



Empowering our unique schools to Excel



collective worship policy

ODBST Level 2 Policy:	ALL ODBST CofE Schools require this policy, which may be adapted where identified to suit local requirements and schools may add their own branding. LGBs will note adoption of this locally adapted policy in LGB meetings. Review will take place at Trust level, and schools will be notified of updates and review dates as necessary.
Other related ODBST policies and procedures:	
Committee responsible:	AEC
Approved by:	AEC
Date Approved:	14 th June 2023
Review Date:	Summer term 2026

In reviewing this policy, the Trust Board has had regards to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged.



Shine as Lights in the World

Collective Worship Policy

The collective worship policy at St Mary's CE School pays due regard to statutory requirements and has taken account of the guidance offered by the board of trustees of ODBST. Collective worship is a valued and valuable part of school life and is taken seriously, because it shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school.

Introduction

St Mary's C of E School is a Church of England School. Daily Collective Worship lies at the centre of Christian life and is at the heart and ethos of life at St Mary's. Worship offers pupils and staff an opportunity to reflect our school values of **Respect, Integrity and Resilience**. It is an expression of our mission statement to "**Shine as Lights in the World**", which shapes our approach to others and underpins all that we do both in and out of school. We warmly invite all members of our school community to join our in Collective Worship.

Our mission statement '**Shine our Lights in the World**' is a summary of Jesus' teaching given after the Beatitudes about how people should live and make a difference in the world around them.

*¹⁴ 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. **Matthew 5:14-16***

Aims of Collective Worship

As a Church of England school, we follow the Liturgical Calendar and celebrate the major Christian festivals throughout the year. We believe that worship and faith exploration are enriched when our entire school community participates. All children and families are warmly invited to share how they celebrate their own religious festivals and traditions during our Collective Worship times. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Hanukkah, or other meaningful occasions, your contributions help create a richer understanding of our diverse community.

Through this inclusive approach, we aim to provide opportunities for pupils and staff to:

- experience a variety of styles of worship
- celebrate together e.g. festivals, school values, individual achievements
- build a sense of community/foster corporate identity;
- develop a reflective approach to living which sometimes encourages understanding of and invitation to prayer;
- look beyond the physical, material and measurable
- worship God or reflect on human values;
- consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading, presentation and evaluation of worship
- feel safe and affirmed in doing any of the above

We believe that learning about different ways of worship and celebration strengthens our school community and prepares our children to be thoughtful, respectful citizens in our diverse world.

Statutory requirements

Through its funding agreement with the DfE, Collective Worship must

- take place for every child not withdrawn by their parents (post 16 students can withdraw themselves) every day
- be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.
- take account of the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils
- take place on the school premises, except on occasions, with agreement of governors

Therefore, at St Mary's CE School our collective worship reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. Not every act of collective worship must comply with this; just the majority so we can include material from other religions and non-religious world views.

Collective Worship and the Curriculum

Collective worship time is distinct from curriculum time given to any subject including religious education. However, we aim to enable collective worship and aspects of children's classroom learning to be mutually supportive. Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in line with school policy. To achieve this it addresses a wide variety of themes and topics, uses diverse stimuli and resources and provides pupils with opportunities to 'respond' at their own level.

The Management of Collective Worship

The Headteacher is responsible for the provision of collective worship, supported by and after consultation with the governing body. The following arrangements exist to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate collective worship:

HT draws up a rota for leading collective worship and themes for each week.

HT/DHT/delegated teacher observes at least 6 acts of collective worship (from a range of formats) per term to ensure that they comply with school policy and the law. Governors may also attend collective worship to monitor their policy.

The Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship takes place in a variety of groupings in the school hall, or one of the multi-purpose rooms, or the classroom. Acts of worship usually last for approximately 15 minutes, although it is recognized that this time will be shortened or lengthened when it is appropriate.

We hold daily acts of Collective Worship that are deeply rooted in our Christian values and inspired by Jesus' teaching about being "a city on a hill" that shines its light in the world (Matthew 5:14-16). Through these daily gatherings, we encourage our school community to be a beacon of hope, kindness, and faith in our local area and beyond. It aims to provide pupils and staff the opportunity to:

- Celebrate - All God's Children and their individual God given talents and achievements
- Christian seasons (according to the Anglian Church calendar)
- Both Christian and festivals represented by the school community
- Our school values associated with Shine as Lights in the World
- Explore and develop their own spirituality through prayer, stillness, music, worship and reflection
- Grow in understanding of and participation in prayer (listening, reciting and creating)
- Bring our thanks and concerns to God as well as asking for forgiveness
- Create a reflective approach to life including the exploration of deep questions relating to love, pain and suffering
- Develop as a community centred on our clear and distinctive Christian values and ethos
- Experience a variety of styles of worship (traditional, modern and cultural)
- Participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship;
- Feel safe and affirmed;
- Worship God on their own terms.

