



Collective Worship Policy

Approved by: Pupils and Curriculum

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Loving, learning and shining together

An introduction to Collective Worship

Our Collective Worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of thankfulness, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness, honesty, respect and love and celebrates the central role that each child plays in our community.

We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity in a way that enhances their lives. Collective Worship, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.

Collective Worship is central to the life and purpose of our school and makes an important contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community. It provides an opportunity for all to express joy and thankfulness, share experiences and concerns, and enjoy stillness and peace.

Our school vision of, 'Loving, Learning and Shining Together' is exactly what we aspire for all to do during Collective Worship.

As a church school, we like to think of Collective Worship as a special time when our whole community meets together- the beating heart of our school life- where moments of 'awe and wonder' may be experienced. It is a significant time during the day when we gather together as a school family:

- the Christian identity of our school is strengthened and supported
- the reaffirming and outworking of our vision is explored
- our values, the roots that give our pupils the guidance and strength to navigate the world, are revisited, expressed and celebrated -ensuring they are at the heart of everything we do
- our sense of school community is reinforced - it is the invisible thread that links all classes, year groups and staff together
- conversations about God and faith are stimulated
- questions are asked
- opportunities are given to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of our world
- each member of our community is valued and celebrated for who they are

We aim for our worship to be welcoming, **inclusive**, **invitational** and **inspirational** for all pupils, staff, parents and visitors- exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality (*Appendix 1*)- ensuring all can be present with integrity.

Based on the school's Trust Deed, our acts of worship are rooted in the Anglican and Methodist traditions and practices on which our school is founded and reflect the Christian liturgical year. This daily Christian act is central to our ethos and is supported by staff and governors.

Our acts of worship take place daily and last approximately 20mins.

Teaching and support staff are all invited to take part in our worship and an open invitation is given to our wider school community, beyond our pupils and teaching/support staff, to attend any worship if they choose to do so. (office/kitchen staff/caretaker/governors)

During each act of worship, our desire is for biblical narrative to be delivered which inspires and enables all our community to leave the time together inspired to live out our Christian values and to shine brightly in all they do and say so that they reflect God's love and flourish and so become the *person* God created them to be by experiencing 'life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10)

We aspire to encourage and enable those pupils with faith to deepen their relationship with, and understanding of God, whilst also welcoming and encouraging everyone, of all backgrounds, to embark on and continue their own spiritual journey. We provide opportunities for all to grow in their faith, whatever that may be and without compulsion, through experiences of worship, prayer, stillness and reflection. Our worship is conducted within an equal opportunities policy and is supported by all staff and members of the Governing Body.

Collective worship and the law

- As a church school, our Collective Worship is conducted in accordance with the Trust Deed (Collective worship in a Church School/academy should be carried out in accordance with the schools founding Trust Deed, and in accordance with the School/academy's Ethos Statement, which is to be found in the statutory Instruments of Government.) and is consistent with the beliefs and practices of our joint Church of England and Methodist Church heritage.
- In accordance with the legal requirements of a church school, we provide a daily act of collective worship for all registered pupils and staff.
- The Governing Body should ensure all pupils each day engage in an act of Christian Worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the church.
- All acts of worship in church schools must be Christian in character (based on biblical teachings).
- Arrangements for Collective Worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher.

Christian foundation of the school

We rejoice in being one of just a few joint Church of England and Methodist Church schools in the county. As such, we are privileged to have both Southwell Minster and Southwell Methodist Church (SMC) as our 2 main churches. We are also occasionally supported by Holy Trinity Church and Riverside fellowship both practically and in prayer.

The requirement to reflect the Anglican/Methodist status of the school, as expressed in our trust deed, liberates those leading worship to build on the rich lived diversity of Methodist/Anglican tradition and identity which, in turn, provides our pupils with a variety of experiences of worship.

Our church school is not simply for Christians but exists to serve the whole community. Whilst we have several practising, worshipping families, these are in the minority. Our worship is, therefore, a collective act, not, as in a church, a corporate ('body' of believers) act. It is a gathering of many individuals all on their own spiritual journeys. We aim to include members of the school community who come from faith backgrounds other than Christianity, or from no faith background at all.

Our worship offers pupils an **opportunity**: whilst Collective Worship is an essential core element of Church school life, it should also be a **voluntary act**. Worship is an open invitation, but it is for

pupils and staff to use that opportunity if they feel comfortable doing so: there should be no compulsion to worship, and this is made clear to all who lead acts of collective worship, including visitors from outside groups. (*Appendix 2*). We do not assume personal commitment or involvement; our task is to enable worship not to compel it. We do, however, strive for our worship to be capable of soliciting a response from all.

