



Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed: November 2021, September 2023

Next review date: September 2025

Rationale

This policy outlines our approach to Collective Worship in line with our vision and values and within the traditions of the Church of England.

Vision and Values

Our vision and values is embedded in our worship. The vision of the school is: *Be courageous! In God's faith, hope & love be empowered to be inspirational, inclusive and innovative.* This is based on Joshua 1:9 (courage) and 1 Corinthians 13:13 (faith, hope and love).

The key bible verses/stories for **courage, faith, hope** and **love** may change from time to time but are currently:

- **Courage** – Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3).
- **Faith** – For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17:20-21).
- **Hope** – Be joyful because you have hope. Be patient when trouble comes, and pray at all times. (Romans 12:12).
- **Love** - Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbour as yourself. (Mark 12:30-31).

The school is part of the Bishop Otter Academy Trust (BOAT) whose vision states:

*Our vision is rooted in Christian values which inspire and underpin our community life together as the foundation of all of our educational and pastoral efforts. We seek to be a distinctive but inclusive Trust, valuing and respecting each other. We extend the invitation to all those in our school communities to join our pursuit of **wisdom for life**. We aim to be a mutually supportive community where we strive for transformational educational excellence through effective partnerships within and beyond the Trust.*

The trust's strapline is 'Wisdom for Life' worship led or prepared by the trust will often be based on James 3:18:

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

Trustees and governors have a responsibility to ensure that the school maintains is Christian worship in line with its foundation and diocesan and Church of England guidance.

Aspiration

In a Church school collective worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Our aspiration is that Collective Worship is exemplary and want to:

- **Courage**
 - o Be truly 'inspirational, innovative and inclusive'.
 - o Teach children about people of **courage** (and faith) within and beyond the bible.
- **Faith**
 - o Give opportunities for children and adults to grow in their journey of **faith** or discovery.
- **Hope**
 - o Foster hope through reflection, prayer and worship.
- **Love**
 - o Provide opportunities to love God (through, for example, prayer, worship/singing, giving and service).

- Encourage children and adults to love their neighbour.
- Encourage children and adults to love themselves (including opportunities for stillness and reflection).

Additional aims of collective worship includes:

1. provide children with an opportunity to worship God;
2. give children experience of Christian acts of worship within an Anglican framework;
3. provide opportunities to explore different Christian Values, particularly our adopted values of courage, faith, hope and love;
4. give children the opportunity for reflection and thought in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity;
5. provide a special, quiet, focused time where children are invited to explore issues for themselves and reflect and learn from their own experiences;
6. provide an experience where children can consider moral and spiritual issues;
7. provide worship which is appropriate for children's needs and interests and to encourage their participation;
8. be an activity distinct from, but linked to and supportive of, other school activities;
9. provide experience which enables children to develop sensitivity and a sense of wonder, awe and mystery for the world of which they are a part; (See SMSC Policy);
10. provide opportunities to ask and answer 'Big Questions,' related to our worship. (See SMSC Policy);
11. provide an opportunity for celebration of the school community, its life, its work and its ethos at which staff and pupils can come together as a family;
12. develop children's skills, for example, music, drama, ICT.

The Legal Requirements

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) requires that:

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on "each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship".
- The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.

Withdrawal

The right of parents to withdraw their children from Collective Worship established in the 1944 Act remains unchanged. Parents also retain this right in voluntary aided and voluntary controlled church schools. This means that:

- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending Collective Worship at a school, the school must comply.
- If parents request alternative worship in accordance with a particular faith or denomination for a child who has been withdrawn, schools should respond positively providing that:
 - denominational worship does not replace the statutory act of Collective Worship for voluntary schools;
 - alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purpose of the school curriculum;
 - such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school.

In recognition of the particular affiliation and ethos of this school, all staff and pupils are expected to take part in worship though the right to withdraw exists. The Governors would hope that parents and staff having chosen this school would wish to support its ethos. Pupils whose parents withdraw them from collective worship go to the library or other agreed place during this activity.

In our worship, and in line with SIAMS we aspire to and will monitor the extent to which worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring and:

INCLUSION

St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School welcomes all. Our pupils come from a variety of backgrounds reflecting our local school community. This may include those who have, or who come from:

- Families with a commitment to the Christian faith.
- Families with a commitment to a faith other than Christianity.

- Families with no particular commitment to any religion.

Acts of Collective Worship take account of the family backgrounds of all pupils as part of the school's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Diversity enriches the life of our school community. In line with guidance from the Diocese of Chichester (In Spirit and In Truth 2015) we take particular care to ensure that in acts of Collective Worship diversity is embraced in positive and sensitive ways through:

- Building up positive relationships with families and local faith communities.
- Encouraging pupils to be present at acts of Collective Worship while ensuring that pupils from other faiths and their parents are aware that they will not be required to say Christian prayers.
- Ensuring that when some leaders use Christian prayers in the time set aside for prayer, pupils will be encouraged to use their own private devotions by thinking of prayers they have learned in their own faith tradition.
- Providing opportunities for silent reflection to enable all pupils to make a personal response.
- Developing a sense of shared values and achievements which cross cultural and religious boundaries.
- Catering for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals.

