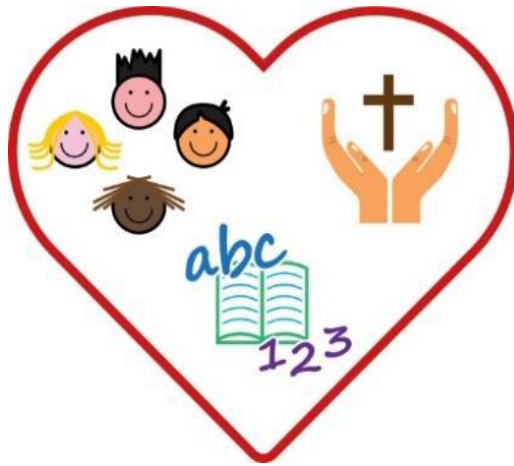


# ST. MATTHEW'S C.E. PRIMARY ACADEMY



## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP & SPIRITUALITY POLICY

Reviewed: Sept 2026  
By: M MACKLEY

Date of next review: Sept 2029

**St Matthew's C of E Primary Academy**  
**Collective Worship & Spirituality Policy**

**Mission Statement:**

St. Matthew's CE Primary Academy is dedicated to providing an education which enables every child to fulfil their best potential. It seeks to promote academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment, welcoming children drawn from diverse cultures.

**Vision Statement:**

Inspired by Jesus' words (Matthew 5: 1-12), we strive to promote academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment for all members of our school family.

We can all '**Be blessed by God, be happy and aspire to be...**'

**Our roots and foundations in Christ, with Christ and through Christ.**

At St Matthew's school, collective worship is the keystone of our school day. Our worship is inclusive, invitational and inspirational and is centered on our Vision & Mission Statements and school Christian values.

**Inclusive**

As a Church of England school, our Christian ethos underpins all that we do and is at the heart of our school family. We endeavour to provide children with an understanding and knowledge of Christian heritage, develop a spiritual dimension in each child and offer the basis of a faith by which to live. We aim to nurture the development of children's understanding of spirituality, others, the natural world and a faith in God.

**Invitational**

Our worship provides the opportunity to engage, whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. Acts of prayer are invitational, children and adults are invited to pray if they wish to do so and to pray in their own way.

**Inspirational**

In accordance with the school's Vision Statement, children and adults are encouraged to take the opportunity to consider faith and belief and to grow spiritually. We encourage children to reflect on their actions and consider issues affecting the wider world. We also include references to issues affecting children and the world, local and global..

## **St Matthew's CE Primary Academy – Collective Worship policy**

Worship is also a time of praise and music naturally enhances this. The opportunity to join in with communal singing is offered, songs are a mix of overtly Christian, faith based and those which support the values and ethos of the school.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promote Christian values through the experience we offer to all our pupils.

### **Christian Values and our Vision & Mission statements**

Collective Worship contributes to the working out of our Mission Statement, the Christian Vision of the school, which was written by the whole school family, and therefore is central to the Christian Education we provide. It also contributes to the celebration and exploration of the Christian values of our school.

The worship and prayer life of the school is not limited to the legally required daily acts of worship but permeates all areas of our school curriculum, our daily dealings with each other, our extracurricular life of the school, our stewardship of resources and our links with our local and global partners.

As part of our school commitment to wellbeing and spirituality, opportunities are regularly taken to use prayer and meditation exercises in the curriculum and in worship. The School Prayer is shared regularly across the whole school:

***O Lord, bless our school. So that working together, and playing together, we may learn to serve you and serve other people. Amen.***

### **Character education, Values and Christian virtues Education**

Through our collective worship and our curriculum, we blend Christian teaching and values education. We create opportunities for our school family to develop physically, emotionally, personally, socially, intelligently and spiritually so that their self-esteem and well-being is sound and supported by ever growing emotional intelligence; leading to an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens. There is a shared, common language in our school based upon our Christian values of **hope, love/compassion, trust, community, thankfulness and respect/reverence.**

Our Christian values are embedded and woven into the daily life and curriculum choices of our school. Staff purposefully plan opportunities throughout the curriculum and our resourcing choices to embed our values and the Word. We regard worship as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask children to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully and participate.

## St Matthew's CE Primary Academy – Collective Worship policy

### Organisation and Delivery

Worship within the school is varied and follows a weekly pattern of:

|                      |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday               | Google Slideshow             | Diocesan 'Living Out God's Big Story'. Opening slide with a song followed by the video for the week.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Tuesday              | Whole School in the hall.    | HT leads - candle is always lit by a child and the link with Jesus being the light of the world/being in God's presence is made. A member of the worship group opens with a prayer written by them, these are kept in a file on the worship table in the hall. Music and teaching with encouragement to reflect and concluding with an invitational prayer. |
| Wednesday / Thursday | Class Worship / Picture News | Staff decide which to do on which day.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Friday               | Whole school in the hall.    | Celebration of the previous week, reinforcing the school's values and vision.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

Worship in the school, while reflecting our denomination, will take into account the levels of development of pupils and also our school's diverse character.

In our diverse and inclusive school, there is plenty of flexibility in the provision of collective worship to enable all pupils to benefit without compromising their own faith beliefs.

Parents may withdraw their children from Collective Worship in school and, if this provision was needed, a staff member is allocated to support the children/parents during worship time.

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's 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.

Because of the importance placed on the worshipping life of our school, where possible **every** child, staff member and school visitor will be afforded the opportunity to share in worship.

