



Collective Worship Policy

Review date: September 2023

Next review: September 2024

Headteacher signed:

Date: 11.9.23

Chair of Governors signed:

Date: 11.9.23

Oak Church of England Primary School

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. As part of a Church of England school, we have a distinctive character, where Christian values are promoted and modelled in all aspects of school life.

Be The Best You Can Be

Our vision has been developed from the parable of the Mustard Seed,

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches"
(Matthew 13:31-32).

In the parable Jesus is talking about the surprising change in size from the mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, to a huge tree which shelters and supports others. At Oak CE Primary School, our vision and values are based upon this idea. We are privileged that pupils come to us in their formative, early years and by helping them to thrive academically, emotionally, spiritually and physically they can achieve their fullest potential.

Our chosen Christian values support us in this process and are the strong foundations on which our school is built.



Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to 'live life in all its fullness'. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

Purpose of Collective Worship

At Oak CE Primary worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is **not** a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship **must** take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Oak CE Primary School collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given – developing spirituality for all children. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian and other faiths calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

Church of England Guidance

Collective worship policy at Oak CE Primary draws on guidance from the Church of England¹. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>

them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words, the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in Oak CE Primary should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing body of Oak CE Primary have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the Headteacher.

The right of withdrawal

At Oak CE Primary there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part.
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas.
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- 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 their faith or denomination, the governors and Head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school.
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

Guiding Principles

Collective worship at Oak CE Primary aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision and values are unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.

- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well known Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

Other documentation

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included on the school website.

How Collective worship is organised.

Leadership

- Collective worship is led by various stakeholders of Oak CE Primary. These include, but is not limited to:
 - Headteacher
 - Senior Leaders
 - Teachers
 - Pupils
 - Members of the local church and/or clergy
 - Individual visitors to school i.e., Open the Book
- An information leaflet for visitors is shared to support them in planning and delivering worship.

Planning

- The overview of worship for the year is planned by the Headteacher with input from Senior Leaders
- Pupils will be encouraged to lead elements of collective worship such as the school prayer and lighting the candles.
- Pupil Worship Leaders will have training in the Summer Term 2024 to support school in developing collective worship.
- Collective worship at Oak follows the Anglican liturgical calendar as well as including celebrations for other faiths.
- Collective worship always makes links to other faiths and beliefs to ensure that it is inclusive for all our community.
- Oak CE Primary has a weekly rhythm of worship:
 - Monday: Christian Vision and Values based worship. (Whole school)
 - Tuesday: Singing Worship (whole school)
 - Wednesday: In Class Worship (worldwide themes through a Christian lens)
 - Thursday: Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC/PSHE) based worship (whole school)
 - Friday: Celebration Worship

Organisation

- Collective worship is mainly whole school. As we are two form entry, we use both halls and each year group splits in two
- Collective worship takes place at the start of the day, bringing everyone together.
- To ensure the worship space is made special, we always:
 - begin with music and a visual focal point to give pupils' opportunity to reflect peacefully on the theme.
 - Light three candles to represent the Trinity.
 - Christian signs and symbols are evident.
- Pupils' spirituality is developed through collective worship. See our Developing Spirituality policy for more details.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.