



ROOTED IN GOD'S LOVE, EVERYONE GROWING TOGETHER
TO BECOME THE BEST THAT WE CAN BE

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

2024-25

Policy Leader	Mrs Nicola McArdle
Governor	Revd. Michele Jarmany
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At Barrow URC Primary School, our Christian vision shapes all that we do, 'Rooted in God's love, everyone growing together to be the best that they can be.' Ephesians 3.16-19

Therefore we work hard to ensure that all of our pupils are included in all parts of school life. We begin with high quality teaching, ensuring that all of our staff are trained to support all children. For children with special educational needs or disability, we may make reasonable adjustments or call upon the support of external experts. We have high expectations for all of our children and track the progress they make carefully, ensuring timely and high quality intervention is in place where necessary. It is important that we work closely with families, with the child always at the heart of our approach. We provide a safe, inclusive environment, in which all children feel welcome and valued. In our school, the child is always at the heart of what we do. Our seven core values- Respect, Honesty, Trust, Love, Peace, Kindness and Forgiveness- are the pillars of our school community and help us to provide a safe, caring environment in which all our children feel welcome and valued.

'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 Barrow URC 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 curiously engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and how that relates to how we live our lives today.

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 both defending the right to religious freedom whilst being invitationally inclusive.

At Barrow URC Primary School collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational, inclusive and encourage living well together whilst leading 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 equality of voice and the 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

GUIDANCE

Collective worship policy at Barrow URC Primary School draws on guidance from the United Reformed Church³ and Church of England⁴. 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. The policy also makes reference to United Reformed Church traditions.

¹ Collective Worship in a URC 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>

⁴ <https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/prayer-and-worship/>

THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

In Barrow URC Primary School there are some children whose families are members of another faith and many who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of our school is that it should be hospitable and inclusive to all families within the community that it serves. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of our Church school, this is made clear on induction, and 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.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. In which case they will be invited to meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. This conversation will establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent objects 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

If parents withdraw 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 will comply.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Collective worship in Barrow URC Primary School aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual and personal growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored enabling the whole school community to be 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.

- Ensure that any language of hierarchy and structures or layout do not present barriers to full participation and inclusivity of all.
- 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 known 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.
- The impact of worship is seen in the relationships between people and the work towards justice and creation locally and globally.

HOW COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IS ORGANISED

The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the Governing Body. We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school. Worship takes various forms throughout the week including class and whole school worship. Worship forms part of each morning assembly, held in the hall. The Headteacher or other members of staff lead worship as well as local clergy, governors and other visitors.

Sometimes the themes of our worship reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum, such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning/PSHE; Golden Rules or RE. We plan our worship as part of a series of themes well in advance of the day they take place, although do respond to events as they happen either within the school community or in the wider local or national community of which we are a part. Worships offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of schools. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. Our Friday 'Celebration Worship' reflects the accomplishments and learning of the children. Songs/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music to draw upon – taken from a variety of cultures and types. We sing a variety of songs and hymns. We carefully select songs/hymns to match the theme. We invite parents to class-led worship, as well as worship for special events or times of the year. We encourage them to attend as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children. We also welcome governors' attendance at our special worships, similarly as a way of governors sharing in and getting to know the work of the school.

A programmed schedule for collective worship is devised by the Headteacher and shared with staff and visiting worship leaders each half term. This will include stories, poetry, biography, drama, special occasions/events and will be taken from other philosophies and religions as well as Christianity. There is also flexibility to include current and topical issues. A variety of teaching and learning styles and active and interactive methods are used including:

- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Music
- Artefacts and Visual Aids
- Dialogue and Pupils' Contributions
- Visitors
- Stories

- Film
- Prayer/ Creative Silence

The person leading the worship will choose the style/method and resources which are appropriate to the content, the age and the background of the children. Pupils will be asked to participate in a variety of ways: answer questions; give opinions; describe an event/feelings; drama; discuss in pairs. Pupils are given opportunities to lead worship. The ethos of worship is invitational and inclusive promoting, “togetherness” and a sense of school family/community. There are daily takeaways that encourage reflection of the ‘big question’ that week. This develops the children’s spirituality and relationship with God.

Our usual guide to weekly worship follows this pattern;

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Headteacher – Focus for the week	Singing	Wellbeing Wednesday	Visitor	Celebration Worship

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.