



St Nicholas CEVC Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Last updated: February 2024

Principles Statement

At St. Nicholas CEVC Primary School we aim to serve our community by providing education of the highest quality to all within the context of Christian belief and practice. "The core purpose of any church school is to maximise the learning potential of every pupil within the love of God" (Valuing All God's children, May 2014). We encourage and promote our core Christian values Friendship, Respect, Forgiveness, Thankfulness and Compassion through the experience we offer all of our children. We offer equal opportunities for all of our children whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, ability and background.

Collective Worship should be:

"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes."

(DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)

Safeguarding

St Nicholas CEVC Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

School's Distinctive Christian Vision

To nurture each child's spiritual and moral development, in order to reflect and use their embedded Christian values to make positive choices for themselves and the environment.

"Start children off on the way they should go and even when they are old,

they will not turn from it" Proverbs 22:6

Our vision is brought to life through our Christian values of

Compassion, Respect, Friendship, Thankfulness and Forgiveness.

We work to instil in our children the virtues of St Nicholas - those of

thoughtfulness, generosity, humility and kindness

in our thoughts, words and deeds.

Collective worship in our 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, friendship, thankfulness, forgiveness and compassion and celebrates the central role that each child and adult have to play in our community.

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 child 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 child 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. Children 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 children 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 children, 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 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship:

- Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all children and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
- Enables all children 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.
- Helps children 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.
- Enables children 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.
- 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
- Using Psalms with simple responses
- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship

Implementation

Collective worship takes place every afternoon for the whole school. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using Rochester Diocese Collective Worship Planning, which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long- and short-term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

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, with music and the lighting of three candles
- **Engage** – we share, a Bible reading or story, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message
- **Respond** – children discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing
- **Send** – we share the message of the worship again and ask children to think about how the worship will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with a final prayer, putting out of our candles and music)

Expectations of children

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

Children 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.

Children are asked to volunteer to welcome everyone to worship time and to light and put out the candles. As we grow into a through primary school, we are working towards having worship leaders, who will be supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the collective worship leader during 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, children 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, have access to regular Diocesan led training.

The leader for collective worship will:

- Ensure that all children 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 Rochester Diocese
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with Governors and the incumbent 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.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship on the whole school community by gathering child and adult voice.
- Use 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 child leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

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 children remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of the collective worship leader and 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. They will be supported and monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation process of worship.

Self-assessment and Inspection

Our school regularly evaluates all acts of collective worship and the impact they have on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, children and governors in order to grow and develop.

We also welcome the contributions of parents and children, which are reviewed and considered on a regular basis. These play an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school.

The impact of collective worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS). Our last inspection was in 2018, in which we gained an 'outstanding' grade.

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 no faith 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.

Monitoring and review

The Head Teacher and the collective worship leader will be responsible for reviewing this policy very two years.

Next review date is February 2026.