

GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



Collective Worship Policy March 2022

Review: September 2022



GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Collective Worship Policy

Rooted in faith, growing in wisdom, branching into the world

We are a diverse, vibrant learning community where everyone is welcomed, valued and encouraged. Loving relationships, rooted in the teachings of Jesus, allow children and adults to flourish together, creating wise, compassionate, respectful individuals who are ready to confidently take a productive place in an ever changing world.

The Christian ethos of Guston Church of England Primary School is our motivation for all that we seek to do. It is founded on the understanding that all people are uniquely and unconditionally loved and cherished by God and therefore deserving of our utmost respect and that it is God's will that we are enabled to live life to the full. The Christian ethos is rooted in the values of love, forgiveness, friendship and justice as exemplified in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Our ethos is given life through our relationships - the way that we work together and behave with one another and those we seek to support and nurture. It is an ethos which is inclusive and seeks to encourage and inspire everyone to achieve their fullest potential.

Christian values

- Each individual is unique and every attempt is made to meet their needs and enable them to fulfil their potential
- Diversity is celebrated
- Every member of the community feels valued including staff, learners and parents/carers
- Community and worship are at the heart of the life of the school
- The development of the 'whole child' is fundamental – recognising physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions
- Respect for each other and a sense of belonging are ideals to which we aspire
- Honesty, openness and transparency
- Inclusion

We share five explicit Christian values with our school community and demonstrate how these values can be displayed in everyday life but are rooted in scripture. These values are: **Friendship, Endurance, Compassion, Forgiveness** and **Equality**.

Introduction

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of Friendship, Endurance, Compassion, Forgiveness and Equality and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will 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.

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)

Collective Worship gives pupils and school staff the opportunity to:

- Engage in an act of community
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate 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

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection. 
- b) 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. [L] [SEP]

- c) 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.
- d) Enables pupils as well as 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.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship. [L] [SEP]

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship:

- 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
- Learning and 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
- 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. 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 in order 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.

On Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday each week the whole school meets for Collective Worship, and this is led by the Head teacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team. Tuesday's are led by Class Teachers in classes.

The Friday assembly encompasses a celebration of children's achievements in all areas and parents and friends are encouraged to attend.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including eg: 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*)

Developing Worship

The school allocates part of its budget to support the daily act of collect worship. The collective worship leader attends professional development with Canterbury Diocese and accesses a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.

Self-assessment and Inspection

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils and these play an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school. Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury (SIAMS).

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'

Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a church school. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none. We respect the right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents.

COVID-19 ADDENDUM

During times where schools have been only partially open and when there are restrictions in schools to avoid large gatherings and protect bubbles, the school have been creative in developing its worship.

We have used a variety of prerecorded videos from school staff, our local incumbent and diocesan staff, as well as live worship. We have involved children in leading prayer where possible.