Assembly v collective worship

As we meet together daily for worship, we are continually mindful of the difference between an assembly and an act of worship.

Assembly is: Meeting together for a common purpose. e.g. a visiting theatre company in school, or the need to give out important notices or deal with matters of common concern.

Collective worship is: A coming together of the school community for the purpose of engaging in an opportunity to worship. In each act of Collective Worship, some of the elements of worship (i.e. of "giving worth to God") must be present.

An Assembly may include Collective Worship. Not every Assembly is Collective Worship.

Responsibilities

- **Role of governors**

All governors are welcome to attend Collective Worship at any time and when they do, they will complete a feedback form to evaluate the quality of the worship, fulfilling their statutory duty. Governors therefore ensure that our worship is consistent with the trust deed.

- **The Head Teacher**

Whilst our worship co-ordinator works closely with the Head Teacher to provide planning and support, the Headteacher has overall responsibility for our day-to-day acts of collective worship. He will ensure all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements.

Aims of Collective Worship

We aim to provide the whole school community with a rich and meaningful experience of Collective Worship, which demonstrates and supports our school Christian vision and values in action and focuses on the life and teaching of Jesus and the word of God.

Each child brings to Collective Worship their own unique being, personality and background. The opportunities they are offered invite them to explore who God is, the world around them and, through this, to understand their place in our school, their wider community and their world. They will do this in their own way, from their own perspective and at their own speed.

Collective Worship offers pupils, staff and the wider school community the opportunity to gather together and, without compulsion, to:

- explore the Christian faith by learning more about the life and teachings of Jesus and the central teachings of the Christianity through biblical texts (knowledge)
- develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)
- link our Christian school values to the life and teachings of Jesus
- become familiar with the bible and understand that, for Christians, it is God's word

- grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, music, story, drama and reflection
- appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world
- share and foster moments and feelings of joy, laughter, challenge, grief and love
- express praise and thanksgiving to God
- foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- understand that Christians worship in different ways
- experience awe and wonder.
- celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar and learn about those from other faiths (relating what they hear to Christian values)
- foster a concern for others within our school community and the wider world (courageous advocacy).
- deepen appreciation for the natural world and the importance of acting responsibly toward the environment as God's stewards (global neighbours)
- have respect for other people's religious beliefs and practices
- develop an enquiring mind and express and explore their own views honestly and openly through reflection and wondering questions
- bring personal needs and the needs of others before God in prayer
- share each other's successes
- learn how to behave and respond in a large social group.

We will enable this in a number of ways:

- Promoting a reflective and worshipful atmosphere.
- Deepening and widening the experience of those of 'faith' and encouraging those of little or no formal faith so they begin to feel something of what it means to worship.
- Providing a break from the busyness of the day.
- Encouraging a sense of unity and community spirit (whole school community meeting together).
- Reflecting the Anglican/Methodist tradition.
- Celebrating gifts, talents, achievements and special occasions.
- Enabling all to respond to the worship offered in their own way.
- Supporting those in responding to crises at a personal or collective level.
- Welcoming local clergy and church volunteers to lead our worship.
- Providing a safe, nurturing environment where pupils feel happy to share their thoughts and feelings.
- Giving children opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate worship.

Organisation

- **Timing of worship**

Careful consideration has been given to the timing of our worship. (See appendix 10) Our week begins with a whole school gathering on Monday morning to set the tone for the week. This is repeated on Tuesday morning when we regularly welcome visitors. Worship on a Wednesday and Friday is at the end of the day with the timing of class worship, on a Thursday, being left to individual members of staff to decide when it best fits into their day.

- **Content of Worship**

Worship is given careful planning, preparation, execution, evaluation and resourcing. The Collective Worship lead plans the themes for the term and then, in consultation with the Head teacher, creates a half-termly plan- taking account of school activities, festivals and important events.

The person leading Collective Worship is expected to plan their worship as carefully as they would a lesson.

