

East Meon Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

Collective Worship Policy



Learning inspired by love, hope and courage.

Approved by Full Governors

Date: 17th January 2024

Reviewed by:

Catherine Olver (Headteacher) and Steph Perkins (Staff Governor and RE Subject Lead)

Next review due by:

January 2027

This policy is an agreed statement of the values and aims of collective worship at East Meon Church of England (Controlled) Primary School. It has been prepared by the governors and headteacher with assistance from other staff and diocesan advisers. Collective worship is valued as a central aspect of the life of our church school, through which children grow spiritually, emotionally, morally and culturally.

Legal Status of Collective Worship

In a Church of England school, worship must be in line with the trust deed of the school and will reflect the traditions of the Church of England, i.e. the Anglican tradition.

Aims and Purpose

Worship in our school should:

As worship:

- Be at a level to enable children and adults to explore their own understanding of God within a Christian framework;
- Explain and promote the school's core Christian values of love, courage and hope;
- Have integrity as acts of Anglican worship whilst being invitational, inclusive and inspirational;
- Be based on Biblical text or themes;
- Be central in importance to the life of our school community, which is part of a wider community that embraces the whole world;
- Mark the seasons and festivals of the Christian year;
- Develop understanding of Anglican traditions such as the lighting of a candle or use of a cross.

For people:

- Develop personal spirituality within the setting community through a range of experiences including individual and collective prayer;
- Celebrate the God-given gifts and talents of individuals;
- Make a significant contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of members of the school community;
- Consider and respect the beliefs and values of others, especially those within the setting community.

To comply:

- Reflect any trust deed of the setting;
- Be clearly outlined in the setting prospectus and documentation;
- Involve children and adults in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship e.g. through acting out stories;
- Be monitored and evaluated by the governors for the impact it has on the school community.

Aims of our worship:

- To promote the joy of worship as engaging, inspiring and transformative;
- To develop spirituality, morality, social and cultural values;
- Sometimes to provide a peaceful environment enabling stillness, reflection and prayer;
- Sometimes to be noisy and joyous with singing, music, dance, drama, etc.;
- To give an opportunity to experience faith as revealed in the Bible;
- To understand, celebrate and develop children's knowledge of Christian beliefs, celebrations, traditions and religious festivals in the Anglican Church's year;
- To facilitate a deeper understanding of the Christian story narrative, from creation to the present day;
- To appreciate that people, cultures and beliefs differ and to demonstrate respect, tolerance and generosity towards them;
- To develop young children's sense of self-worth and to provide opportunities to celebrate achievements;
- To develop a caring attitude to others and a sense of community and loyalty;
- To provide opportunities for children to plan, lead, contribute to, monitor and evaluate collective worship;
- To invite clergy of the parish, other lay members of the parish and other Christian leaders in the community [as are acceptable to the parish church] to lead worship regularly.

How we achieve our aims

We aim to promote collective acts of worship, which are rich, meaningful experiences that are appropriate and significant to the pupil's needs, age, development and interest by:

- Creating a sense of occasion and reverence;
- Providing opportunities that develop pupils' awareness of what is beautiful, good, wonderful, awesome and puzzling in life experience;
- Arranging worship at different places when possible, different times with different people and groupings, involving all members of the setting community at some time;
- Planning and linking themes which focus on a particular idea/concept, i.e. the liturgical year; festivals and celebrations, our Christian values;
- Using a wide range of resources, artefacts (from religious and secular sources), music, art, drama and external visitors to engage children's interest;
- Encouraging children to participate and experience different styles of worship, e.g. prayer, praise, silence, rituals, and become familiar with the language of worship, Biblical readings and liturgy;
- Providing opportunities for children and adults to reflect, contemplate their own thoughts, feelings and beliefs;
- Using the centrality of prayer – personal silent prayer, personal shared prayers, collective prayers, writing prayers (note that all prayer will be invitational);
- Involving children and members of the wider community to participate in collective worship and activities within the parish;
- Presenting and creating displays that promote and enhance spiritual ideas, thoughts and questions.

As a school, we will endeavour to fulfil the following 'central attributes' of worship:

Gathering: Making worship a special time of the day.

Engaging: Using the best available techniques to stimulate interest in the content.

Responding: Ensuring there is time and opportunity for individual, group reflection and thought, so those attending can respond in a variety of ways.

Sending: Summarising the worship in a meaningful short message used to create an opportunity for those attending to implement the ideas covered and to conclude the worship.

During collective worship, there will be a time for response and reflection, to ponder on a question, statement or thought. This may also be reflected in an invitational prayer, which may be offered spontaneously by a child or adult, read out or recited. This prayer may be displayed and used in class and reflective areas so that:

- Children understand the nature and purpose of prayer;
- Children understand the part prayer may play in their lives and the life of the school community;
- Prayer contributes to the spiritual development of individuals and the whole school community.

There will also be appropriate opportunities for prayer and other worship activities, including reflection, outside of collective worship.

The school has a 'reflective area' to encourage children and adults to engage in their own reflection, as well as designated special spaces in classrooms or shared areas.

Planning and Organisation

Collective worship is planned systematically, so there is continuity, variety and clear focus on Christian beliefs and festivals.

We hold a daily act of collective worship. This most frequently takes place as a whole-school collective worship but can also take the form of a Key Stage or class worship. Collective worship normally takes place in the school hall but can sometimes take place in classrooms or outside. At key celebration times of the year, for example, Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers, collective worship may take place at the All Saints Church in East Meon. Worship is led by a variety of people which includes school staff, pupils, governors, representatives from the parish church, members of different faith communities and members of the local community.

The setting has resources available to support with delivering collective worship and these are stored in the worship basket in the hall. This includes artefacts and music resources. Electronic resources can be found on the school network.

Parents are invited to join some collective worships, particularly those that take place in the church. The school communicates with parents regarding collective worship events and themes via newsletters and display boards and encourages them to discuss these with the children further at home.

Responsibilities

The normal expectation within our school is for all staff to view collective worship as an important part of their own well-being and spiritual development as human beings. The school will endeavour to timetable staff so they all have an opportunity to attend regularly.

At interview, all applicants are informed that the school holds acts of collective worship that promote the Christian ethos and values of the school. The normal expectation will be that staff will participate in and lead collective worship. The school welcomes offers from any member of staff who feels confident to lead worship.

The headteacher is responsible for co-ordinating the programme of induction and training for staff and for the long-term planning and organisation of collective worship across the year. Every teacher has responsibility for planning and resourcing collective worship when it is their turn to lead.

The Right of Withdrawal

We expect all children to attend collective worship. However, parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from religious worship. We ask for this to be discussed with the headteacher so the exact nature of worship is understood by the parents before this becomes a permanent arrangement; alternative activities can be provided for worship time in consultation with parents. Please be aware that this does not mean that the children will be exempt from the Christian ethos of the setting which underpins our teaching, learning and relationships. The right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act and was reinstated in the 1988 Education Act.

The headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship policy.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Monitoring and evaluation of collective acts of worship is undertaken by children, staff and governors. All those who deliver worship regularly will be observed on a regular basis. This process supports the school's self-evaluation as well as staff development and appraisal. All leaders of collective worship are asked to evaluate continuously, reflecting after every worship to develop and improve their practice.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if appropriate.

Please note that references to 'parish' within this policy refer to the local parish church to which the school is linked.