

'From Acorns to Oaks: Learning and Growing Together.'

Collective Worship Policy

January 2024



At our school, we embrace creation in our rural setting, striving to learn, contribute and achieve.

As #TEAMELHAM, we respect, support and inspire each other.

We are a community that holds each other to high standards, helping everyone to be the best they can be, held safe in the loving hands of God.

Our Narrative

New Living Translation John 6:5-14 Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

5 Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" **6** He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money^[a] to feed them!"

8 Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. **9** "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

10 "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) **11** Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterwards he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. **12** After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." **13** So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

14 When the people saw him^[b] do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!"^[c]

Elham Church of England Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School catering for children between the ages of 4 and 11 years. The school

prides itself on being a church school with specific values based on the fundamental beliefs in one God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Anglican tradition.

How is this policy a reflection of our distinctive Christian vision?

The narrative that underpins our School Vision has been chosen with care. It has been selected as it embodies our values and vision and can help all stakeholders understand how our values and vision run through everything we do within our school. It underpins the choices we make with everyone working together to achieve great things, and enabling all our stakeholders to flourish.

John 6:5-14

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Our daily collective worship is the heartbeat of the school. It is an opportunity for everyone to come together to share and explore stories from the bible. We encourage children to use 'I wonder...' Collective worship aims to be invitational, inclusive and inspiring. The aim is for everyone involved to expand and develop their spirituality enabling them to flourish in their lives.

An Introduction to collective worship

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, Support and Inspire and celebrates the central role that each pupil and adult have to play in our community.

Our acts of collective worship reflect the various 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 pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds so that 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 the 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.
- **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 of collective worship

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 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Enables pupils and 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 – Taizé style

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Using Collects as a focus for worship
- Celebrating Eucharist

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. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using Canterbury Diocesan 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 meet every afternoon at 2.45 pm.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in 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.

Expectations of children

In our school, there is an expectation that all children will be involved within worship regularly. This may be opportunities planned ahead of time 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 the acts of worship they have joined with. Their voice is integral to improving the structure, and content and in shaping plans for worship.

Children worship leaders are supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship voluntarily. They work with the collective worship leaders to develop their 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, should 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 Canterbury Diocese
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with stakeholders and Governors to provide 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 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 children and adult voices.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is 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.

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 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 headteacher, 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 child 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 their impact on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors to grow and develop.

We also welcome the contributions of parents and children, which are reviewed and considered regularly. These are shared with our staff and governors and 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).

Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as a special time in our school day when 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 we 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 of validation:

Signed:

Headteacher

Date of review:

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Appendix

What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

*"... Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'.
(DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)*

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

Collective worship, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.

Collective Worship should be:

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

(DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)

Therefore, collective worship in Church of England schools must be inclusive and invitational of all, to ensure all can be present with integrity.

The legal requirements of collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools.

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- The Governing Body should ensure that **all** pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher *(DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53)*
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- **All** registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship'.
- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, then the school must comply. *(Education Reform Act 1988. s9 (3))* The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from collective worship.