



Barrow CEVC Primary School

Inspire, Create, Discover, Together

Colethorpe Lane,
Barrow,
Bury St Edmunds,
Suffolk IP29 5AU



1 RATIONALE

1.1

Barrow CEVC Primary School's vision is from John 10:10 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'. In line with this we aim to develop children and staff in their character and personal spirituality. It is also a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, these acts of worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character" for the majority of the time. They must also be "appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils". Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian. We do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship, we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. Assemblies are conducted in a manner that is sensitive and respectful to the individual faiths and beliefs of all members of the school community.

2 COLLECTIVE WORSHIP DEFINED

2.1

In an educational context, worship reflects the values, aspirations and faith of the people worshipping. It is a time when the whole school or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none – in this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive. Whenever possible we follow the principles that:

- Assemblies should be inclusive
- Assemblies should be educational with curricular links.
- Assemblies should contribute to the religious education of pupils.
- Assemblies should have a sense of occasion.
- Assemblies should use materials that cover a variety of religions and cultures and encourages and understanding of equity and diversity.
- Assemblies should, where appropriate, involve people from the local community.

3 AIMS & PURPOSE

3.1

We believe at Barrow CEVC Primary that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life- experiencing 'full life' as described in John 10:10. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually, is reflected in our worship. The aims and purpose of collective worship at our school are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to engage in an act of Trinitarian worship;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs and understand those of others;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship and experience aspects from different liturgical traditions from across the Global Church.

3.2 Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community.
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of the other people in everyday situations and beliefs.
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings.
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them.
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school.
- Respond freely and/or spiritual stimulus.
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not.
- Foster a sense of fellowship bringing pupils together.
- Create an atmosphere where children can experience worship.
- To encourage in pupils a reflective approach to life.
- To introduce pupils to various aspect e.g. prayers, hymns etc.

4 Organisation of collective worship

4.1 We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school. Each day a different member of staff delivers the worship with a particular focus and style e.g. head-teacher's vision-setting, class-based discussion times, Bible story and application, celebration and singing assemblies. Some are delivered via Zoom directly into the classroom, some are in person and some are child-led. The whole school and key stages meet together on different occasions depending on the logistics and content.

4.2 We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection - and use learning about 'Zones of Regulation' to help articulate this. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and sometimes candles or other objects that act as a focal point for the attention of the children.

4.3 The head-teacher or other members of staff normally conduct assemblies, but sometimes local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups eg Open the Book, conduct them instead. Children are actively involved in collective worship, with opportunities to participate and regularly lead aspects of it.

4.4 We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith, using a Values system. We often reflect on the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our assemblies as part of a series of themes well in advance of the day they take place.

4.5 Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies 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. Barrow School is a successful school and we shall celebrate the successes of all the children in assemblies.

4.6 Where possible we invite parents to assembly and 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. Where this is not possible we share via Google Classrooms and newsletters.

4.7 We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

4.8 Collective Worship is overseen by the Collective Worship Team which includes staff, Governors and the local Vicar. We intend to bring pupil representatives onto the team in the next academic year. This team uses pupil voice information and feedback from parents and other stakeholders to shape the worship formats in the school.

5 PRAYER & REFLECTION

Prayer and reflection is an effective way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. However, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. Children may be asked to close their eyes and reflect upon the assembly that has taken place. A prayer or 'thought for the day' may be read (however this is not always necessary as the use of regular moments of silence also provides opportunities for pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish). The act of worship may allow children to respond verbally.

6 SPECIAL ASSEMBLIES TO CELEBRATE

During the course of the year, a number of special assemblies are undertaken to reflect both the traditions and liturgical calendar of the Christian Churches (e.g. Christmas, Easter), and the religious traditions and calendars of all other faiths that may be represented in the school and the wider community (e.g. Eid, Chinese New Year, Hanukkah). Special assemblies are also held to mark significant days in the calendar, with a particular focus on diversity and equity, such as Martin Luther King Day, World Peace Day, St. Patrick's Day etc. At Harvest, Christmas and the end of term our worship takes place at All Saints Church where possible.

7 SUCCESS CRITERIA

At this school we evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils.
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community.
- Positive response to shared experience.
- An atmosphere which matches the theme.
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well-being.
- A sense of occasion.
- Good order.
- Staff affirmation.

- A sense of challenge.
- A place in the overall plan of the school.
- Enrichment of pupils' experience.
- Increased understanding of the diversity of belief and practise within the school community and wider world.

8 Right of withdrawal

8.1 We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

8.2 The head-teacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 It is the role of a named school governor with responsibility for religious education and collective worship to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. The governor concerned liaises with the head teacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship.

Helen Ashe November 2023