



Collective Worship Policy

Last updated:	September 2021
Approved by Governors:	21st September 2021
Review cycle:	Three Years
Review date:	September 2024

Introduction

At High Ash CE School, our daily Reflections (the name chosen by our children for collective worship) are an integral part of our school week and calendar, are the 'heartbeat' of the school and play a key role in the character and personal development of our children. They also serve to bring us together as a school community and ensure we maintain a strong sense of belonging.

Our reflections are an opportunity to praise, celebrate, reflect, wonder and live out our school vision and how it can enrich our daily lives. We underpin them with our vision of 'Let your Light Shine' and 'Grow Together, Shine Forever' through Christian values, bible stories, our PROUD principles and through key Christian festivals and events in the Church calendar. This is through the format of our symbols of a window (British Values), a mirror (our PROUD principles) and a door ('letting our light shine' through courageous advocacy and being a Good Samaritan).

Our Vision

Our vision for our school is that we 'Grow Together Shine Forever' to become the very best version of ourselves to then let our light shine on others. We know our children are going to be influencers and leaders of the future, yet we are committed to also ensuring that they are compassionate and caring community members, with a generosity of spirit and a sense of social responsibility that enriches the world and people around them and feeds their soul.

As a high achieving school, we encourage our children to be the best they can be; yet we also base our vision on the parable of the Good Samaritan so that they too will wish to help others no matter who they are, show acceptance, be culturally aware and inclusive and not always expect something in return.

Our bible quote of 'Let Your Light Shine' (Matthew 5:16) is to show the children the joy there is to be had in spreading goodness and having the courageous advocacy to make a difference in the world for the community good and not just that of the individual.

We are an inclusive school and so our reflections are also mindful and respectful of other faiths. We warmly invite all members of our school community to join our Reflections. Our Reflection times are there to present all our children with a firm foundation for a strong moral code based on Christian values for their life now and in the future, whatever beliefs they may choose to have. They serve as a vehicle for them to reflect, discuss, question and evaluate how they can become the best version of themselves and let their light shine on others for the collective good.

We aim to make the reflections current and relevant to the world the children live in now and reflect national and global issues. Our Reflection Leaders help senior leaders to plan, deliver and review our reflections to ensure that they have relevance and connect with their peers, so that reflections are invitational and inspire them to be a force for change.

The opportunity to gather for collective reflections comes in a range of experiences and they are interactive and fully involve the children and staff in their discussion and sharing of views and experiences. Reflections use drama, role play, music, art, symbols, stories and 'talk trios' to ensure a range of experiences is offered. We have them in the hall, in classrooms, in the woods at Christmas and outside.

The children contribute to prayers and reflections in worship, through either prayers or reflections in the Prayer Basket or impromptu prayers/reflections at the end of a Reflection time based on what thoughts/feelings it has provoked in them. We also ensure a spread of age groups lead church services at key times of the year such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

Our Reflections provide pupils and staff the opportunity to:

- Celebrate -
 - Christian seasons and festivals including Easter, Advent, Christmas, Harvest, Ash Wednesday, Pentecost and other Church services such as Remembrance and our Leaver's Blessing;
 - school values associated with our vision;
 - Pupils' and adults' achievements;
- experience prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- grow in understanding of and participation in prayer;
- create a reflective approach to life including the exploration of deep questions
- develop as a community centred on our clear and distinctive Christian vision
- experience a variety of styles of worship;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship;
- feel safe and affirmed;
- worship God on their own terms.

Reflections mirror aspects of the curriculum and in particular:

- nurture spiritual growth;
- enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context;
- enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through courageous advocacy;
- give participants a chance to reflect on the place and importance of faith in the lives of people today;
- encourage participants to explore beliefs drawn from their own cultural heritage;
- reflect the teachings of Jesus and a trinitarian theology.

The Pattern of Reflections

Reflection takes place in a variety of groupings, in the school hall, in classrooms and on occasions outside. Occasionally worship takes place in St Mary's Church, Great Brickhill. We follow the seasons of the Church year and within these significant festivals and other special days are observed. These always include Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost. Other important days in the calendar such as Remembrance and the Leavers' Blessing also feature in collective worship.

Whenever worship takes place it is planned to promote participants' thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

Our Reflections follow a weekly format of:

- Monday- our 'Big Question' linked to the vision and theme- 'Time to Be'- these are in Key Stages
- Tuesday- Class Reflections- Follow up reflection time on the Big Question 'Time to Think'/'Time for Action'
- Wednesday- Music Appreciation 'Time to Sing'
- Thursday- Sharing of learning from 'Big Question' and links to our Christian vision 'Time to Share'
- Friday- Star Assemblies and Good Samaritan celebration and praise assembly 'Time to Shine'

Our local clergy support worship through leading blessings at Church Services. Governors, leaders and children review Reflections to see if it is helping us deepen our connection to our core vision.

Our themes for this year are based around our vision and the church calendar as well as supporting the aims of the Oxford Diocese and the Church of England.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Leaders, including the children, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme/topical issue and the needs of the pupils. The themes of worship are chosen to both express and explore our vision and the way in which this vision is experienced in school through the associated values. Throughout their time at our school children will encounter a wide variety of activities such as dance and drama alongside more traditional elements of worship such as prayer and song. We light a candle to mark the start of Reflection and we include bible quotes and/or stories into our Reflections. There is always time for a mindful moment, discussion and debate, a song and a prayer. Our call and response ends our Reflection as does the extinguishing of the candle.

Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Pupils who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

Our worship is regularly reviewed through discussions with participants, observation and reflection. and our evaluations are fed into the planning for future worship.

Our reflections are monitored by leaders and Governors and we regularly seek feedback from the children on how it impacts upon them and ways to make it more meaningful for them.

A legal note

By law, Collective Worship must:

- be provided for every child every day;
- reflect the school's Trust Deed.

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship. In the first instance, parents who may wish to exercise this right should make an appointment to speak with the headteacher.