



Collective Worship Policy

Debden CE Primary Academy

Reviewed by: Sarah Bailey

September 2025

Shared with staff:

September 2025

Shared with Governors:

September 2025

Review date:

September 2027

Introduction

Our Collective Worship Policy strengthens and supports the Christian ethos of our school. It explores our vision '**that they may have life in all its fullness**' (John 10:10) and the associated values we derive from it: **Compassion, Respect, Aspiration, Endurance, Wisdom and Creativity**. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and explores the global church. Through embracing Christian values and the core teachings of the Bible, we enable children to develop as people and thus have the best possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

Collective Worship in our school is not simply a statutory duty. This daily Christian act is the heartbeat of our school, 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.

AIMS

The aims and purpose of Collective Worship as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God.
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues.
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs.
- To encourage participation and response
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes.
- To reflect on their role in the wider world.
- To develop a broader understanding of British Values.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

We comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on "each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship".
- The daily act of Collective Worship in a church school should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos



statement in the Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.

- All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character.
- For Collective Worship, pupils can be grouped in various ways: whole school, according to age, or in groups (or a combination of groups) the school uses at other times. Pupils cannot be put into special groups just for Collective Worship.
- Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
- The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises, but all church schools are able to hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.
- Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in VC schools rests with the Governors in consultation with the Headteacher. Governors have a particular responsibility because they are appointed for "the purpose of securing, as far as is practicable, that the character of the school as a voluntary school is preserved and developed, and that the worship is conducted in accordance with the provisions of any trust deed. The Headteacher has a responsibility to ensure that all arrangements for Collective Worship are secured.

ANGLICAN FAITH AND PRACTICE

As required in C of E schools, we seek to provide acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England which traditionally has the following traits. It is:

- **Biblical** – we use the Bible as a source book for inspiration and learning and make pupils familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture. We also introduce them to a variety of well-known prayers - many of which express the central beliefs of Christians throughout the ages.
- **Liturgical** – we use aspects of Anglican liturgy to create a framework for worship and other traditional aspects of liturgy such as the Lord's prayer on occasion.
- **Eucharistic** – We do not have a school Eucharist. We are, however, 'Eucharistic' in the sense of thanksgiving. We fill our worship with thank you prayers, we readily thank pupils and staff for all they do in school. We encourage intercessory prayer for individuals, those in positions of authority, the needs of the local community and the wider world.
- **Seasonal** – We observe the cycle of the Anglican year including celebrations of the major Christian festivals.
- **Symbolic** – We provide opportunities to use Christian symbols as a focus for reflection and to enable pupils to discover the value of meditation and silence.
- **Diverse** – We try to use a variety of music and song from different Christian traditions and cultures and to encourage different Anglican and other Christian visitors to reflect both the unity of Christianity but also its diversity.

As a C of E school, we foster strong links with our parish church, regularly involving its clergy in leading Collective Worship and providing coherence between the worship in church and school.

For some pupils the experience of worship will be tentative and exploratory. For those who have already developed a growing Christian commitment, worship will be the natural outcome of belief, and a place where their deepest thoughts and emotions can be expressed in communion with God.

SCHEDULING/ THEMES

Collective Worship takes place each day at 09.00 for 20 minutes (this is different on Fridays – see below). The Collective Worship Leader is the Headteacher and is responsible for the scheduling of Collective Worship. In scheduling Collective Worship, we ensure that:

- *There are a variety of groupings over each week (whole school, class, group).*
- *A range of stakeholders are involved in the leadership of Collective Worship (the Headteachers, teachers, children, etc).*
- *We regularly invite visitors to lead Collective Worship (for example Church leaders).*
- *There is staff and pupil involvement no matter what their personal beliefs.*
- *Collective Worship is aligned with, and is used to enhance children's understanding of, Christian events and celebrations.*
- *There is substantial forward planning in terms of themes, leaders, curriculum connections etc.*

We espouse six Christian values that form the basis of our worship and wider school life – they are entwined with our three overarching school values, as shown below.



The six values are each focused on for a period of four weeks each over the first two terms of the academic year. All worship is planned around this value, as well as being promoted throughout the school. Care is taken to ensure that understanding of each value is rooted in the Bible and the example of Jesus. To allow for development of ideas and true immersion in subjects, different staff members are responsible for the leadership of worship across a period of at least a week per half term. The Collective Worship leader provides the overview of the value that what should be covered, alongside relevant bible stories, prayer and hymn ideas. This helps to ensure appropriate coverage across the academic year.

In the third term, we deepen understanding of themes as appropriate and focus on key biblical characters/ stories.

We also recognise and commemorate significant dates in the Christian year and days of particular importance such as Remembrance Day. We also respond to local, national or world events (or a need from the children), that merit reflection and prayers.

We use Friday assemblies as an opportunity to share children's work and to celebrate their successes. These play an important part in promoting the positive ethos of the school.

PLANNING/ FORMAT

In planning Collective Worship sessions, leaders should ensure that:

- The session is in keeping with the school's vision and ethos.
- They have a clear idea of the goals/ objectives of the session.
- Subject matter is presented appropriately and imaginatively to engage children.
- Suitable, interesting resources have been sourced beforehand.
- Efforts are made to generate the right atmosphere.
- Children are actively involved in the discussion (perhaps through discussion, reading, presenting or role play).
- A variety of methods and presentation-styles are utilised over time.

The agreed format for Collective Worship is that:

- At the beginning of the Collective Worship, a candle upon our dressed table is lit.
- Where appropriate, children will listen to a Bible story or a reading linked to the Collective Worship theme.
- Children collectively engage in considering the subject matter of Collective Worship.
- Children have a moment of reflection.
- Where appropriate, children sing a hymn.
- Children are invited to join in with a prayer.

Principles of Collective Worship

Each adult and pupil 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 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 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 to do so.
- **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.

PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As established by the 1944 Act and explained in the School Prospectus, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, having sent their children to a church school, it is hoped that no one will exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act.

Teachers have the right to withdraw from Collective Worship.

The Foundation governors have a particular responsibility to ensure the character and foundation of the school are reflected in Collective Worship, but the actual arrangements are made by the Collective Worship Leader, who is the Headteacher.

MONITORING

Monitoring Collective Worship (CW) involves evaluating its impact on spiritual, moral, and personal growth, using methods like pupil/parent surveys, observer feedback (diocesan/incumbent/governors/Executive Headteacher) and children's monitoring.

Key Monitoring Methods:

Pupil Feedback: CW pupil monitoring forms and pupil surveys/voice.

Adult Observation: Incumbents or diocesan officers observe worship, followed by feedback sessions with staff/governors. The Headteacher and Executive Headteacher also complete monitoring alongside Governors.

Staff Reflection: Staff meetings discuss CW effectiveness.

Parental Input: Parent questionnaires gauge perceptions of Liturgical calendar events.

POLICY REVIEW

The Collective Worship Leader is responsible for this policy which will be reviewed every two years. Its implementation is the responsibility of all those planning and leading Collective Worship.