

West Ashton CE Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

Dated: May 2023

Date of review: May 2025

‘You will shine among them like stars in the sky.’

Philippians 2:15

An Introduction to Collective Worship at West Ashton CofE Primary 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, 'You will shine among them like stars in the sky' (Philippians 2:15) and our associated Christian values of Agape, Hope, Wisdom, Thankfulness, Friendship and Koinonia. It celebrates the central role that each pupil and adult have to play in our community.



Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

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 academy councillors. 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.

Policy Statement

In West Ashton CofE Primary 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.

At West Ashton CofE Primary School 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 calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

Church of England Guidance

Collective worship policy at West Ashton CofE Primary School draws on guidance from the Church of England. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

In line with 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/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; and
- e) encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, "that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", is not relevant.

The Trust's Leader of Church Schools Flourishing and the Academy Council have responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

Guiding Principles

Collective worship in West Ashton CofE Primary School aims to:

- have a pivotal place in the life of the school;
- support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth;
- be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible;
- provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity;
- support pupils in the development of their understanding of the trinitarian nature of god in Christian belief;
- provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey;
- help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience;
- explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time;
- offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship; and
- ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

How Collective worship is organised

Collective worship 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 be invited to pray and sing.
- 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.

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

Implementation

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. Typically Collective Worship is at 9.00am with the whole school – see outline below.

Below is an outline of the week:

Monday – Whole School – Head Teacher

Tuesday – Class Worship – Worship Leaders

Wednesday – Whole School – Visitors or Class Teachers

Thursday – Class Picture News and Reflection – Class Teacher

Friday – Whole School Celebration – Head Teacher

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. These include: music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT.

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- Gather – we welcome the community, for example, (with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle)
- Engage – we share, for example, (a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message)
- Respond – pupils, for example, (discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing)
- Send – we share, for example, (the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle)

The right of withdrawal

Worship is regarded as a 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 Head Teacher.