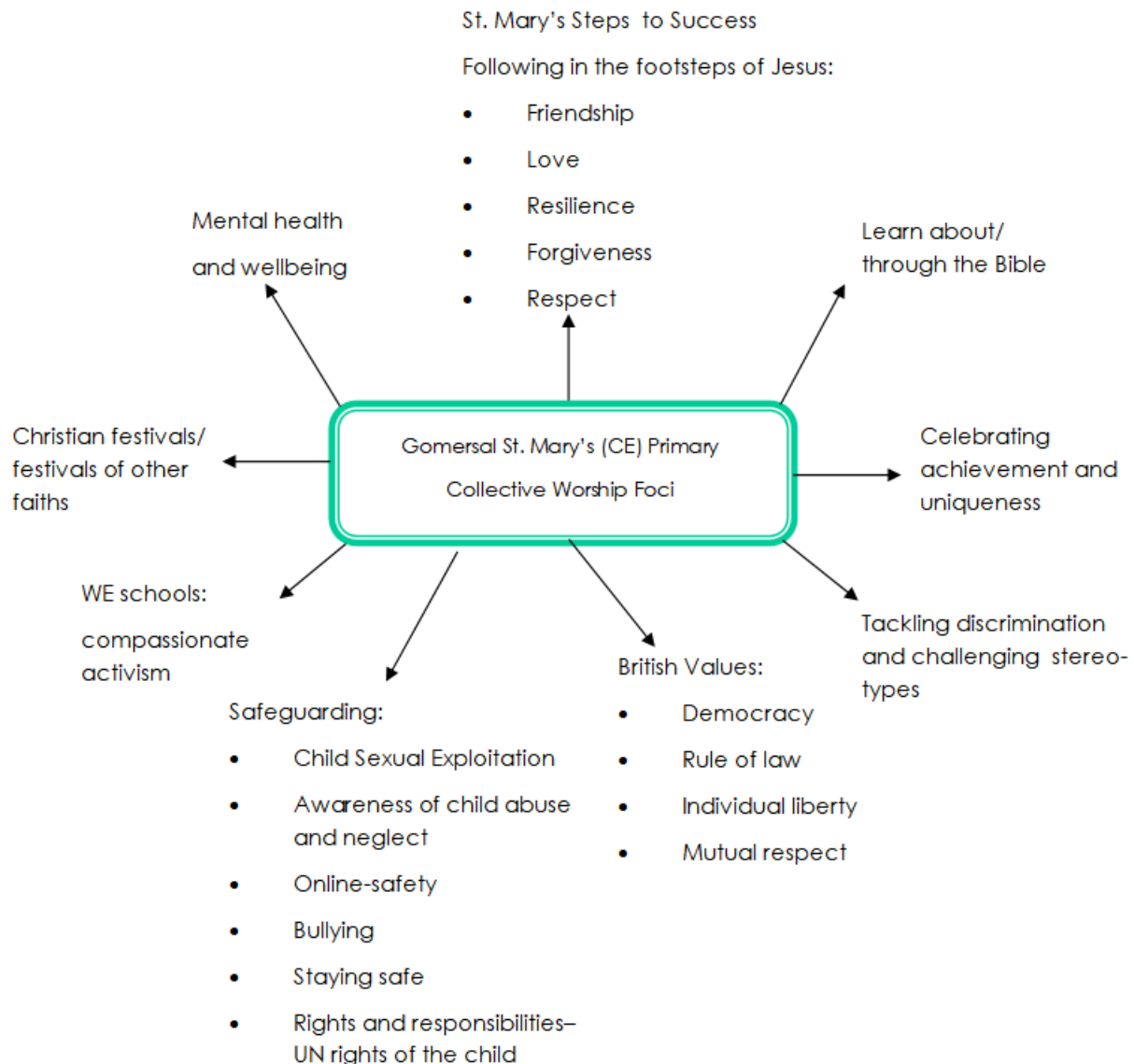
- Are inspiring and transformational;
- Develop the Christian vision, values and ethos of the school alongside British Values, and focus on our school Christian values (Steps to success) and our vision statement;
- Support the school's spirituality statement by inviting worshippers to think deeply;
- Include a range of creative opportunities e.g music, silence, symbol, drama, prayer;
- Involve pupil participation;
- Celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals;
- Provide a foundation for a mature understanding and practice of worship, meditation or reflection in the future;
- Respect the right of parents to withdraw their children for Collective Worship.

