



ORCHARD  
—Community Trust—  
Courage - Unity - Equity



## Collective Worship Policy

**Last Approved:** March 2026

**Review Date:** March 2027



Worship is...

*Giving honour and reverence to a supreme being.  
Christian worship is concerned with bringing praise, prayer,  
thanksgiving and adoration to God.*

*It is an activity of response: in words, actions, and thoughts.*

### **Mission statement**

Collective worship plays a central part in the life of St Mark's CE Primary School. Collective worship is a means by which the school's Christian vision is expressed. As an expression of the Christian vision, ethos, and spiritual life of the school/academy it offers the whole school community opportunities to experience/participate in/take responsibility for the living expression of Christian worship, valued and honoured through the school's/academies Anglican Foundation. This is set within the context of the corporate community of our school and its historic partnership with St. Mark's Church. We affirm every individual's unique contribution, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ability, background, or religion.

### **Legal requirements:**

#### **Trust Deed**

Our daily act of collective worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school. This requires worship to be consistent with the faith, principles and practices of the Church of England.

#### **DfES guidance**

We also take into account DfES legislation. The following link will take you to the current legislation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-worship-in-schools>

#### **1988 Education Act**

We also take into account the 1988 Education that states,

*'... all pupils in attendance at a maintained school **shall in each school day** take part in an act of collective worship',*

And, that this should be,

*'... mainly of a broadly Christian character'*

### **Worship and/or Assemblies**

We recognise the place that a celebration time, celebrating the pupils' achievements, has in a school. However, we also recognise that care should be taken to ensure this is still considered an act of worship. Here at St. Mark's CE Primary School, we have a weekly celebration and praise time on Friday mornings which we incorporate in an act of worship, including the saying of prayers at the end of the celebration to thank God for pupil's achievements and successes. We make links to our vision, values and school Bible story, *The Good Samaritan*.

### **Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools (SIAMS)**

All church schools, whether they are Voluntary Aided (VA), Voluntary Controlled (VC) or Foundation (F) will be inspected on collective worship and the impact this has on the whole school community. Here at St. Mark's CE Primary School, this inspection will evaluate the school's/academies collective worship on the following:

- that it is inclusive, invitational, and inspiring
- offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship, and reflection
- 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
- 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
- enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice
- ensures leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training
- encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

### **The right of withdrawal – see appendix**

We recognise the right of withdrawal from worship for pupils at the request of parents and for staff but encourage discussion with the relevant individuals to ensure that there is understanding of the aims and objectives of worship, and strategies for minimising the disruption caused by any withdrawals.

## Aims of worship

The gathering of pupils each day incorporates collective worship. Worship will be:

- Appropriate to the age, aptitude, and family background of pupils.
- Provided in a variety of settings, groupings, and timings, with a variety of leaders
- The pattern for worship each week at present is as follows:

| Day       | Grouping /Type                         | Led by  |
|-----------|--|---|
| Monday    | Whole School                           | Usually, the Headteacher or a Deputy Headteacher                |
| Tuesday   | Whole School –<br>Worship Through Song | Classroom staff or children                                     |
| Wednesday | Class (in classrooms)                  | Music and Worship Leader / RE Leader / Specialist Music Teacher |
| Thursday  | Whole School                           | Classroom staff or children or Visitor                          |
| Friday    | Whole School                           | Two members of the Senior Leadership Team                       |

## Worship should provide opportunities to:

- enhance the spiritual development and response of pupils
- foster reflection, meditation, prayer, and silence
- create an atmosphere in which God is both normal and natural
- foster a reverential attitude to God
- foster empathy and imagination, enabling pupils to participate in a variety of ways
- actively involve pupils in the delivery of worship in creative and imaginative ways (reading, poetry, drama, dance, quiet / silent reflection, prayer, singing)
- explore and enjoy praise, prayer, and the rituals of Christianity (the Anglican tradition in particular)
- affirm the Christian faith and the central Christian status of Jesus as the Son of God

- affirm the Christian belief in the Trinity and explore the meaning of each part of the Trinity
- explore Eucharistic worship within the Anglican tradition (this is offered in church at various points throughout the year, with children and staff opting to observe and/or participate if they would like to.)
- enable pupils to reflect on the experiences of Christian adherents
- foster and value a search for a faith to live by
- explore the schools/academies Christian values to deepen pupils understanding of them and how they relate to the school/academy, local community, and wider world
- learn about and reflect upon Christian teaching, Biblical material, and Christian festivals, in a way that relates to the pupils' experience and to living together in community
- worship together rather than apart
- provide an evocative setting for worship that fosters spiritual growth and reflection
- experience a broad spectrum of Christian tradition (various expressions of worship)
- inspire pupils to explore further their own faith and tradition
- encourage pupils and staff to plan, participate and lead in worship
- develop a sense of community and shared values
- consider the needs of others and to foster charitable works
- celebrate the highest achievements of the human spirit
- celebrate achievements of members of the school in every aspect of school life
- foster a thought-provoking atmosphere allowing for spiritual reflection and response
- make occasional use of local church buildings for worship as appropriate.

