St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Action	Date
Document reviewed	September 2026
Reviewed By	Sarah Irvine
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Next Review Date	September 2027

St Bartholomew's C of E (VA) Primary School

Follow Jesus in all we do

School Vision

Our Church school seeks to ensure that by following Jesus, each individual is inspired to shine in all areas of their educational and spiritual development.

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' (Jeremiah 29:11)

Mission Statement

Follow Jesus in all we do

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life".' (John 8:12)

Core Values

Our school is underpinned by 6 core values;

Courage

'Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.' (Joshua 1.9)

Friendship

'Love each other as I have loved you.' (John 15:12)

Service

'Serve one another in love' (Galatians 5.13)

Forgiveness

'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; Forgive, and you will be forgiven' (Luke 6:37)

Justice

'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6:9)

Love

'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.' (Chronicles 16:34)

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School

Worship is a divine activity

Worship is not simply about us talking (praising, interceding, confessing, etc.) to God. It is also the breaking through of the divine into human life. Worship is not just a human activity; it is a vehicle for God's action. It is one of the points in life when we open ourselves up to God. An imperfect analogy might be with a radio station and its listeners. The broadcast is made constantly but we can only receive it when we switch on.

Worship is an open activity

Worship is always an 'open' activity. We cannot force children to worship (and even if we tried, they would only find ways of misleading us into thinking they were worshipping). But what we can do is (in the words of the worn phrase) to attempt to bring children to the "threshold" of worship and provide a setting in which they might worship. We want them to be free to respond or not to clearly articulated principles and beliefs, and to be able to accept the invitation to worship or decide not to. But we can hope that at least some will pass over that threshold and worship God and we might properly expect them to.

Worship and the quality of school life

Worship is not something that can be separate from the rest of the life of the Church school. Worship is fed and nurtured or corrupted and rendered meaningless, by the general atmosphere, ethos and quality of life of the school, for instance, if relationships are strained or forgiveness is not practised, then affirmations of love and forgiveness in worship can sound hollow. The relationship between worship and the general life of the school is two way. Worship must flow out of the life of the school and be a celebration of the life and concerns of the school. This is why, as well as the explicit Christian content, almost anything that happens in the life of the school and the life of its members can be offered to God and be a fit subject for the worship theme. But worship is not simply a response to the school ethos; it is the stimulus for the whole life of the school. By the values and beliefs proclaimed in hymns, prayers and story and by the atmosphere created, worship should stimulate and reinforce the Christian values which the school uphold, inform its whole curriculum and set the tone of its pastoral relationships.

Worship is educational

Worship in school must also contribute to children's education. It should develop knowledge and understanding about the Christian faith but also about many other areas of life. Through their participation, children should develop skills and confidence and be helped to grow spiritually and morally. Worship should reflect, celebrate and inform the curriculum and should widen children's horizons.

In our School, Collective Worship is in conformity with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England as laid down in the Trust Deed.

Collective Worship contributes to our vision and the aims and ethos of the school and therefore to the Christian Education we provide. It also contributes to the celebration and exploration of the values of our school.

Collective worship is at the heart of our school life and the Governors see it as an essential part of all pupils' education. As such we are concerned to resource it properly and ensure that it is of the highest standard.

Forms of worship within our denomination differ and these differences enable us to provide a wide range of approaches to worship whilst remaining true to our Trust Deeds. As well as drawing on our denominational heritage, we also occasionally expect to draw on the rich tapestry of practice in the world-wide Christian Church.

For Christians, both individually and corporately, worship is a central feature of their life; it is an acknowledgement of God's glory and presence and a response to God as creator and redeemer. As such it is not primarily concerned with the intellect but with our feelings and deepest aspirations, joys and sorrows. We believe therefore that worship is:

"An expression of a relationship with God and a desire to serve and love God, and others"

The school meets together for Collective Worship but there will be times when we assemble together for other purposes, e.g. important notices and announcements. Such 'assembly' times are legally distinct from Collective Worship and parents' right to withdraw their children do not apply.

Worship in the school, while reflecting our denomination, will take into account the levels of development of pupils. The provision of collective worship at our school conforms to Diocesan policy.

Responsibility for the policy

This policy was approved by the Governing Board on the date at the start of the document. The policy was implemented with the Head Teacher, alongside the RE leader who are the co-ordinators for Collective Worship. It was discussed by the whole school staff and by the Curriculum Committee of the Governing Board.

Aims for Collective Worship in our School

To create an environment for worship

- In which people might be brought to the threshold of worship
- Which provides the opportunity for believers to worship
- Which is enjoyable

To develop knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith e.g.

- Learn about the place and significance of the Bible
- Understand the significance of Jesus
- Celebrate the festivals and Saints days of the Church year
- Show that God is concerned with all areas of life

To contribute to pupils spiritual development e.g.