Our worship is built around:

- Our school vision which is the foundation of our curriculum, our learning and our experiences.
- Our school Christian values- a value is selected for each half term to provide focus and is usually explored during Monday whole school worship and followed up as appropriate throughout the week. In addition, where appropriate, a complementary value is included to deepen our experiences.
- The liturgical calendar. We observe the cycle of the Church's year- Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and various Saint's Days.
- Key events in the calendar of other faith groups e.g. Diwali, Ramadan and Sukkot, (many studied as part of the R.E. curriculum).
- National charity celebrations and key days e.g. Christmas Jumper Day and Fairtrade Fortnight are marked to support our vision of looking outwards and shining brightly by sharing love with others in our local and global communities. Other examples include National Empathy Day and World Rainforest Day.
- Our P.S.H.E curriculum (Jigsaw material).
- British Values and Protected Characteristics which are integrated and acknowledged as and where appropriate.

Worship is constantly evolving and being re-imagined, and our content is fluid to a certain extent, to accommodate school, local and global need.

For our long-term plan see *Appendix 11*.

Over a term, the majority of acts of worship are wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

Whatever content is explored, our values remain central. In the context of our vision, children are encouraged to live out these values and themes of our worship and recognise these, in their day-to-day lives both inside and outside the classroom.

- **Class worship**

This reflects the chosen values or celebrates special days and world/local events as appropriate. The Collective Worship lead selects material from a variety of sources including the Diocese of Guildford and Picture News.

During class worship, pupils have the chance to be more involved than they can be in the hall; the smaller number of people present makes it conducive to asking questions and having discussions. The chance to revisit the material introduced in whole school worship, in a different context, helps pupils to further engage with it and work out how it applies to them. Pupils are encouraged to share prayers, personal thoughts and experiences.

- **Singing Worship**

Our pupils love to sing! With this in mind, echoing the Methodist tradition, singing and Music is a fundamental element of our worship. Songs are carefully chosen by the worship lead and the Deputy Headteacher. A number of resources are used with an increasingly varied diet being introduced to echo traditional and more contemporary styles.

Our Wednesday worship is based on Psalm 96:1, 'Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord all the earth.'

New songs and their meanings, which are often linked to our values, are learnt and previous songs are refreshed. This still follows our format for Collective Worship and, whilst centred around the enjoyment of singing, we endeavour to plan for it to remain a time of worship. A familiar song is sung as praise to begin and this is often followed by the learning of a new song. As lyrics are taught, their meaning is explored and related to the gospel, previous themes explored and our values. Pupils with faith are given opportunities and encouraged to praise God and a reflective time/prayer is also included.

- **Celebration Worship**

Whilst having no discreet teaching, our Friday worship is a definite time of unity and togetherness as we celebrate the successes of individuals and teams within our school- creating a lovely end to our week!

Each teacher chooses a 'star of the week' to receive a certificate and children from upper school are given opportunities to play musical instruments as we enter and leave. School team successes are shared when appropriate and a time of reflection is included. Usually, we all join together in our school prayer to end the week.

- **Special Services**

In addition to the weekly programme of worship, the main festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter are marked with special services. These are held in either Southwell Methodist Church or The Minster, which is also the venue for our annual leavers' service in July.

Structure of Worship

Welcome

Members of the Spark and Ignite team prepare the setting ahead of our worship by organising seating, the altar table and entry music. Our altar table, which is covered in a cloth of the appropriate liturgical colour for the time of year, symbolises The Trinity. We open the bible to remember God the Father, place a cross in the centre to remember God the Son and place a symbol of a dove on the table to remember God the Holy Spirit.

3 candles are also lit to symbolise the Holy Trinity and often accompanied by words such as: 'We light these candles to remind us that God is with us; God the Father who created the world, God the Son who died on the cross and who shows us how to live, and God the Holy Spirit who gives us the spirit of thankfulness.'

In addition, the candles are a visual reminder that Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world,' and also that our school vision is underpinned by Matthew 5:16, 'Let your light shine...'

Pupils are welcomed into our worship with specially chosen music to complement the theme of worship, inspire thought and/or promote praise. Whilst this is primarily to listen to, children are welcome to join in. This music is frequently Christian in nature, however, no child is ever required to join in with words they do not profess to believe.

Structure of a whole school worship session

We have a regular pattern of worship where the key elements of gathering, engaging, responding and sending (GERS) reflect the Anglican tradition. We also allow for variation within this basic structure. Visitors may use their own structure if they wish to do so.

- **Greet**

Everyone is welcomed with the lighting of 3 candles and the saying of a welcome/greeting which designates the beginning of worship. (As detailed above)

- **Engage.**

The main content is usually bible based and centres on the life and teaching of Jesus. Old Testament stories and world faith stories are also used to explore the nature of God. Worship is designed to be as interactive as possible using pupil participation via actions, drama, questioning, imagining, talk partners, chanting, dancing, etc. to enable pupils to engage with/relate to the message as much as possible.