**Other opportunities that worship can offer are:**

- celebrating the beliefs and cultures of others particularly those represented in our school/academy
- celebrating achievements of members of the school/academy's community
- reinforcing school expectations, good behaviour, and school/academy's routines
- sharing local school/academy and community information
- Teaching about fundamental British Values.

### **Management of worship**

Ultimately the responsibility for collective worship lies with the Headteacher and the Co-Chairs of the Local Governing Board. However, the role of planning, resourcing, managing, and evaluating worship has been delegated to the Worship Leader. In addition, all teachers in a church school are 'spiritual leaders' and have a responsibility to help pupils develop spiritual awareness.

### **Resourcing worship**

Worship should be adequately resourced to ensure that it is regarded as an important part of school life. Pupils are encouraged and provided opportunities to plan acts of worship so that they have ownership of it. In addition to regular classroom worship, classes have an opportunity to lead whole school worship to which families are invited.

### **Monitoring, evaluating & action planning worship**

Worship is monitored and evaluated frequently in order to ensure that it meets the needs of all who take part. All stakeholders' opinions are sought (this should include pupils, teachers, governors & parents). A yearly action plan, which feeds into the school development plan, is written and revised to ensure that worship remains relevant and up to date.

### **Management of the Worship Coordinator**

This is done by the Headteacher in conjunction with the Local Governing Board.

### **Worship themes and current practice**

A number of resources are used to deliver collective worship. The worship themes for each half term are based around the school values, the various spiritual pathways and the Anglican Church calendar.

Other resources used include:

- Values for Life (Jumping Fish Publications)
- Roots and Fruits (Imaginer)
- Out of the Box Worship (Imaginer)
- [www.assemblies.org](http://www.assemblies.org)
- [www.barnabasinschools.org.uk](http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk)
- [www.prayerspacesinschools.com](http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com)
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We will review this policy on a yearly basis



**Signed:** .....

Headteacher

**Signed:** .....

Co-Chair Local Governing Board

**Signed:** .....

Co-Chair Local Governing Board

**Date:** March 2026

## Appendix

### **Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education and Collective Worship March 2017**

#### **Collective Worship**

The **1944 Education Act** gave the right to withdraw from RE or collective worship to parents who wished their children to receive different form of RE or worship. This right is also confirmed in section 71 of the **School Standards and Framework Act 1998**. In the case of collective worship, the government guidance document is **Circular 1/94: Religious Education and Collective Worship**.

Collective worship in all Church of England schools and academies should honour the school's trust deed and Christian foundations. Worship is central to school life, offering an opportunity for the whole school community to explore the distinctive beliefs and narrative that underpins the school's Anglican foundations and distinctive Christian character. Worship is the responsibility of the governing body in conjunction with the headteacher, working in partnership with the staff and the local parish church.

Our Church of England schools should strive to ensure they are consistently excellent, distinctive, and inclusive, and that the whole curriculum is underpinned by Christian values. Religious Education is an important part of the curriculum in all Church of England schools and academies. Its nature, objectives, and content should be shared with parents each term to ensure that parents are able to recognise that RE is of educational value to all pupils, whatever their belief background. In the same way, collective worship should lie at the heart of school life, proclaiming its distinctive character and faith in a way that is relevant, inclusive and that leads each pupil a little further in their spiritual journey. In this way, the likelihood for parental requests for withdrawal should be reduced. However, when they are made they must be handled accordingly to the legal guidance, while there is scope for a little realism and adaptability in order to ensure the best for every pupil.

In many of our schools within the Diocese of Lichfield, there is a large percentage of children whose families are members of another faith. It is the purpose and duty of every church school to be distinctive as a Church of England school. In each school, it is part of the mission of the church to welcome those of other faiths and no faith. In most cases, parents will have chosen the school for their child, making a specific choice of the school because of the ethos and education it offers. In a small number of cases, parents of other faiths will have been offered a place at a church school because no other school has a place for their child within a reasonable catchment area.

The right to withdraw from collective worship should be at the instigation of the parents or pupils above the age of 16.

### **The right of withdrawal from collective worship**

The right of withdrawal from collective worship would normally be exercised through the physical withdrawal of the pupil from the place where the act of worship is taking place. Indeed the school could insist that this is the way the right is to be implemented. If, however, both the parent and the school agree that the pupil should be allowed to remain physically present during the collective worship but not take part in it, nothing in the law prevents this.

Experience suggests that, to avoid misunderstanding, a Headteacher / Principal will find it helpful to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right to withdrawal:

- the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part;
- the practical implications of withdrawal; and
- 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 a particular faith or denomination, the governors and Headteacher / Principal will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school; and
- that the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in **Section 1 of the 1988 Education Act. (Circular 1/94)**