

RIPLEY ST THOMAS

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY



Collective Worship Policy

Originator	K Potter
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Ripley St Thomas CE Academy
Ashton Road
Lancaster
LA1 4RS

t 01524 64496
e admin@ripley.lancs.sch.uk

website www.ripleystthomas.com

An education for life

Collective Worship Policy

We aim for all members of our Christian community to flourish spiritually, academically and personally so that they can live life in all its fullness.

***'I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.'* (John 10:10)**

At Ripley, we realise our vision through our Christian values of faith, hope, love and service. Our commitment to the Christian faith and these values helps create our harmonious, kind and considerate school.

'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.'
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

When you join the Ripley community, a spark ignites. Through our values of faith, hope, love and service we nurture our very essence. We build our sense of purpose, confidence, empathy, awe and wonder. This enables us to see the beauty in all creation.

As a Church of England Academy with a rich Christian life, worship and prayer is at the heart of the daily life of Ripley St. Thomas. We have a daily act of collective worship and collective worship is fundamental to the Christian foundation of our school. In worship the school community shares a quality experience, central to the life of the school and to its religious character. As such an act of collective worship is fundamentally different from an assembly in a community school. All acts of worship at Ripley St Thomas give staff and pupils the opportunity to take a step back from the stresses of daily life, creating space for an encounter with faith in God and personal beliefs. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, this time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather, reflect, pray and support one another as a community. It is an integral part of who we are. Through our actions which mirror our worship, we seek to develop the same faith, hope, love and service towards each individual in the school community, as exemplified by Jesus Himself.

The school follows a well-designed plan for collective worship which is based upon the liturgical calendar and appropriate weekly themes. The collective worship plan is underpinned by the school's values of faith, hope, love and service which are embedded into the themes. Prayer and worship in school may be as simple as listening to a piece of music, reading a prayer and allowing time to reflect. Or it may involve leading a form or year group in a carefully selected theme during tutorial, morning assembly, chapel or even the whole school at the end of term services. Spirituality permeates every aspect of living and so also has to do with creativity, art, music and serving others. In this sense, it affects the whole life of the school, and involves each department and all members of the school community.

Worship can take place anywhere: the classroom, outdoors, and in our actions wherever we may be. We are particularly privileged to have a beautiful chapel which all year groups encounter on a weekly basis. This space creates a place within the school for pupils and staff. It is very much part of the everyday life of Ripley and used every day for collective worship for different year groups. It is available before and after school and during lunch-time for private reflection. It is also available during lesson times and tutorials for the use of classes for worship. We hold a number of other services, such as staff communion and services of celebration, at different times in the Christian calendar.

Whilst we have a team who is responsible for overseeing worship at Ripley, all are part of the worshipping community that is Ripley and as such all staff and pupils are encouraged to take part and be involved in leading worship. The importance of worship being led and modelled by peers is as powerful as the act itself, as it speaks of God bringing us into the fullness of life, echoing the theological roots of our vision.

Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from worship. However, in view of the religious foundation of the school and the centrality of the Christian faith in all that we do and how it drives our vision and values, the Governors would consider such requests before agreeing to such requirements.

Statement of Aims

Worship is wholly Christian and mainly, though not exclusively, Anglican in character. It will aim to develop pupils spiritually with due consideration to age and phase specificity so that they increasingly know and meet with a real and living God:

- learning to communicate with God through prayer
- learning to be still with God and able to be reflective
- learning to see God in this community and wherever they may be
- increase our collective and personal knowledge of God
- understand what worship is and what people do when they worship
- develop a sense of awe and wonder at creation
- explore the mystery and the important questions about life and creation, including suffering, loss, death, evil, etc.
- explore that which is of value in life – faith, hope, love and service etc.

