



LEARNING AND GROWING; SAFE IN GOD'S LOVE

## BIRCHINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Collective Worship Policy

#### Introduction

Our Collective Worship policy strengthens and supports our unique Christian Vision and School Values of Hope, Peace, Love, Forgiveness and Respect. We strive to ensure our Collective Worship are a time where our school family can come together and celebrate the central role that each child plays in their community. Following the words of our Christian Vision, we ensure that our worship leaders plan and deliver aspirational worships that celebrate and respect all our pupils. Like our chosen Bible parable of the Lost Sheep, we aim for all our pupils to flourish and feel safe; we ensure that all our worships are invitational and inclusive to include all our pupils. 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.

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

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, developing a sense of belonging through different groups of students and staff coming together
- Explore the school's distinctive Christian vision and values in action, nurturing a community spirit
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still, pray, reflect and to experience silence in a busy world
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events, developing an enquiring mind and exploring their own views in a safe space and fostering an awareness of the world around them and a sense of their place within it
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Explore Christian values and attitudes and celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar
- Reflect in ways that are of a broadly Anglican Christian tradition, whilst recognising the validity and importance of other Christian denominations, religions, belief systems and other world views.
- Take responsibility for their own conduct, charitable giving, and social actions so that they might contribute positively to a multi-diverse society

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/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.

### **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 responses at the beginning and end of worship
- 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

## Implementation

Collective Worship is a legal requirement. In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, each school must provide a broadly Christian act of collective worship for all pupils every day. 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.

Collective Worship is led by the Headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, teaching staff and Governors on a rota basis. Pupils, members of the clergy and other invited guests also contribute to our worships. Collective Worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, Governors, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors in consultation with the Spirituality Hub. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using Canterbury Diocese's *A Fresh Approach to Collective Worship* planning, which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our school community. This ensures there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and enables continuity. Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies. This includes discussing the content of any worship with a member of the Spirituality Hub or 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.

Throughout the week we lead one Hymn and Worship, one Celebration and Worship, one Class Worship and two key stage worships. KS1 and Year 3 meet in our Mr Mac Hall and Years 4-6 meet in our Quex Hall. Our joint worships are held first thing in the morning following our morning registration.

Our EYFS children are introduced to Collective Worships in a class setting; it is expected the majority of the children will be able to join KS1 by Term 2.

Children on school trips will also be invited to join in an act of worship at some point during their day.

On key dates throughout the year, our local vicar will lead acts of worship after school in our school hall. Staff, pupils and their families will be invited to attend.

Collective Worship at Birchington CEP is inclusive and all members of our school community are invited to attend. It is conducted in a calm and dignified way, with children entering and leaving in a respectful manner. All children are expected to be quiet, thoughtful and behave in an appropriate way, listening carefully to the teachings and being invited to participate appropriately in prayers and songs. A 'thinking candle' is lit to provide a visual focus for Collective Worship, and a response invited, and to mark this time as a special period of reflection. Themed displays are used to enhance the worship, pupil interaction and create a reflective school environment.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT and outside worships.

We also hold worship services at All Saints Church at Christmas, Easter and the end of the school year. Parents/carers are invited to join these and other acts of worship in school at any other times during the year.

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- *Gather* – we welcome the community with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle
- *Engage* – we share a bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message
- *Respond* -- pupils discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing
- *Send* – we share 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.

## **Expectations of pupils**

In our school, there is an expectation that all pupils will be involved within worship on a regular basis. This may be opportunities planned ahead of time or unplanned through questioning, asking for volunteers or simply responding to moments of spontaneity.

Pupils are invited to evaluate and reflect on the impact of acts of worship they have joined with. Their voice is integral to improving the structure, content and in shaping future plans for worship.

Pupil worship leaders are supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis. They work with members of staff during in after school *Planning and Leading Collective Worship* club to develop their own understanding of worship and to design an act of worship to support the spiritual development of their peers.

## **Developing worship**

Parents, pupils and adults in our school are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a Church School context.

Therefore, all those leading worship, including clergy, should have access to regular Diocesan led training.

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 regular training and network meetings with Canterbury Diocese
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of collective worship across the school.
- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning and joining worship.
- Join those who are leading worship to provide supportive feedback on how worship could be developed.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship on the whole school community by gathering pupil and adult voice.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources, to help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited to lead collective worship.
- Meet with and encourage pupil leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

## **Monitoring, Review and Inspection**

The Spirituality Hub takes the lead in initiating themes for worship. They also liaise with other Hubs including Healthy Body Healthy Mind and Expressive Arts who also contribute to the content and quality of Collective Worship. It is the role of the Spirituality Hub and a named school Governor with responsibility for RE and Collective Worship, to monitor the policy and practice of Collective Worship. The Governor liaises with the Spirituality Hub and the Headteacher before reporting to the Governors on RE and Collective Worship. We also welcome Pupil Voice and have Spirituality Representatives who are involved in the planning and monitoring of Collective Worship. Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury.

## **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.

**Date reviewed GP/Headteacher: September 2023**

**Review: September 2025**