

St John's CE Walworth Primary School

*Assembly and Collective Worship
Policy*



November 2006

Assemblies and Collective Worship

St John's School is a Church of England school with strong links with the Parish Church of St John the Evangelist that stands next to it and shares the same site. There is continual interchange between the two. Many of the families that worship at St John's Church send their children to the school. The Church is strongly represented on the School Governors; the Parish Priest is currently the Chair. The children in school use the church building for their assemblies and every fortnight there is a School Mass. Children are prepared in school for confirmation, which takes place in May every year. There is a pronounced Christian ethos in the school and it is the intent of all concerned that this will remain so.

This Christian ethos is without doubt strengthened by the assemblies that take place in school each day with an act of collective worship as its integral part. In these assemblies children are given the opportunity to consider and reflect upon religious and moral issues that affect them in their lives now and will most certainly affect their lives in the future. They are taught the background to their faith through Bible stories and contemporary stories that contain situations they can identify within a Christian context. They are taught about their relationship with God through prayer for themselves and for others. They learn about other religions and what other people believe and so are able to compare their faith to that of others. The worship times puts all this into a Christian context. The worship is always Christian, there is always time to remember others and their needs in prayer and at every act of worship the children say the Lord's Prayer.

There is an assembly, with an act of worship, every day and a timetable listing them is displayed in the staffroom.

Aims

- To gather the children together to learn and share information about their faith and the religious beliefs of others. To praise and worship God and so develop their relationship with Him through prayer, their communication time with God, for others and for themselves.
- To foster a sense of awe, wonder, delight, joy and mystery and to encourage their natural curiosity to ask questions and find answers that will help them to understand something of God and of the world in which they live and its peoples.
- To help children formulate their own response to moral issues by assisting them in exploring the meaning of life and also to help them cope with and learn from life's painful experiences such as fear and suffering.
- To enable them to recognise their own worth and importance, to promote their social development in the give and take of life and to show them that life is a series of growth stages – physical, emotional and spiritual.
- To develop skills which may help them to respond appropriately to religious ideas?
- To consider some basic religious concepts by looking at how they have been expressed in sacred books, language and writing, symbols and art, daily living and different types of ritual.

- To help them towards an understanding of the different religious beliefs, life-styles and activities of other people and to compare these with their own beliefs, life-styles and activities.
- To introduce them to the lives of great men and women who have influenced or changed this world in some way either through their religious belief or moral and social concern.
- To stimulate an interest in the beliefs and practices of other religious groups.
- To provide opportunities through which they can share in and experience the festivals of other religious groups and cultures and so begin to question the meaning of such social occasions.

Procedures

All assemblies are recorded following the guidelines to the teachers' planning books. Class assemblies should follow a theme related to the RE taught in class that week.

The Headteacher records each assembly on a record sheet, which is kept on file and follows the same format as that used by the teachers.

Children will be led calmly and quietly by a teacher or classroom helper in to the hall or church where, if possible, there should be music playing. External noise (teachers raising their voices, children being boisterous) is a distraction to those already in the hall or church who are trying to compose themselves. Nosy classes will be taken back to their rooms to make the journey again if they cannot be contained. If a similar situation follows they will be kept in their classrooms to be spoken to and disciplined later either by the Headteacher or Deputy Head.

Children and their adult supervisors should not talk once they are in the hall or church unless it is absolutely necessary. Teachers and auxiliary helpers should position themselves so that they can oversee all the children between them and deal with "situations" as they arise. It should be the policy clearly understood by children and adults alike that unless the situation is serious (i.e. a nose-bleed or a child distraught for some reason) matters of concern to the children will be dealt with after the assembly.

Teachers must be in attendance at the assembly though they have the right to withdraw from the worship slot, as do the children. If this is the case they should be absent from the hall only for the time of worship. If it is the turn of a teacher to take an assembly but they feel unable to take the act of worship they should arrange for another teacher to take responsibility for the worship. However, willingness or otherwise to participate in school worship in assembly or in church should be an issue addressed in interview before they are appointed.