2 Collective worship

- 2.1 We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God and/ or reflect upon the wonders of our world and its people and foster personal growth. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an act of worship, reflection or celebration. We expect everyone to take an active part.
- 2.2 Our Collective Worship centres on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our acts of worship in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.
- 2.3 While most acts of worship in our school are Christian in focus, we also hold acts of worship that reflect the traditions of other religions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Collective Worship Policy

- 2.4 Each class holds a regular Picture News session in addition to the week's worship schedule. This allows pupils to engage with current events and issues, inviting them to explore and reflect upon issues of relevance to them. This may also include prayer or reflection time.



3 Organisation of collective worship

3.1 As a Church of England school, the content of our worship is organised to:

- Support pupils to live out the school vision;
- Help pupils to live out our spirituality statement and allow children to develop spirituality through exploration of Big Questions;
- Follow a termly plan which focuses on our core Christian Values (St. Mary's Steps to Success) and other Christian Values, British Values, the school's vision statement and compassionate advocacy (through WE schools);
- Allow all members of the school community the chance to lead worship;
- Develop pupils as compassionate, respectful and reflective individuals;
- Cover all the major Christians festivals including Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost and teach pupils about major festivals in other faiths;
- Be rooted in Bible teaching;
- Use the school prayer, our Trinitarian prayer, Lord's prayer and other prayers written by pupils and staff;
- Be presented using a variety of styles and to include music, story, drama, enthusiastic singing, reflection and reverence in prayer time;

Collective Worship Policy

- Provide pupils with good habits and approaches to keeping well, mentally and physically.

- 3.2 We hold a daily act of collective worship.
- 3.3 We conduct acts of worship in a dignified and respectful way. We explain to all worshippers that worship is a time for calm reflection. We regard it as a special time, and expect everyone to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate fully in prayer or reflection (giving pupils the right to decide how to participate) and singing. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, candles and sometimes other objects, to focus the attention of worshippers.
- 3.3 The acts of worship are normally conducted by teaching staff but at least once per fortnight, children from Y1-Y6 lead worship too and are able to sign themselves up for available slots. Even in staff-led workshops, children are often involved in the delivery. For example, Bible stories are often presented to the rest of the school in Whoosh assemblies, and often prayers are written and led by pupils. Our local reverend comes to school and may lead or participate in collective worship.
- 3.4 We take the themes of our acts of worship from the traditions of the Christian faith, and we observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. The whole school visit St Mary's Church on a regular basis and holds services, usually written and led by our children, at special times of the year including Christmas, Pentecost, Easter, Candlemas, Harvest and Remembrance Day.

Our worship themes are also carefully planned to allow pupils to develop behaviours intended to help them to 'flourish', developing resilient, healthy attitudes towards themselves, others and the challenges they face in life. They are also designed to help our pupils understand that their actions can change the world, by challenging injustice where they encounter it and being a force for good. (Some key guidance documents are used to help us develop our foci- see appendix 5).

- 3.5 Our termly collective worship plans follow the 'Gather, Listen, respond, go forth' model. In order to help children to make the link between the week's big question, and their basis in scripture, we start each week with a Bible story/ passage of scripture/ thought-provoking stimuli which illustrates the issues being explored. Each week, a big question is explored in depth with weekly merits given for children who have put what they have learnt into practice.
- 3.6 Collective worship schedule:

Monday: Introduction and exploration of the Big Question by Miss Barker, Mrs Sheard- Key Stage Worship

Tuesday: Class Worship to further explore the Big Question led by class teacher

Wednesday: Child-led worship/ Myhappymind *- Key Stage

Thursday: Singing Worship – Deputy Head- Whole school

Friday- Celebration- merits awarded for vision and values in action- led by head-teacher- whole school

*Children can sign up to deliver an act of collective worship individually or as part of a group.

