

St John's C of E VA First School

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

(Adapted from the Bath and Wells Diocesan Model Policy for Collective Worship)



'Together we have roots to grow and the wings to fly.'

This policy should be taken as part of St. John's C. of E. First School's overall strategy and is implemented within the context of our vision of Government aims and our values as a Church of England School.

Review

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
	January 2023	Deputy Headteacher	

Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Claire Levene Plumb	CLAIRE LEVENE PLUMB	
Head Teacher	Joanna Greathead	JOANNA GREATHEAD	
DSL	Nicole Simenton	NICOLE SIMENTON	

Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details
January 2023	Update of Collective Worship timetable and planning



In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

‘Together, we give our children the roots to grow and wings to fly.’

As John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, here at St John’s, we strive to prepare children for life – *‘life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10).*

As a fully inclusive Church school, we are rooted in hope. We aspire to nurture and help our children to be the best versions of themselves.

‘For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, love and self-discipline.’ (Timothy 1:7)

Our school staff, parents and governors work together to help our children flourish as respectful, confident and aspirational citizens who seek to positively contribute to the school community, local community and the world beyond.

Our vision is based around the elements of the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13: 1-23. For seeds to grow, they need firm and strong roots. In this parable, Jesus explains that when seeds are planted in good soil, they grow and thrive. When seeds are planted in bad soil or on unsuitable ground, the roots cannot grow, meaning the plants are weak. Jesus goes on to say, when seeds are planted in good soil they grow and bear fruit.

Like birds who nest in trees, the St John’s community aim to nurture their young, who then go on to fly out into the world and flourish.

By sowing the seeds of:

- learning to gain WISDOM
- uniqueness to show dignity and RESPECT
- life to have HOPE
- responsibility to gain SELF-CONTROL
- community to build FRIENDSHIP
- courage to PERSEVERE

together, we will give our children the

‘ROOTS TO GROW’ and the ‘WINGS TO FLY.’

‘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.



Policy Statement

In St John's C of E VA First 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 John's C of E VA First 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 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

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 anytime 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. Worship in St John's C of E VA First School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing body of the school have the 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.

The Right of Withdrawal

In St John's C of E VA First School, there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that

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)



parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- ❖ The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- ❖ The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- ❖ The practical implications of withdrawal
- ❖ Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- ❖ Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- ❖ That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)

Guiding Principles

Collective worship in St John's C of E VA First School aims to:

- ❖ Have a pivotal place in the life of the school and 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 known 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.
- ❖ 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.

Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

This policy was developed by adapting the diocesan model policy. We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- ❖ Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- ❖ SMSC and PSHE
- ❖ Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- ❖ Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- ❖ Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians and the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

How Collective Worship is Organised

Day	Time	Type of Collective Worship	Location	Leader of Collective Worship
Mondays	14.40-15.00	Whole School	Hall	Headteacher
Tuesdays	14.30-15.00	Whole School	Hall	Headteacher
Wednesdays	14.40-15.00	Whole School	Hall	Deputy Headteacher
Thursdays	14.40-15.00	Class/Year group	Classrooms	Class Teachers
Fridays	14.40-15.00	Class/Year group	Classrooms	Class Teachers

This timetable is adhered to consistently throughout the year, apart from when we hold special collective worship, such as Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, Easter and Leavers.

Our Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers services are held at St John's church at 09.15.

Our Remembrance Service is held on 11th November, if a weekday at 10.50, so that the 2 minutes silence can be observed at 11.00. This service is held in the school hall with all classes present.

At the front of the school hall there is a focal point for collective worship. The display board shows our school prayer, which highlights our core value, our strapline with image and our five school rules. We have a reflection table, with



the appropriate coloured cloth to reflect the Christian calendar, a cross and a candle displayed on it. We include other items when appropriate throughout the year. Each classroom also has its own reflection area, which can serve as the focal point for class based worship.

Leadership

Most collective worship is led by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or class teachers. The Vicar and lay reader from St John's church also join us for collective worship. We are providing more opportunities for children to lead our collective worship and to tell us what they like or would like to improve.

