



# Collective Worship Policy

**Reviewed October 2022**

**Next Review date October 2024**



## Introduction

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school and reaffirms our vision:

**We know the extraordinary worth of all our children. Our vision is to grow children believing in their own value, their academic successes and their place in the wider family of school and community. We are all created in the image of God.**

Our worship also reinforces our agreed associated Christian values of compassion, hope, wisdom, justice, endurance, friendship and service.

Collective Worship celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

## What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

*"... Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)*

**Corporate worship** assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

**Collective worship**, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.

Collective Worship should be:

*"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes." (DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)*

Collective Worship gives pupils and school staff the opportunity to:

- Engage in an act of community
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar

In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship



- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

### **Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring**

In line with Church of England guidance, collective worship at Christ Church Church of England Academy aims to be Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring.

The guidance documents defines these as follows:

Inclusive:

Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. In the Church school pupils, their families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our schools will come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school.

Pupils should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching. Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship.

Invitational: Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. The metaphor of 'warm fires and open doors<sup>3</sup>' captures this idea. The warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. There is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith. Importantly the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable. Pupils and adults should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer should always be accompanied by the option to reflect. Music and liturgies<sup>4</sup> used in worship should reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican



worship, it should connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used should reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community.

Inspiring:

Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in a Church school to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

## **The Anglican Christian Tradition**

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Learning and saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection

## **Planning Worship (see Appendix 1)**

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors in consultation with the collective worship leader. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class. Our school plans worship systematically and cohesively using a variety of resources. Resources are adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

## **Expectations of pupils**

Expectations of pupil behaviour are commensurate with our whole school behaviour policy.

The school aims for pupils to be able to regularly plan and lead worship on a voluntary basis or as part of a class or phase group. Pupils can volunteer to be part of the worship council and work with the collective worship leader (P.Foster) to develop their own understanding of worship and to design a worship to support the spiritual development of their peers. This may be through supporting and participating in adult led worship or in planning and leading worship with the collective worship leader.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Our school regularly evaluates the breadth of acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order for worship to

grow and develop. We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils through our collective worship big book. These play an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school. Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

## The legal requirements of collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools.

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- The Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher (*DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53*)
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship'

## Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a church school. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none. We respect the right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents.

## Appendix 1: The Rhythm of Worship at Christ Church Academy

The following pattern is followed, providing a daily rhythm to our worship

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Gathering</b>           | <i>We aim to ensure children 'cross a threshold' into worship. We gather in worship to the sound of music. Calming images are displayed on the hall screen. The music plays before the children arrive as a 'call' to worship. Three candles are lit. Whoever leads worship begins with the greeting: 'This is the day the lord has made.' And the children respond with 'thanks be to God.'</i> |
| <b>Engaging</b>            | <i>We aim to stimulate the interest of children through a range of storytelling, drama, activities, poetry, videos, slides etc around a single simple focus.</i>   |
| <b>Actively responding</b> | <i>In every worship session, children and adults will have an opportunity to respond to the focus of the worship. This may simply be through prayer and reflection but we try to provide for the range of pupils we have.</i>  |
| <b>Sending</b>             | <i>Worship always ends with the words. children and adults respond with <b>Amen</b>. The candles are blown out. Children leave to sound of music and calming images are shown on the screen.</i>   |

The following ongoing weekly pattern is generally followed:

|                  |               |  |
|------------------|---------------|--|
| <b>Monday</b>    | <b>9.15am</b> | Headteacher leads worship to introduce the theme and set the tone for the week |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>9.15am</b> | An Assistant Headteacher continues the theme                                   |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>9.15am</b> | Worship through song led by our Community Liaison Officer                      |



|                 |               |   |
|-----------------|---------------|---|
| <b>Thursday</b> | <b>9.15am</b> | The theme is continued by a different member of teaching or support staff. Once each half term pupils in each class plan and deliver worship.   |
| <b>Friday</b>   | <b>9.15am</b> | Thanksgiving – a celebration assembly to recognise the talents and gifts held in school and offer them to God’s service. Parents are invited to attend. Each class has a class prayer and a different class leads the prayer each week. |