We aim that our approach to Collective Worship is sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of the communities it serves.

Delivering collective worship at our school

The arrangements for collective worship in this school are made by the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

A daily act of collective worship is provided for all pupils. This will be held in various ways – whole school, class groups or phase groups – giving an opportunity for all children to take part. Worship will be held both indoors and outdoors.

All collective worship is time-tabled and usually held in the morning when children are most receptive, although times may vary.

Collective worship should:

- Be inclusive and involve children;
- relate to children's experiences;
- build on the school's shared values;
- provide an opportunity for prayer and reflection;
- be curricular and educational.

Our worship follows the four-fold structure of 'Flippin Praise'

- a) Gathering (Greeting)
- b) Engaging
- c) Responding (Reflecting)
- d) Sending

See Appendix I for more information.

The school has a 'master' set of slides that can be adapted for each worship. This includes a selection of greetings, key bible verses (and associated images), sample questions, prayers (Lords' Prayer, Prayer of St Richard, School Prayer) and blessings/sending out responses.

In addition:

1. Acts of worship should be carefully planned and records kept. Themes will be planned for each week and a schedule for each term and year, but will also be responsive to current affairs and the needs of children.
2. Acts of worship will be held in the school hall, small classrooms, the Parish Church or appropriate outside venues, for example, Lancing College. They can also be held outside.
3. The setting for acts of worship should be attractive and welcoming with a focus for all attending. Children should enter and leave in an orderly manner. Music will be played on entry and departure. Hymns and songs will be sung and there will be a quiet time for children to reflect. The visible focus may be a picture, slides, artefacts or the lighting of a candle. For school Eucharist Year 6 pupils will prepare the altar and process in with the cross at the start of worship. At the end all stand while pupils process out with the cross.

4. Acts of worship will be led by members of the Senior Leadership Team or other staff members, whole classes, groups of children, local clergy or visiting speakers.
5. A place is given for the celebration of the school and individual achievements – including certificates and awards.
6. Children will be able to participate in a number of ways including worship, planning, setting up the hall or room, working the data projector/PA system/computer, singing, reading, responding, reflecting, spending time in prayer and evaluating. Opportunity to perform musical recitals at the start and end of worship will be given to children who play musical instruments.
7. Parents, friends and governors will be invited to particular acts of worship such as class assemblies and Eucharist services.
8. The school will support the Diocesan Leavers' Service.
9. All visiting speakers will have access to the Collective Worship Policy. A senior member of staff should ensure that all visitors keep within the ethos of the school and Church of England.
10. Acts of collective worship will not normally be used as a forum for announcements about conduct or matters of organisation of the school.
11. Acts of worship should be referred to or written about in the School Newsletter/Bulletin.
12. Acts of worship should be planned, monitored and evaluated by the "Dream Team" and the Senior Leadership Team.
13. Governors, particularly foundation governors/clergy should also be involved in the monitoring and evaluating of worship within the school.
14. The trust will support and monitor collective worship as required.
15. Acts of worship will be evaluated against the SIAMS Toolkit. (See appendix).

Acts of worship in class or year groups

1. Class worship, led by the Class Teacher will occur in each classroom or outdoors in an agreed location (eg in the Tree Circle of Friendship) on a regular basis.
2. The acts of worship should have a visible aid to help focus on God – candle, picture, artefact, vase of flowers, display on a cloth, poem or natural objects (see Guidance for Class Worship).
3. There should be time for quiet reflection.
4. Children in Key Stage 2 may have the opportunity to use their Bibles during worship.
5. Children should be given the opportunity to participate and/or plan and arrange worship themselves (see Pupil's Guide to Leading a Whole School Assembly).

The Anglican Tradition

The faith and practice of the Church of England is explored in collective worship through a child's time in school.

The areas covered are:

- using the Bible;
- taking part in the set order of Anglican worship;
- reflecting on Christian symbols;
- observing the cycle of the Church's year and holy days;
- using the Parish Church and its priests as resources;
- building up a collection of prayers, hymns and songs for worship;
- learning traditional responses and prayers;
- providing the opportunity to discover the value of silence within worship;
- recognising our strong commitment to ecumenism;
- welcoming all pupils of whatever faith and celebrating shared values and beliefs.

The Bible

The use of the Bible is central to worship and is used to enrich worship, to enhance the theme and to give context to the worship. Bible readings and stories are a regular focus during worship. In addition, children are presented with Bibles (by the local vicar) at the beginning of Year 4, for use during class worship, quiet reading time and RE lessons in the subsequent school years. These Bibles are then presented again formally at their school leaver's service as the children continue onwards in their spiritual journeys.