- Develop the ability to reflect, to be still and use silence creatively
- Learn to pray in a variety of ways
- Understand that worship is and what people do when they worship
- Foster a sense of awe and wonder at creation
- Explore mystery and the important questions about life and creation, including the dark side of life e.g. suffering, loss, death and evil
- Explore all that is of value in life – truth, love, goodness, beauty etc.
- Reflect on and express their hopes, concerns, joys and sorrows etc.

To celebrate, take note of and build up the life of the school in the presence of God, e.g.

- Celebrate work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum
- Build up the sense of community of the school
- Develop and reflect on the values of the school
- Share the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the school community

To contribute to pupils' moral development e.g.

- Explore and reflect on moral issues and concerns
- Help them reflect on their own values, commitments and beliefs
- Help them develop behaviour based on Christian values
- Help them deepen their awareness of the needs of others

To contribute to the general development of pupils, e.g.

- Provide them with opportunities for leadership and developing performance skills
- Learn the skill of choral speaking
- Develop singing ability
- Participate in group preparation and presentation

To look out to the wider world, e.g.

- Take note of events in the world and express joy or sorrow as appropriate
- Celebrate and give thanks for God's world

To explore the beliefs of others, e.g.

- Listen to stories from other faiths and learn about their significance

- Celebrate values, attitudes and beliefs shared with members of other faith communities

Organisation and Delivery

Monday	Whole School Worship	Led by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
Tuesday	Key Stage 2 Worship Key Stage 1 Class Worship	Led by the KS2 teachers on rotation. Led by class teacher/children in the class.
Wednesday	Whole School Sung Praise	Led by class teachers and the Ethos Team on rotation
Thursday	Key Stage 1 Worship Key Stage 2 Class Worship	Led by the KS2 teachers on rotation. Led by class teacher/children in the class.
Friday	Whole School Celebration Worship	Led by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher

Though worship is not designated as curriculum time under current regulations, it is a major aspect of the whole curriculum provided by the school. Worship is a vehicle for exploring aspects of the National Curriculum and Religious Education and frequently involves teaching and learning activities such as discussion and question and answer. Pupils may be read to or instructed or they may be asked to listen to readings or to think about and respond to a stimulus such as a work of art.

Worship is also concerned with the celebration of the curriculum, with pupils displaying or recounting details of what they have learnt. Frequently pupils are involved in leading worship or performing through dance, drama or music. When any such activities occur, they may be counted as teaching time even though they take place within worship. It is appropriate that, in a Church school, worship and learning is seen as a seamless whole even though, for the purposes of recording teaching time, we distinguish between the two. We believe that it is important to develop a real sense of what it is to worship amongst our children.

With this in mind, the following elements will characterise our worship together:

- That children and staff enter and leave the place of worship in a quiet and peaceful manner

- That an appropriate medium will be used to set the tone for the worship, e.g. music may be played or silence required

- That there will be a visible focus for the worship in the form of a Christian symbol together with other items of display, e.g. flowers, artefacts etc.

- The main element of each assembly will be the fact of worship, but assemblies will also be used as an opportunity to give out awards, notices and results. These items will be given at the end of the worship. Where possible, all disciplinary items will be kept separate from the assembly.

We recognise that in our School we have children from a variety of faith backgrounds and that many children have no religious background at all. Great care is taken during Worship to ensure that all children feel valued and special and that integrity as human beings is consistently upheld. Collective Worship at St Bartholomew's CofE Primary is an inclusive activity.

Worship is planned by the Headteacher/RE Coordinator in conjunction with the teachers and the Ethos team on a termly basis. Meetings are held to discuss, plan and evaluate worship as well as discuss major festivals/special acts of worship and pupil participation. We also welcome visitors to lead Worship. Planning is flexible and allows for the 'Wow' factor in Worship

We have extremely positive links with our local Church, Clergy and congregation. The School participates in major festivals in the Church with special Services. These are led by the children alongside Rev. Graham

- Harvest
- Christmas
- Easter
- Leavers

We have different themes for Worship throughout the School year which follow the traditions of Christian faith and values and often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. These are planned by Blackburn Diocese and follow 'Living out God's Big Story' using the Worship Together resources and YouTube links and the London Diocese.
We also use key themes such as love, service, justice, friendship, courage and forgiveness. Sometimes the themes of our Worship reflect and consolidate topics and events that are part of the School curriculum or have a global dimension – particularly

when linked to charitable activities. Links are made to other calendar events and other religious celebrations. Big Picture News is used to support planning.

Evaluation

The monitoring of collective worship is carried out regularly by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator, senior leaders, and foundation governors. Feedback from pupils via the Ethos plays a crucial role in evaluating the impact of worship on our school community.

Parents are also invited to make comments about worship when they attend an assembly led by their child's class. Ideas and thoughts about ways of improving worship are also sought from staff.

Worship should normally take place on the school premises, but may take place in Church on special occasions.

The Content of our Collective Worship

We have different themes for Worship throughout the School year which follow the traditions of Christian faith and values and often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. We also use key themes such as love, courage, friendship, service, justice and forgiveness. Sometimes the themes of our Worship reflect and consolidate topics and events that are part of the School curriculum or have a global dimension – particularly when linked to charitable activities.
In the course of a school year, worship will be planned around our school values, but all worship will provide opportunities to incorporate many, if not all of the following:

- Sharing and taking note of common experiences – loss, death, birthdays, anger, thankfulness, sorrow, joy, fear, jealousy, beauty, good-byes, new siblings, illness, recovery etc.

