



Yatton Church of England Junior School - Policy for Collective Worship

Last Updated: September 2021

*This Policy has been written to reflect our Christian vision: We want to provide a happy, considerate, secure and supportive environment that promotes respect for self and others, valuing friendships and a life-long love of learning – **life in all its fullness.** John 10:10.*

All policies are reviewed by Foundation Governors alongside senior leadership, staff and other stakeholders as appropriate.

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.

In short, we say to the children: **We want to ... 'Grow, Celebrate and Make a Difference'**

Policy Statement

In Yatton Church of England Junior School worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision and values. 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 Yatton Church of England Junior 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 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 calendar. Time is also given to recognise some of the key festivals of other faiths and develop the children's understanding of them and respect for them. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.



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 Yatton Church of England Junior School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing body of the school has 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 head teacher.

The right of withdrawal

In Yatton Church of England Junior 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 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 Yatton Church of England Junior School aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- 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 know 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.

Links to other policies and documentation

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
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with 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 planned and organised

- Daily worship may be led over a period of time by the Head Teacher, Deputy Head teacher, other teaching staff, a pupil or groups of pupils, a member of the clergy or local church leader, individual visitors or teams (e.g. ‘Open the Book’).
- Collective worship *usually* takes place at 10:00 each morning. It normally takes place in the school hall. Special acts of worship also take place in St Mary’s Church during the course of the year (eg, Harvest, Christmas, Candlemas, Easter and at the end of the school year).
- Children are regularly encouraged to be involved in collective worship by reading prayers, acting, singing and general participation.
- Visitor assemblies are very much appreciated, valued and welcomed. These will include regular assemblies from ministers from the local places of worship in the village.
- A typical weekly timetable for Collective Worship would be:

Monday Whole school collective worship (led by Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher).
Tuesday Worship through Music (led by Music coordinator)
Wednesday Lower School Collective Worship in hall; Upper School in classes
Thursday Upper School Collective Worship in hall; Lower School in classes
Friday Whole School Collective Worship (led by Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher) including regular celebrations of a wide breadth of learning and achievements (both personal, academic and sporting).

Planning and organisation

- Each term, collective worship is planned around a rolling programme of Christian Values and includes key religious festivals and Saints days to reflect the cycle of the church year. This is distributed to all staff. Guidance and support is provided by the Collective Worship Leader.
- Candles are often lit during collective worship to signify a special time, to help focus attention and reflection and to reinforce the candle as a symbol of Jesus being the light of the world in Christian belief.
- Other Christian signs and symbols, such as a cross, may be displayed which help to signify that this is a Church of England School and to help make the space special.
- Collective worship includes at different times: singing, music, times for reflection and stillness, discussion and prayer. Prayers may include the Lord’s Prayer or other prayers, including those



created by the children. A range and variety of materials are used, including: websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle

- Bible stories and passages are used to explore our Christian Values
- As part of the Collective Worship programme, the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God is explored
- When prayers are used in collective worship, they will be worded so as to be understandable to the ages of the children present. Children will be invited to join in or reflect upon the words and message. If they wish to, children can respond to a prayer with Amen. Prayers used should not alienate children or adults from differing denominations or faiths.
- Celebration collective worship is an opportunity for the whole school to celebrate achievement (both personal and academic).
- High standards of respectful behaviour are expected during times of collective worship. Children are expected to enter and leave a collective worship time in a sensible and respectful manner; calm music will often be played to facilitate this and there will often be an image or question on display for children as a focal point.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Governors have responsibility for monitoring how Collective Worship in the school reflects its Christian vision and values
- The headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will assist the headteacher by monitoring plans and programmes relating to Collective Worship
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will assist the headteacher by monitoring Collective Worship through, for example, observations and pupil voice
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will keep a file/record of examples of Collective Worship to demonstrate coverage, continuity and progression
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will manage resources
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will endeavour to keep up to date with information, initiatives and developments in collective worship and disseminate this as appropriate.
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will be aware of staff development needs and encourage continuing professional development.
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will facilitate the sharing of good practice.
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will be responsible for drawing up plans for collective worship each term, built largely around our Christian Values and festivals.
- The Collective Worship leader(s) will liaise with the Diocesan advisers, local clergy/church partners and community visitors to help ensure the principles of this policy are upheld and Collective Worship is relevant and of a high standard

Staff development and training

We ensure that staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is important that Collective Worship is monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is of a high standard and of relevance. Foundation Governors and staff will evaluate the impact and appropriateness for pupils



through pupil conferencing, on regular occasions. Members of the school council, for example, provide feedback on collective worship, suggesting ways it can be further improved and developed.

Guidelines for visitors

- We try to enhance our programme of Collective Worship through the participation of visiting speakers from a range of different backgrounds. Some may be representatives of the church community, charitable concerns, or environmental groups, for example. Visitors from various professions or interest groups, as well as those from different cultures and of different religious affiliations, are welcomed.
- Visiting speakers can provide pupils with a fresh voice and possibly a fresh perspective on issues relevant to the pupils' lives, as well as their spiritual and moral development. Your support is greatly appreciated.
- Collective Worship normally takes place in the School Hall. Please arrange with us in advance which pupils you would like to benefit from your worship.
- In recognition of the School's Church of England foundation, we have a small altar with a cross and a candle at the front of the hall.
- Music will be playing (you may bring your own music if you want something particular). Children will walk in silently with their teachers. They will sit on the floor in rows facing the front (youngest at the front, oldest at the back). They will listen to the music until all are present and the Collective Worship can begin.
- At the end of the Collective Worship, a pupil will start the music; children will stand and file out in silence, as directed by members of staff.
- Collective Worship should last for approximately 15- 20 minutes.
- It is expected that school staff will sit in the hall with you and the pupils.

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?