The Eucharist

The Eucharist is central to the expression of Anglican worship. In this school it is celebrated regularly, usually twice a year for KS2 pupils, parents and friends of the school. The Eucharist is planned with care so that the children can grow in understanding of what it means to be believers. On St Nicolas Day or close to it we celebrate the Eucharist with the whole school, governors, parents and friends.

Parental permission must be given before children receive the Eucharist, which includes wine. When children (and adults) go to the front they normally put their hands behind their back to indicate that they want to receive a blessing or in front of them to receive the bread and wine. Alternatively, and this particularly applies to children of other faiths, may shake hands. Children are encouraged but not compelled to go to the front. They can remain in their place.

Prayer

Prayer is an important part of collective worship and a natural part of school life. Children can be helped to understand through a flexible approach to prayer.

We use different methods of prayer such as:

- arrow prayers anytime, anywhere, anyhow;
- prayer and music;
- prayer and silence and quiet time;
- postures for prayer such as hands together or hands in laps;
- ways in which pupils can make prayer requests such as our prayer folder/book in the hall or prayer post-box.
- prayer activities within the Prayer Space, which is held annually and led by the Brighton and Hove City Mission and Off the Fence charities.

We also use set prayers – our School Prayer, the modern version of the Lord's Prayer and the prayer of St Richard of Chichester, as well as our own collection of prayers and graces for use at lunchtime and at the end of the day.

Hymns and Music

Music plays an important part in our worship and helps to create an atmosphere that sets the tone for worship.

We have a large repertoire of hymns, songs and rounds. These include a variety from all traditions of Christian worship.

Hymns and songs are selected for the appropriate age group and are practised regularly. Where possible, these relate to the theme of our worship eg courage, faith, hope and love, or to the relevant Christian festivals.

Music is chosen to start and end our collective worship. This is either recorded music or can be live music played by children and visiting adults.

Planning

Worship is planned in advance using long term plans and termly plans. The themes ensure a balance by considering special occasions in the school's life, the use of the Church Calendar, Christian values (including the school's own: Friendship, Respect, Hope, Compassion and Creativity), the leadership of the worship and special services.

The planned worship for the term provides opportunity to be flexible offering invitation to reflect, be responsive to local and national situations and current affairs, be responsive to children's needs, and appropriateness for our school. KS2 children can also plan whole school worship sessions, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team Music Leader.

Online Worship

If the school is closed or partially closed for any reason e.g. pandemic, then the school will seek to provide online worship. This could include a range of worship e.g.

- Worship recorded by staff and clergy.
- Signposting/links to other organisations providing worship via platforms such as YouTube.

Staff will monitor to check that any assemblies delivered externally are in line with the ethos and values of the school.

Whole School Worship Restrictions

Sometimes it may be not possible to have Key Stage or Whole School collective worship. In such circumstances the school will have a combination of online worship (see above) and class worship.

If it is not possible to meet in the school hall, the school will consider outdoor worship.

Staff Expectations

Staff are expected to fully support the Christian ethos of the school and respect times of worship. They should join in or respectfully observe and set a good example. They should not do alternative activities e.g. if the class are watching an assembly online, they shouldn't multitask and do something else.

Resources and Review of Policy

The worship plan is accessible to staff in the staffroom, hall and via the weekly Staff Bulletin. Worship resources are kept in the holy cupboard, and Headteacher's room.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Related Policies / Documents

- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural policy
- RE Policy
- School vision and values

Appendix I: A BRIEF GUIDE TO SCHOOL WORSHIP

We meet daily for worship, for 15 minutes.

Set up

Music is usually played as pupils come to worship. This may be secular or sacred and will include worship songs, classical and contemporary music to set the tone of a calm and reflective space.

Where possible we have a picture, question or artefact (etc) for the children to look at and reflect on as they come in.

Greeting (or Gathering)

We indicate the start of worship with a call and response such as:

God is here: We come to worship Him

Engagement

The theme of the week should be articulated in each session (see Collective Worship Plan). Across the week, the theme is explored through reference to Biblical text, our principles, through stories and song. Where possible, this should be interactive. A picture or artefact is helpful to focus attention, particularly of the youngest pupils.

Reflection (or Response)

Pose a question or thought for pupils to reflect on (this may be the little or big question of the week, or another thought).

Prayers may also be said. The Lord's Prayer, Prayer of St Richard of Chichester, School Prayer or your own prayer can be used.

Sending Out

Worship usually concludes with a blessing or 'sending out', for example:

God, give us faith, to understand more about you
God, give us hope, to follow you into our future
God, give us love, to know and share your love
Amen

Any notices are given following the conclusion of worship.

Music is usually played as the children leave.