Planning

At the heart of our collective worship, is our core value that we are focussing on during that half term. Our six core values of Wisdom, Respect, Hope, Self-Control, Friendship and Perseverance are timetabled across the year, and directly link to the themes also being explored in our PSHE and RSE Jigsaw Programme. We reflect the cycle of the Church year through our collective worship, exploring harvest, advent, Christmas, lent, Easter and Pentecost. When appropriate, we also include other key important national and international events within our collective worship, including Remembrance, Anti-Bullying, Children In Need, Christingle, Comic / Sport Relief and specific saints days such as St George and St John.

Collective worship is carefully planned by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and class teachers. This planning is recorded and saved on the p-drive. Staff have received training and support in planning and leading collective worship. During the academic year 2022 – 2023, Year 4 children will be encouraged to plan and lead collective worship, with the support of the RSHE/School Council Lead and Headteacher.

We explore our Christian values primarily through Bible stories; less frequently, but when appropriate, stories from other faiths and non-faiths are also used. We have chosen to use 'The Storyteller Bible' as our main Bible text, as we believe this is accessible and meaningful to all children from Reception to Year 4. We introduce the children to the 'Holy Trinity' through our singing of the hymn 'Father We Adore You' and through the key events from the Christian calendar of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

We plan for our collective worship to be as interactive and engaging as possible, with participation from as many children as possible. When children enter the hall for collective worship, there is always music playing and a slideshow of images on the screen. We open our collective worship with the lighting of the candle, and the leader will say 'Peace be with you', and the children respond with 'Peace be with us all.' We have chosen this response specifically, as it is again accessible to our youngest children, but it is also fully accessible and meaningful to all our children and school community, regardless of their faith and beliefs. The main part of our collective worship, is usually a Bible story, which is told in a variety of engaging ways, including film clips, PowerPoints, children dressing up and acting out the parts and repetitive actions or key phrases that all children can join in with. There is always a moment of reflection, followed by a prayer, which is usually the school prayer or children contributing to the 'Teaspoon Prayer.' Music, and particularly singing, is an important part of our collective worship and school life in general; we sing a variety of traditional hymns and more contemporary songs, all of which will reflect the core values or Christian festivals we are focussing on at that given time.



Roles and Responsibilities

Each member of our school community has a part to play in upholding the principles and actions of this policy:

The Governing Body

The governing body are responsible for ensuring the school meets its legal duties with regards to collective worship. As a church school the governing body are also responsible for ensuring the school meets the requirements detailed in the SIAMs evaluation document. They are also tasked with monitoring the impact of collective worship on the school.

The Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher provides leadership in the planning and leading of collective worship across the school. The Headteacher and RE Lead teacher are responsible for ensuring staff have received the necessary training and support in providing high quality collective worship, which meets the legal and SIAMs requirements, but most importantly has the best possible impact on children. The headteacher and RE Lead have overall responsibility for monitoring the quality of collective worship.

Clergy and Church Partners

The vicar at St John's Church and a lay reader from St John's Church, provide the school with a direct link and partnership with the church.

Teaching and Support Staff

Teachers and support staff have the responsibility to 'live' our core values, demonstrating and modelling them through their daily work. Teachers have the responsibility to plan and lead high quality collective worship for their class and year groups. Teachers and support staff are expected to join the school for whole school collective worship.

We note that the right of teachers and Headteachers to withdraw from Collective Worship remains unchanged since the 1944 Education Act. All staff are reminded, however, that they are appointed to respect the school's Christian foundation, character, ethos and values, and worship should underpin that foundation.

Pupils

Children have the responsibility to show respect and engage with the different elements of the collective worship through personal choice.

Parents, Carers and Visitors

When parents, carers and visitors join us, they too have the responsibility to show respect and engage with the different elements of the collective worship through personal choice.

Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. This can be accessed through the diocese or through our own school professional development meetings.



Monitoring and evaluation

We monitor and evaluate the impact of worship through:

- ❖ Scrutiny of planning records
- ❖ Observations
- ❖ Feedback from staff
- ❖ Dialogue with children

We use our monitoring to strengthen and develop our collective worship over time. This has been evidenced in the past, where children have told us that they wanted more of them to be actively involved, and it was at this point we ensured we included as many whole school responses as possible in our collective worship.

Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

Other Useful Documents: (can be found on the diocesan website)

- Guidance for visitors leading Collective Worship, including a code of conduct
- Example Visitors Leaflet about Collective Worship
- Collective Worship Planning Proformas
- Evaluation and Monitoring – Ideas and Systems
- Suggested Resources for Collective Worship
- Spirituality – What is it?