



Collective Worship Policy

Spring 2024

Unlocking Every Child's Potential
as a Unique Child of God

Agreed by staff: January 2024

Ratified by Governing Body: *February 2024*

Link Governor: Tim Lee

Review Date: January 2027

Vision of the School:
Unlock every child's potential as a unique child of God

"May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Ephesians 3: 17-19

INTRODUCTION

Mountnessing CE Primary School is committed to offering high quality collective worship. Our school is a place that recognises and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing the school's Christian vision. In practice this means that structure, planning, evaluation, participation, collaboration, and inspection of worship are all taken seriously by the school.

Collective worship is seen as more than a daily 'awe and wonder' moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is 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.

This form of encounter through worship should be truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality. This is an approach that seeks to meet the needs of all, wherever they may be on their journey of faith and belief.

WHAT IS COLLECTIVE WORSHIP?

Collective worship is a special act or occasion, the main purpose of which is to show reverence to God.

Collective Worship should reflect the Anglican status of the school as expressed in its trust deed liberates those leading collective worship to build on the rich, lived diversity of Anglican tradition and identity. In the same way as worship in churches is aspirational, constantly evolving and being re-imagined there is an expectation of a continuous, dynamic reimagining of what collective worship means in the Church school.

Collective worship ought to reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.

Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to, watching and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

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.

An act of collective worship is distinct from an assembly. Although they often take place during the same gathering, the difference between the two should be clear.

AIMS AND PURPOSE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation; and

develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.

- 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.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- 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, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.
- To celebrate difference, diversity, achievements and special occasions.
- To develop a sense of community by understanding the feelings and needs of others.

Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring

Inclusive: Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. In our school pupils, their families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our school will come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in our school. Pupils should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. Although part of a national legislative framework, collective worship in our school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds. It should reflect the faith, belief, and ethnic communities the school serves. Collective worship should validate, embrace and celebrate all protected characteristics.

Invitational: Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should 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 should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer should always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies used in worship will reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship, it will connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used should reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community. Care should be taken to ensure that pupils and adults do not feel compelled to sing strongly confessional lyrics. There should be no assumption of Christian faith in those present.

Inspiring: Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in a Mountnessing school to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP PROVISION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Through Collective Worship, we are creating a space for an encounter with faith in God. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on larger questions of meaning and purpose. Pupils and adults can expect that our school's collective worship practices will provide a shared set of symbols, signs, words and actions which give the community a language upon which it can draw, in times of joy and grief. Such an experience is key to fostering a sense of fellowship and cohesion within the school community. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, this time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community.

Our Worship timetable is as follows:

Monday	Whole School Worship	10.30am	Hall	Head teacher/SLT
Tuesday	Whole School Worship	10.30am	Hall	Head teacher/ Child led/ Minister/Chaplain
Wednesday	Worship through Song	10.30am	Hall	Teaching staff
Thursday	Picture News	10.30am	Hall	Teaching staff
Friday	Celebration Worship	10.30am	Hall	Head teacher/SLT

Throughout the year, our school may meet to celebrate and mark certain seasons in the Church calendar, such as Lent, Harvest and Advent. Other important events in the school year, such as the start and end of the academic year, may be marked by formal acts of collective worship. Pupils and adults will encounter the practice of regular prayer and worship as a normal part of the life of the school.

Parents, pupils and adults can expect that worship in a Church school will follow a recognisable structure that will help focus worship on one idea. This helps to give organisation and clarity to the unfolding of that idea, as well as helping the leader to ensure that worship is age-appropriate. This could take the form of a welcome or prayer followed by a consideration of a Bible passage or story that the group can then reflect on through discussion, prayer, silent reflection or music.

We use set gathering and greeting words such as *'We light this candle to remind us that ...God's love burns brightly for all of us'* and *'Peace be with you... and also with you'* which are spoken by all involved in worship.

We close worship with prayer, reflection and the closing words *'Let us go out, into the world, as messenger of hope and ... (Christian Value).'*

There will be a programme of Christian Values to follow:

Term	1:1	1:2	2:1	2:2	3:1	3:2
Christian Value focus	Friendship	Thankfulness	Perseverance	Responsibility	Respect and reverence	Creativity

We will use 'Values For Life' to support our Collective Worship.

The following are ways in which the Aims and Objectives of the Collective Worship Policy can be met.

The children will be asked to arrive for assembly in a quiet manner

The children will be smart with shirts tucked in.

Music will be played

The focal point will be central to the assembly

A candle will be lit.

In the classroom a picture could be used on the whiteboard.

The school aims to create an atmosphere which is conducive to worship/reflective thought. This can be achieved by using the following stimuli: -

Song
Stories
Personal experiences
Reflections/meditations
Prayer
Readings – sacred/secular writings
Music – instrumental/vocal
Dance
Drama

Video
Poetry
Interviews
Quotations
Silence
Artefacts
Child participation
Question and answer sessions
Guest speakers

SPIRITUALITY

Worship should seek to support the school's definition of spirituality:

In our school, spirituality creates a feeling of belonging to a community where we show love and kindness.

We build connections between ourselves, God, nature and the world around us; so that we can all flourish.

We make time for moments of quietness and stillness to reflect and think about our own thoughts and feelings and to make choices about how we want to live in this busy world. We seek to build an understanding of our place in the world and be aware that there is something or someone greater than ourselves.

Worship allows children to learn, express their views, listen to others opinions and think more deeply about the world around them. It should be a time for awe and wonder, to reflect on something 'bigger than ourselves' and to reflect on who we want to be.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Children's entitlement to Acts of Collective Worship should not be affected by gender, culture, race or special needs. It is important that there are no barriers to this equality of opportunity.

CURRICULUM LEADER:

Parents, pupils and adults 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 and by those who are professional in their approach to working with pupils and adults from all faiths and none. Therefore, it is a priority to build up the expertise of staff, pupils, clergy and other adults in facilitating collective worship in Church schools.

To do this our school will ensure the following.

- Worship leaders, including clergy, should have access to regular training, primarily through local diocesan education teams.
- Pupil worship leaders should be supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship.
- Worship leaders, including clergy, should have access to high quality and current resources.
- The governing body should have robust systems in place to monitor the impact of worship effectively; this monitoring will include and meaningfully involve pupil voice. Those facilitating worship should have the opportunity to receive feedback and the hear the outcome of evaluation.
- Those from outside agencies and church groups invited into the school to facilitate worship should be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and the school's vision. They should be supported and monitored as part of the school's systems for the evaluation of the impact of worship.
- Mrs Obank is the named member of staff responsible for collective worship with responsibility for ensuring that appropriate policy and practice are in place and publicly available.

The co-ordinator/ Head teacher is willing to provide help, support and ideas to any member of staff in planning and delivering acts of collective worship on a class, phase or whole school level.

It is the role of a named School Governor with responsibility for religious education and collective worship to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship (Tim Lee). The Governor concerned should liaise with the Headteacher before reporting to the Governors on religious education and collective worship.

The Worship Committee (Leading Lights) in school is made up of pupil representatives from each class along with staff, governors and parents. This group meets regularly to review worship practises in school, monitor and collect the views of others, implement new ideas and lead on new initiatives.

RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

There may be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our school and so we recognise the right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils who wish to exercise this option.

We will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.