Help pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith with due consideration to age and phase specificity, so that they increasingly:

- learn about the place and significance of the Bible, Church life and Christian practice
- experience different forms of worship
- celebrate the festivals and Saints days of the church year
- begin to understand the nature of God as revealed in Jesus and the significance of Jesus in their lives
- understand that God is concerned with all areas of life, big and small.

Contribute to the general development of pupils with due consideration to age and phase specificity by increasingly:

- providing them with the opportunities for Christian leadership
- exploring moral issues and concerns and the process of decision making with regard to morality
- helping pupils to reflect on their own values, commitments and beliefs
- helping pupils to reflect on the news and current affairs
- helping pupils to be aware of the needs of others.

Appreciate, celebrate and take note of the life of the school by:

- celebrating work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum
- building up the sense of community of the school
- developing and reflecting on the values of the school
- sharing the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the school community.

Content of the Acts of Worship

In general, worship will include one or more of the following: a hymn, prayer, Bible reading, homily, music, drama, dance. Each of these may be related to one or more of the following and dependent upon age and phase:

- **Elements of faith:** understanding the Bible, Old Testament stories, stories about the teaching of Jesus, Church history, Church seasons, festivals and beliefs
- **Prayer and God:** exploring ideas about God and prayer
- **Variety in Prayer:** adoration, confession, thanksgiving and personal supplication and intercession for others; meditation and reflection
- **Topical events:** crises and continuing issues, such as Third World needs, wealth and poverty
- **Stories** which illustrate faith themes, e.g. awe and wonder, love, compassion, myths and legends, literature and children's literature, stories which explore metaphor, truth bearing stories
- **Sharing and taking note of experiences of others,** and expressing concern for others, both in school and in the news
- **Encouraging the Ministry of Giving:** support for a variety of charities, especially those with a Christian foundation; community gifts to the elderly and nearby local and national charities.
- **Exploring common values, standards and rules:** how to treat others, self-discipline, good and evil, understand that Christian values are perfectly embodied in the person of Christ
- **Sharing common experiences:** loss, anger, thankfulness, sorrow, joy, fear, jealousy, beauty
- **Music:** hymns and songs from the Christian tradition, *Taizé* chants for meditative worship etc. to reflect the variety of music used to enhance the worship of God.
- **Sharing communion.**

Structures and Support

It is important to differentiate between worship and assembly. Worship is explicitly about God, not just a Christian or bible quote in a wider message or talk. Our acts of worship should stand alone and are not be diluted by notices.

Collective worship is held in the chapel all year and in form every week. Worship is led by a variety of people. Outside speakers are often invited to lead worship.

Form tutors lead their form in form worship once a week and also deliver two form reflections on days when there is no chapel worship or year group assembly. This is in

addition to reading the daily prayer. Resources are provided for all tutors to support them in delivering form worship and form worship reflections.

Every day a prayer is provided on the daily bulletin. All pupils end the day with the Grace.

It is recognised that to be effective acts of collective worship require a comfortable and stimulating environment conducive, for example, to quiet reflection and contemplative activities. The material, ideas, etc. need to be relevant to the world of young people, appropriate to their level of understanding, age, phase, their degree of faith and to their experiences.

It is also recognised that staff and pupils who lead the acts of worship require support, including induction for new staff, in-service training for all staff and resources that are meaningful, varied and readily available. There is regular CPD for staff on delivering collective worship as well as frequent evaluation.

The following support is available:

- Musical support from the Music Department who are happy to advise and contribute.
- ICT support from our technician team.
- Resources for staff, including a Bible for all form tutors, readily available prayers, a staff library resourced with assembly books, sketches, themes and ideas.
- Visible symbols in keeping with our status as a Church School. For example, there are crosses in each classroom and the 'vision' and artefacts that can serve as a focus for worship are visible in classrooms and about the school.
- A daily prayer is published on the bulletin.
- Resources for weekly form worship and form reflections can be found on Firefly.

Staff are well supported by the school worship team who are always willing and able to support staff in delivering both year and form worship.