- **Respond**

Children are encouraged to reflect in a variety of ways e.g by considering wondering questions, joining in with a time of quiet, praying, sharing thoughts with a partner, singing a carefully chosen song or by listening to a piece of music. All are invited to join in with a prayer said by the leader by responding with Amen, if they wish to do so.

All pupils are encouraged to participate at a level that they feel comfortable with. Some may respond outwardly, through answering/asking questions, volunteering or responding spontaneously. Others may respond entirely silently and individually. All responses are valued and respected.

- **Send**

Our worship ends with a responsive phrase/offering the peace (sometimes led by children) or the central message may be shared again and pupils are asked to think about how their behaviour, actions or thoughts may change in light of the worship. Candles are blown out and pupils usually leave to music. They are often encouraged to reflect on which of our values have been in evidence during our worship.

Prayer (Appendix 7)

Worship leaders will usually lead a time of prayer. Our school prayer and The Lord's prayer may also be used, and a blessing is sometimes included.

Opportunities are given in class worship for pupils to pray, as appropriate. Grace is said in classes prior to going out to lunch.

Pupil involvement

All pupils are given opportunities to evaluate worship via their on-going class book and more formal pupil voice sheets.

The involvement of pupils in the planning and leading/delivery of worship is a developing initiative. Pupil leaders are supported and encouraged to contribute to meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the Collective Worship lead during lunchtimes to support the spiritual development of their peers.

Ways in which this is being developed include:

- Whole school leading using material supplied by the worship lead/ Faithful Fun Club.
- Delivery of class worship by Year 6 pupils to Year 3.
- Leading of class worship by pupils in their own classes.
- Providing material to use in Class Worship.
- Playing of instruments during celebration worship.

Spark and Ignite

Each class has a representative on the Spark and Ignite team. This is a group of pupils who meet approximately once a month, with the Worship Co-ordinator, to organise, evaluate, discuss and move our worship forward practically and spiritually. (*Appendix 3*)

Visitors leading worship

We extend a warm welcome to ministers, vicars and representatives from our local places of worship and the wider community to lead us and take part in our worship. Each half term, in consultation with our worship leader, we are led by Reverend Hibberts (Southwell Methodist Church), the family worker from the Methodist church and Cannon Richard from Southwell Minster. Less frequently, visitors from other local churches join us to lead our worship. This allows pupils to experience and partake in, first hand, a variety of worship styles led by Christians from our community.

Visitors are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies and are never left alone with pupils. All visitors are briefed about the school, its pupil context and the school's vision and values. They are also familiar with this policy and are provided with guidelines for worship. (*Appendix 2*) Very importantly, visitors should understand that in our school 'E' is for Education and not Evangelism and therefore must avoid proselytising. They will be supported and monitored as part of the on-going evaluation process of worship.

Resources (*Appendix 4*)

The bible is used as a main resource for inspiration, stories and guidance. Our resources include books, internet resources, artefacts, music, visitors, Diocesan material (Southwell, Guildford, Canterbury, Bath and Wells, Gloucestershire), subscription and digital materials. The resources are organised and kept by the worship lead.

Monitoring and evaluation

(Self-assessment, inspection and evaluating Impact)

Monitoring and evaluation are vital to our ever-present desire to improve our worship to meet the needs of our whole school community.

It is the role of the worship lead, Headteacher, and Governors to monitor the policy and practice of Collective Worship. They observe whole school acts of worship and class worship regularly (at least 3 times a year).

All Governors have an open invitation to attend worships and the designated Collective Worship governor is invited to attend once every half term, when they are encouraged to feed back (*Appendix 5*). Other visitors are also welcome to fill out an evaluation form.

Pupil voice is integral to improving the structure, content and shaping the future planning of worship, therefore, pupils have opportunities to evaluate worship from time to time (*Appendix 6*) and their responses are noted and acted upon when planning subsequent worship sessions.

Staff views are sought orally, and the Collective Worship lead informally evaluates worship whenever possible.

The **impact** of Collective Worship is independently inspected by law under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS) however, it is essential that we internally evaluate the impact our worship has on the spiritual growth of individuals and the school. This is less straightforward than

evaluating individual acts of worship as it isn't always an outward observation, nor is it measurable.