- 3.7 Our acts of worship reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate by showing their work to the other children, and by raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Acts of worship provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. Each week, on Friday a celebration assembly is held where merits are awarded to pupils who have been noticed for living out our vision and embracing the week's worship message. Collective Worship also plays an important part in promoting the ethos of the school and its vision, which is that all children are valued, and all achievements are recognised. Gomersal St Mary's CE Primary School is a successful school, and we shall continue to celebrate the successes of all our children through worship.
- 3.8 During worship our hall becomes a sacred space. A dressed table acts as an altar and provides a focal point for reflection at the front of the hall: A draped coloured cloth reflects the liturgical colour; a large candle represents the Holy Spirit; a Bible represents God the Father; and a cross represents Jesus, the son. These items are arranged each day by our school worship wardens from our year 2 class who, through their service, learn about each item's significance and symbolism.
- 3.9 At the beginning of Collective Worship, pupils come into the hall to a piece of music or other stimulus. Once children are seated and ready for worship, a child may volunteer to light the candle/ lead the congregation in our opening prayer, a Trinitarian prayer. The prayer marks the beginning of worship and is designed to help pupils to understand the Holy Trinity. After worship, the candle is extinguished and classes leave the hall, marking the end of worship time. This prayer, like all prayers at school, is always invitational so pupils may choose whether or not they wish to participate.

Collective Worship Policy

- 3.10 During each act of formal worship, whether held in the hall or in classes, a candle will be lit, a hymn/ song will be sung and a prayer (see appendices 1-4) will be said or moment of reflection held. Children who lead worship are provided with a planning sheet which helps them to follow this structure in delivery of their worship.
- 3.11 On the special occasions where we hold services at Church, the parents of the pupils who are leading the service are invited to attend. This allows parents from every year group the opportunity to attend a service at least once per year.
- 3.12 Governors' attendance at our acts of worship is always welcome.
- 3.13 At the end of every week, the Big Question for the following week is shared with parents via our school news letter. This allows parents to discuss these Big Questions prior to Monday's worship and ensures our parents are kept abreast of what their children are exploring through Collective Worship.

4 Right of withdrawal

- 4.1 We expect all children to attend acts of worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child. Parents and carers do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.
- 4.2 The headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.

5 Monitoring and review

- 5.1 Monitoring this policy is the responsibility of the Governing Body and the practice of collective worship is evaluated by the children and staff of the school. Meetings of the SIAMS working party will also impact on Collective Worship as the school practice as a Church School is reviewed.
- 5.2 This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 1: Our opening prayer for acts of worship which supports pupils' understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God

Trinitarian Prayer

We open the Bible to think about God the Father,
We look at the cross to think about God the Son,
We light the candle and think about God the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Appendix 2: Our school prayer which reflects our core Christian Values- St. Mary's Steps to Success

School Prayer

Our father in Heaven, (respect)
Thank you for all you have put into our lives,
Thank you for St. Mary's School and for everyone and everything in it. (Love)
We are sorry for the wrong things we do, (Forgiveness)
Help us all to shine brightly,
Making our world and school a better place by being kind, and good and friendly to everyone. (Resilience and School vision)
Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me. (Friendship)
Amen.

Appendix 3: Our 'Following in Jesus' footsteps prayer which reminds children that Jesus sets the perfect example for us, and His teachings are the foundation for happiness.

Candle Prayer

Jesus you are light,
Jesus you are love,
Fill us with your light,
Fill us with your love.
Amen

Appendix 4: A model prayer given to us by Jesus so that children learn how to shape their communication with God.

The Lord's Prayer

Our father in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us,
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
Forever and ever,
Amen.

Appendix 5: These key guidance documents support the school in the planning of worship.

- Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good- Published Autumn 2016
- Valuing All God's Children: Guidance for CoE schools on challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying- Published Autumn 2017
- Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach- Published March 2018