

St Margaret's C of E School



Collective Worship Policy

Adopted as draft under consultation: 1st December 2023

Agreed by Governors: 14th March 2024

Signed (Governor Hub): Dr C Freeman (Chair of Governors) / Mr D Hugill (Headteacher)

Review date (earlier if amendments necessary/statutory): March 2026

Our Vision:

- (a) **Inspire** a strong sense of faith and a commitment to our Christian and British values.
- (b) **Inspire** a love of learning so our pupils can achieve their full potential

Isaiah 40:31 - But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

How is this policy a reflection of our distinctive Christian vision?

In St Margaret's C of E School, worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At St Margaret's, collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*¹) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.²

An Introduction to collective worship in St Margret's C of E school

As a Church of England school collective worship is the beating heart of our school life. It brings and gives life to all we do. Collective worship is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather together as a school family.

Collective worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of **respect, equality, co-operation, compassion, peace and forgiveness** and celebrates the central role that each pupil and adult have to play in our community.

¹ Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

² "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

Our acts of collective worship reflect the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and 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.

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.
- **Invitational** – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to ‘do anything’. Rather, worship will 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. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community’s behaviour and actions.

Aims of collective worship

Collective Worship offers pupils, staff and the wider school community the opportunity to:

- Gather together to share sacred moments of joy, challenge, grief and love.
- Explore the school’s distinctive Christian vision and values in action
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still, pray and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Explore Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other’s joys and challenges
- Celebrate significant and 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 whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
- 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 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.

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship through invitational and inclusive language:

- 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
- 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

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Using Collects as a focus for worship
- Celebrating Eucharist

Implementation

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, our vicar of the local church and external visitors where appropriate. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school or class. We plan worship to meet the needs of our community, building a sense of faith, spirituality and the world around us.

We meet for worship every day: two as a whole school and three as a class or larger groups depending on the plan e.g. singing worship is often whole school.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable pupils, staff and clergy to engage in the acts of worship.

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – we welcome the community and undertake an Anglican greeting

- **Engage** – we share a range of activities on a variety of themes, making links with a Christian message or values, including readings from The Bible
- **Respond** – pupils can discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing
- **Sending out** – we reflect on the message of the worship and encourage the pupils to reflect how they can apply it. We close with a liturgical sending out

Expectations of pupils

We actively encourage our pupils to be involved in all worships. This includes planning and delivering worships on a chosen theme as a group. We provide opportunities through questioning, drawing out answers from a variety of children.

Pupils are invited to evaluate and reflect on the impact of acts of worship. They are empowered to help enhance the structure and content, as well as shaping future plans for worship.

All pupils are encouraged, supported and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the collective worship leader during lunchtime and breaktime to develop their own understanding of worship and to design an act of worship to support the spiritual development of their peers. Children also contribute regularly to their class prayer books, sharing these in class and school worship, as well as composing a range of prayers individually for whole school worship.

Developing worship

Worship is delivered by people who understand the nature of collective worship in a Church School context. Guidance and training are provided if needed, supervised by senior leaders.

The leader for collective worship will:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements
- Ensure that collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring
- Attend network meetings/training where appropriate
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking
- Provide feedback to leaders and governors on the impact of collective worship
- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning and joining worship
- Gather supportive feedback on how worship could be enhanced
- Evaluate collective worship by gathering pupil and adult voice
- Support colleagues with ideas and resources to help them lead effective acts of worship
- Apply protocol (safeguarding procedures) for visitors leading collective worship
- Evaluate acts of worship with the Faith Team

Visitors leading worship

Visitors to our school must read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies. This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of teachers and senior leaders to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship, are properly briefed about the school, our vision and expectations.

Self-assessment and Inspection

We evaluate collective worship and the impact it has on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. This includes gathering the opinions of parents/carers during community worships.

We also welcome the contributions of pupils to develop the spiritual growth of the school. These are reviewed by the Faith Team and shared with governors by our Christian link governor.

The impact of collective worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).

Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time in our school day where we gather as a school family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, collective worship 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 from acts of collective worship, so would welcome the opportunity to discuss this decision with them.

Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw children from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.

Appendix

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: 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)

Therefore, collective worship in Church of England schools must be inclusive and invitational of all, to ensure all can be present with integrity.

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'.
- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, then the school must comply. (Education Reform Act 1988. s9 (3)) The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from collective worship.