The depth of impact of our worship will differ from person to person and group to group as we acknowledge children and adults will be responding to the worship in different ways and at different levels. Some will be passive observers, learning about worship but not participating in it; some will be "at the threshold", interested in the process and participating in it but not full believers; for others the act of collective worship may be a time of real worship of God.

We evaluate impact by considering the following questions:

- How positive are learners' attitudes to collective worship?
- To what extent do learners and staff derive inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation from worship?
- To what extent do they take elements from worship sessions and apply them to their relationships and their attitudes to school life?
- To what extent are pupils flourishing and shining?

How this is done is an ongoing area of development.

As a way of promoting impact, we encourage all staff/ adults in school to develop the themes and content of our worship beyond our designated collective worship time in to the curriculum and the school day- encouraging everyone to apply what they learn to their relationships, actions and attitudes.

We monitor this in a number of ways:

- Continually observing children's general attitude to worship.
- Observation of the worship space (engagement, behaviour and responses of pupils).
- Taking note of classroom feedback and follow up from the children.
- Observation of behaviour and attitudes around school (inside and outside the classroom).
- Looking for the effect on the quality of relationships within our school.

Ongoing monitoring is implemented through planned activities:

- Half-termly formal evaluations of one week's worship by pupils across each year group. (*Appendix 6*)
- Informal 'jottings' in class evaluation books by pupils and staff.
- An evaluation book is available in the staffroom for any stakeholders to share their views, both positive and negative.
- A questionnaire is given annually to all staff and a random selection of pupils from each year group (*Appendix 9*)
- Evaluating and monitoring by worship leaders (mainly informal).
- Half termly reviews by the Collective Worship lead.
- Informal feedback by Spark and Ignite members of Class worship.
- The Collective Worship lead submits an annual evaluation to the governing body.

Training

The lead has attended a course, together with 4 pupils, led by the Southwell Diocese. This outlined good practice, with a special emphasis on the involvement of pupils in all aspects of worship.

The lead has attended a series of 'Prayer Spaces in Schools' webinars with a view to establishing these in the near future.

Regular webinars provided by MAST have greatly enhanced the Collective Worship leader's understanding and development.

Role of the Worship Lead

- planning worship
- overseeing the Spark and Ignite worship group
- keeping records of acts of worship.
- organising and liaise with visitors to lead worship
- selecting entry and exit music
- supporting the Headteacher
- providing basic resources for class worship/reflective areas
- keeping abreast of SIAMS initiatives
- attending training when possible.
- regularly reviewing this policy to ensure it reflects current practice and thinking
- liaising with the Headteacher and Governors on the monitoring and impact of collective worship across the school.
- ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading and planning worship.
- evaluating the impact of collective worship on the whole school community by gathering pupil and adult voice and instigate necessary changes in light of this.
- Signposting staff to a range of resources to ensure that worship is inspiring and engaging.
- supporting colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources and help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- ensuring there is a protocol for when visitors are invited to lead collective worship (*Appendix 2*)
- meeting with pupil leaders to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship when possible
- updating resources when and as necessary.
- inputting into the songs learnt during Singing Worship and lead/assist weekly sessions
- endeavouring to find new resources and approaches to enable our worship to evolve so that it meets the needs of our pupils (purchasing resources as appropriate)

Pupil and staff withdrawal

Whilst worship is a special time and an integral part of our day, when there is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity, we respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children.

- Parents may withdraw their children from collective worship on 'religious grounds.' They make their request in writing to the Headteacher, however, the 'religious grounds' do not have to be justified and explained by the parents.
- Should children be withdrawn, we provide adequate supervision to ensure their safety during the period in which the worship takes place.
- Children should not be withdrawn from Collective Worship for any other reason.
- Although Collective Worship is seen as a valuable time for building community, as we are a controlled school, staff may request withdrawal from Collective Worship by contacting the Headteacher.

Guidance for new parents on non-participation in acts of worship is available on the school website.

See DfE Circular 1/94 for further details.

Class Reflection Areas

Every classroom has a Reflection Area where values are explicitly shared, and worships are reflected or followed up as appropriate. Pupils can use these spaces if they need a moment to reflect during the school day. (*Appendix 8*)

Equal Opportunities and SEND

All pupils, regardless of academic ability, age, gender and ethnic origin will be supported in their understanding of and responses to worship e.g. we support our hearing impairment pupils using audio equipment.

Conclusion

Collective Worship is central to the life of our school. It permeates through all we do: contributing to the wellbeing of our school community; equipping and supporting all to shine brightly and flourish.