- Expressing concern for others, both in stories from school and in the news

- Looking at the world – developing awe and wonder, exploring mystery, pattern, order, change and renewal, thanksgiving

- Exploring common values, standards and rules – how to treat others, self-discipline, good and evil

- Topical events: continuing issues such as starvation, peace and conflict. Celebrating the curriculum

- Sharing and celebrating achievement in sports, hobbies, relationships and behaviour in and out of school

- Stories which illustrate faith themes; which evoke a sense which, present truth in story. Examples might be myths and legends, literature and children's literature which explore metaphor and biographies

- Music – from a variety of sources; recorded or performed by pupils and staff

Christian Content

As we believe that our worship should recognise the distinct nature of our school the inclusion of material in the above section will always be delivered clearly and explicitly in a way which points children to God.

However, there will be content which is specifically Christian drawn from the following:

- Christian Faith and History
- Understanding the nature of the Bible
- Old Testament stories
- Stories about the teaching of Jesus
- Church seasons and festivals
- Church History
- Stories of saints and famous Christians or of people who exemplify Christian virtues, chosen from the past and present, and taken from a range of cultural backgrounds
- Christian beliefs
- Christian values, e.g. forgiveness, reconciliation, mercy, self-sacrifice, compassion and love
- Prayer and God
- Exploring ideas about prayer as well as practising the habit of prayer to God
- Using different forms of prayer to express acknowledgement of failings and wrong doings, confession, forgiveness and reconciliation as well as thanksgiving, praise and petition

Resources

The school capitation budget makes an annual allowance for RE and Collective Worship. Attempts are made to keep our resources for Worship up to date.

The Role of the Co-ordinator

At our school the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship will:

- Co-ordinate the planning of worship taking account of possible curriculum links, known celebrations and events,
- produce a half-termly plan which is flexible enough to allow for spontaneous events and ideas

- attend appropriate in-service courses
- advise colleagues on class and group worship
- consult with staff and pupils
- provide and maintain suitable resources
- liaise with and be responsible for visitors taking part in worship
- evaluate the quality of worship and share this information with staff and Governors

This evaluation will take account of;

- management and organisation
- variety offered
- balance in terms of leadership
- Governors will carry out a monitoring role

The legal requirements for Collective Worship in our School

a) Legal Basis Collective Worship in Church Schools is governed by both the 1944 and 1988 Education Acts, (as consolidated in the 1996 Act) as well as the Trust Deed of the School. The Collective Worship provided by the school must be in accordance with the Trust Deed.

b) Daily Worship Daily Collective Worship has to be provided for every pupil. This worship may take place in various groupings such as the whole school, separate Key Stage groups, year groups or house groups or in classes or tutor groups, but not faith groups. Worship may take place at any point in the school day.

c) Parental rights of withdrawal Parents may withdraw their children from Collective Worship and this provision and its limitations are indicated in the school brochure. The Governors have agreed with the following form of words on this subject: "The Worship and Religious Education provided by the school is in accordance with the Church of England Foundation. This Foundation is also reflected in the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate pupils from the religious life of the school".

d) Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship Any complaints about Collective Worship should be addressed to the Head Teacher who will attempt to resolve them informally, in consultation with the Governors, and possibly with advice from the Diocese. However, if the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, then formal procedures come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese.

The aims for worship in our multi-faith Church school have been carefully selected to recognise that Christian worship needs to be maintained but in a way which allows children from other faiths to take part.

The Christian framework for worship has been maintained, but without violating the integrity of pupils from other faiths. Material used in worship will regularly be drawn from Christian sources, inviting pupils to explore and respond to Christian stories and Christian values and to see what is important to Christians through thinking about prayers, beliefs and practices.

As important, however, is the witness to the Christian faith carried out through the life of the school, the way adults and children relate to each other, the expectations of all members of the community, the life of service lived day by day.

Pupils will not be coerced into anything that would be against their faith, e.g.

- Made to join in hymns that express beliefs they do not share

- Made to say Trinitarian formulae though this will not prevent participate in an act of worship in a building dedicated to worship in a faith other than their own. Whilst the whole act of worship will be clearly consistent with Christianity all attempts will be made to ensure that it does not cause offence to our children from other faiths

The Policy at Work

Each year a set of guidance notes will be provided to give a practical interpretation of this policy and to help all involved in the delivery of worship to plan in detail.
The notes will set out the aims and objectives for the year, providing practical guidance on how the acts of worship should be conducted, and detailing on a term-by-term basis the themes to be followed.

Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship

Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Head Teacher, in consultation with the Governors and possibly with advice from the Diocese or District. However, if the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, then formal procedures come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese.

Date of this Review: September 2026 **Date of Next Review: September 2027**