

Ashford CE Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

Updated Policy: June 2025

Signed: _____ L Bowman _____

Approved by FGB: 19 June 2025

Chair of Governors

To be reviewed: Summer Term 2028

Collective Worship Policy

Our School Vision

We are a caring Christian community where everyone adopts an “I can” attitude; everyone feels valued, safe and loved by God. We celebrate our God-given individuality, achievements and talents and we aspire, with God’s help, to become the best that we can be. We believe that each one of us has the ability to achieve our highest potential, living and learning in the fullness of God.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

Philippians 4v13

Our school is a Church of England Voluntary Aided school and works in partnership with our two local parish churches, St Matthew’s and St Hilda’s along with other Christian churches and groups. We aim to reflect the values, traditions and beliefs of the Christian faith and to demonstrate a continuing educational and pastoral concern within the life of the school and community.

Each member of our school community knows they are individually valued, unique and special to God and is committed to working together in a Christian spirit of co-operation, courtesy, care and consideration.

Our community at this school is diverse and our Collective Worship aims to be inclusive and respectful of individual beliefs, as well as distinctively articulating Anglican beliefs and practices.

Meeting together as a school community to worship together is a central part of the life of the school, and all we are. As a Church of England Voluntary Aided School, our worship is essentially Christian, but conducted within an educational context in which inclusion of the whole community is a key focus.

Introduction

In Church of England schools, collective worship is seen as more than a daily ‘awe and wonder’ moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and will be offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.

*We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives...Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.*¹

¹ The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. (The Church of England Education Office 2016) page 10

Collective worship is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather together as a whole school family. Collective worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school and reaffirms our Christian vision and associated values of perseverance, respect, compassion, forgiveness, courage and thankfulness.

Aims of Collective Worship

- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- To reflect the parish tradition of worship, while giving experience over time for pupils to experience the breadth of Anglicanism.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship and festivals.
- Explore the school's Christian vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues.
- Enable pupils the opportunity to make a positive contribution to worship through involvement with aspects of the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship.

Legal Requirements

Collective worship:

- Should be conducted in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school and Instrument of Government and be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- Unless the right of withdrawal has been exercised all pupils must take part each day in an act of collective worship (DfE circular 1/94 para. 51) and the Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage in a distinctively Christian act of worship.
- Arrangements for collective worship in foundation schools of a religious character (i.e. church schools) are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consultation with the headteacher (DfE Circular 1/94 para 52&53).

Planning of Worship

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including the senior leadership team, RE leader, staff, the incumbent of our linked church/es and external visitors in consultation with the collective worship leader and governors.

The daily Christian act of worship is central to our Christian ethos. It makes an important contribution to the spiritual flourishing of the whole school community. We are committed to providing a daily act of Christian worship which is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifies the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school or key stage. Our school plans systematically, using both long term and short-term plans which enables continuity and cohesion. We use LDBS Collective Worship Planning and Roots and Fruits publications to support our worship planning.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and our planning incorporates a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. These include: music, art, drama and storytelling. There are opportunities throughout worship for children to engage in moments of reflection and deeper discussion with peers and adults.

When planning acts of worship, we follow the Church of England guidance to ensure that worship is:

- **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 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.

Pattern of Worship

Our pattern of worship is as follows:

Worship led by Clergy. At least once a week, clergy from our parish churches, St Matthew’s and St Hilda’s, lead collective worship.

Class Worship. Each class worships together at least once a week where there are more opportunities for personal reflection.

Hymns of Worship. Once a week the children have Key Stage singing worship where they learn new hymns and faith songs.

Whole School Worship. Once a week the whole school comes together for worship, usually led by the Headteacher, or senior leader, often centred around our value.

Celebration Worship. During this worship, the achievements of the children that have been entered into the Celebration Book are shared. Class attendance is acknowledged. Staff achievement is also acknowledged when appropriate.

Services in St Hilda’s and St Matthews. During the year we hold a range of services in our parish churches. Some are led by the children and others by the clergy. These may include Harvest, Christmas and Leavers’ services. Parents and Governors are invited to join us.

Daily Prayer in class. Each class has a prayer at the end of the school day. These may be led by a pupil or the class teacher.

Prayer Tree. All the children are encouraged to stop and write a prayer for the school prayer tree. These are periodically included in Collective Worship.

Worship led by other Christian ministers and organisations. From time to time, we also welcome other ministers, children/youth leaders or Christian organisations to lead the school in worship.

Our worship consists of 4 parts:

- **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 a final prayer, music, and the blowing out of our special candle*)

Leadership of Collective Worship

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for collective worship in school, including the long-term planning of worship, leading acts of worship and supporting staff and pupils who are planning and leading aspects of worship. The leader, alongside nominated governors, also monitors the quality of worship and evaluates its impact across the school community.

Visitors Leading Worship

Visitors to our school are asked to 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 the senior leaders to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its context and our school's vision using the LDBS guidance for visitors leading worship.

CPD and Training

Parents, pupils and adults in school are entitled to be led in Christian worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a church school context. Therefore, all those leading worships, including clergy, should have access to regular diocesan led training.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact they have on pupils and adults within the school community.

This involves monitoring by school leaders, the collective worship leader and governors and takes place both informally and formally. Everyone who leads worship is asked to evaluate, reflecting on how they can improve and develop their practice. We welcome the views of all those who participate

in our worship, including pupils, parents, and visitors, these views are gathered through discussion following the worship. This feedback plays an essential part in developing the spiritual growth of our school community.

Foundation governors and the worship leader observe and evaluate worship regularly and report back to the whole governing body.

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

Parents and Carers

At the beginning of a person's relationship with the school, for example on a tour of the school for a new child or at an interview for a new member of staff, it is explained that by becoming part of a faith community, there is an agreement to embrace and accept our ethos by taking part in RE lessons and acts of worship. However, Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship, although this would be unusual given the religious character of the school. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from worship will need to meet with the Headteacher before this is granted. If children are withdrawn the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child. Ashford Church of England School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities

Teachers also have the right to withdraw from collective worship, although this again would be unusual given the religious character of the school they have chosen to work in.

Evaluation / Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the collective worship leader in consultation with the Headteacher and ratified every **three years** by the Governing Body.