Worship will reflect aspects of the curriculum and in particular will:

- nurture spiritual growth (including reflecting with reverence on God's creation, awe and wonder)
- develop a deeper understanding of the Bible and Christian faith through the teachings of Jesus and our Christian Values,
- enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context;
- enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through courageous advocacy; (being involved in local, national and worldwide charities)
- help each child to become reflective and independent learners as they prepare for their future in an ever-changing world.
- give participants a chance to reflect on the place and importance of faith in the lives of people today; (learning about people currently Shining Their Light on the World due to their faith and/or moral convictions)
- encourage participants to explore beliefs drawn from the diverse cultural backgrounds represented by staff and pupils
- reflect the teachings of Jesus and a Trinitarian theology. (all year groups explore with the mystery of the Trinity through RE teaching and specific activities near Trinity Sunday)
- ensure all pupils have the confidence to share their own thoughts and beliefs in an environment of dignity and respect.

Weekly Worship Pattern

Our Collective Worship follows a structured weekly pattern designed to serve different groups within our school community:

Monday – Whole School Collective Worship

Led by the Head Teacher

Starting the week together with shared vision, values, and inspiration for the days ahead.

Tuesday – Singing or music Collective Worship

Led by the Deputy Head or Music Lead

Congregational singing creates a shared emotional and spiritual experience.

Wednesday – Key Stage Focussed Worship

Age-appropriate worship that speaks directly to children's developmental needs and understanding

Thursday – Whole School Collective Worship

Led by Rev. Anthony Howells from The Church on Fairford Leys

Strengthening our community links through worship led by our local church partner.

Friday – Whole School Celebration Collective Worship

Led by the Headteacher or a member of SLT.

Celebrating achievements, reflecting on the week's learning, and preparing hearts and minds for the weekend.

This daily rhythm of worship creates opportunities for spiritual reflection, community building, and the nurturing of our Christian values throughout each school week. Every act of worship is an invitation for our school community to shine brightly as a beacon of faith, hope, and love in our world.

Leading worship

The head teacher/deputy head teacher/SLT and local minister, Rev Anthony Howells lead worship on a weekly basis with all staff being encouraged to lead worship alongside the children throughout the year. The lighting of a candle signifies the start of formal Collective Worship. In Year 6 all children have opportunities to lead worship e.g. Year 6 pupils call the school to whole school Collective Worship; they open worship with a greeting and take turns to read from the Bible each day; they set up the Worship Table and ensure the table cloth is changed in line with the liturgical calendar; they are in charge of playing music during worship and of projecting PowerPoints; they lead prayer. Collective Worship led in the classroom and that in a key stage enables more pupils to participate in the act of leading worship not just the Year 6 children. While Worship Leaders take on an active part in Collective Worship, this does not prevent other children who wish to take part less often from doing so.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

The content of all acts of collective worship is considered carefully to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils, as well as the balance between Christianity and other faiths.

Termly planning sheets list themes, special occasions and events, but there is flexibility to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues. Weekly planning and recording sheets enable the monitoring and evaluation of acts of worship.

Visitors are welcomed to lead collective worship from time to time and are given guidance on our worship policy. Leaders from faiths within the area help us to increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these faiths.

Role of Worship Leaders

Children from Year 6 apply to become Worship Leaders. These children help with the running of Collective Worship, especially with the teaching of new action songs. They meet regularly with The RE lead to discuss these areas and give feedback on Collective Worship.

Withdrawal

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship and staff (and students in the sixth form) are also free to withdraw from involvement in this aspect of school life. We request that those who wish to exercise this right inform the Head Teacher in writing so that school records are accurate. We also appreciate opportunities to speak with parents and staff who have concerns about collective worship, always keen to develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible. Those pupils who are withdrawn from worship are cared for by a member of the school's staff; parents may provide suitable activities for children so withdrawn.

Collective Worship Appendix

Organisation

- Music is played as the children enter and leave the hall.
- The candle is lit to express the presence of God and signify the start of the
- Collective Worship. A candle is also used in class to show this is a special time of the day and different from lessons.
- Year 6 or Worship Leaders introduce the greeting and read the Bible verses.
- The leader will introduce the theme encouraging the children to participate or reflect as appropriate.
- Hall Collective Worship concludes with prayer and a song.
- Reception classes hold worship in their own classrooms. They join the whole school for the special celebration occasions.

Other Collective Worship

- At least once a term Collective Worship takes place in Houses where children meet for a special activity led by their House Captains
- At the end of each half term a Special Collective Worship takes to celebrate the learning that has taken place over the half term and to renew the Good Learning Board.
- Special events led by Year Groups e.g. Remembrance led by Year 6; Harvest led by Year 4 are held at the Church on Fairford Leys; Carol Concerts and productions held in the school and the Church; the final event of the Year being a special Collective Worship to celebrate the Year 6 Leavers . These events are led by pupils and attended by parents.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the role of the Foundation Governors and the Headteacher to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship with the RE Lead and through her report to Governors and practice are reviewed every two years and the policy is changed if necessary.