### Distinguishing between Collective Worship and assembly.

## **St Matthew's CE Primary Academy – Collective Worship policy**

The school meets together for Collective Worship but there are times when we assemble together for other purposes, e.g. important notices, announcements and visitors. Such 'assembly' times are legally distinct from Collective Worship and parents' rights to withdraw their children do not apply. We distinguish 'worship' from notices and other 'assembly' activities through the signifying lighting and extinguishing of our worship candles OR signaled by information being given after a closing hymn or song.

### **Aims of collective worship at St Matthew's**

Through our worship life in school, we expect that pupils will be introduced to the key beliefs and aspects of the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and help to explore them. The aim of our worship is to help our school family:

- Express praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Have opportunities to be still, pray and reflect.
- Explore the big questions of life and of faith and to respond to national/global events.
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness.
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ.
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes.
- Share each other's joys, difficulties and challenges.
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar together.
- Feel nurtured in spirit, allowing everyone (regardless of their own faith or lack of faith belief) time to 'be' in the presence of God
- Be aware of the Holy Trinity and the nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- Know that although all unique and different **all** are children of God, part of his creation and, though sinful, through God's grace can be forgiven;
- To have opportunities to know Jesus as the Son of God who, through his life, death and resurrection, broke the power of evil and restored humanity's relationship with God; The central values of forgiveness, selfless love, redemption, goodness, compassion and charity;
- To understand the importance of the Bible (and God's Big story!) as a source of knowledge about God and Jesus and as a source of inspiration and guidance;
- To understand the importance and power of prayer;
- To gain an understanding of the central symbols of Christianity; The cycle of the Church year, the symbolism of festivals
- To have opportunities to engage with Holy Communion *and to experience and understand the central place of the Eucharist/Communion in the life of the Church*
- To have the opportunity to experience and build living faith foundations and know Jesus can be their personal saviour and friend.

Worship also affords opportunities for our school family to celebrate our curriculum and their God given gifts, with pupils displaying or recounting details of what they have learnt across subject areas.

## **The planning and content of worship**

We provide a varied range of approaches to worship whilst remaining true to our Trust Deeds and Church of England roots. The provision of collective worship conforms to Diocesan policy. As well as drawing on our denominational heritage, we also draw on the rich tapestry of practice in the world-wide Christian Church.

A sense of worship is established through the use of modern and traditional worship hymns/songs and signed songs, built up through the use of music, silence, appropriate movement into and out of worship and through the setting (including display) and the use of our worship table, candles and altar cloths. The start of our act of worship is signaled by the lighting of the candle.

The worship co-ordinator, plans themes/topics taking into consideration the diocesan vision, christian festivals and also the latest resourcing to engage, inspire and make worship relevant. The half-termly plans are shared with clergy, staff, and governors.

The content of worship varies according to theme or the person leading it. Pupils can become involved in leading worship through reading, prayers, dance, drama or music.

Worship is generally planned with the following scaffold:

- Call to worship (through song, silence, signing)
- Greeting (Trinity reference, prayer, signing and candle lighting)
- The main message.
- Responding to the Word – through song, prayer or thought
- Sending out – how can we take what we have heard out to the life of our school, community and world?

## **Worship in Church**

In recent years the church has not been available to use and the parish has undergone a period of reorganisation. Since the merging of the parish with the Minster Church and the appointment of a new vicar, we are seeing an active re-engagement with the school hall being used by the church on Sundays and the vicar actively engaged as a Governor and working with the Headteacher to develop closer links on multiple levels.

We look forward to the day when the church building is once again open and we can worship there on special occasions.

## **Christianity as a world faith & opportunities to explore other faiths/visits**

Christianity is an inclusive and welcoming world faith which should mirror the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. We are blessed with a diverse school family and this is celebrated through our worship times. School family members of faith and no faith are given opportunities to voice and share their

## **St Matthew's CE Primary Academy – Collective Worship policy**

own beliefs. Within worship we explore Christianity as a world faith and also make appropriate links and opportunities with other world faiths. Through their Christian character, our acts of collective worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of the cultures, life styles and faiths which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for every student to attend
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;
- foster active roles of pupils, parents and members of the local community –
- in preparation, participation and leadership.
- Support all members of our school family in their faith journey.

### **The wider support network for worship in our school**

Our school family is closely supported by Blackburn Diocese and as part of our resourcing for worship, we opt in to their service level agreement, utilising all it offers. This policy has been written, shared and agreed by the governing body of the school. The school is supported in our mission by our Diocesan / District Adviser and our local Vicar & Curate.

The school supports a range of community initiatives and seeks to support local issues and also global partners – Community Food Hub, Comic Relief, Children in Need etc.

### **Resources**

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

Worship has its own budget. Resources and suggested online/digital resources are highlighted on the worship plan and the worship, music and RE subject lead have a number of resources to support worship in school.

### **Record Keeping, Evaluation and Monitoring**

Children have the opportunity to reflect on worship by recording on a leaf which is added to our values tree. The worship lead takes time to read and reflect on this feedback to influence future worship.

Each class has a focus area in their room and class worships are, where appropriate, recorded into scrapbooks which are monitored by the RE lead.

### **The legal requirements for Collective Worship in our school**

#### Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship

## **St Matthew's CE Primary Academy – Collective Worship policy**

As an open, Christian school, it is hoped that any complaint would 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 would be followed, and the matter would be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of Blackburn.

### Equal Opportunities and special needs issues

In line with our school aims and also our belief in everyone being 'precious in God's sight' all pupils, staff and visitors, regardless of age, ability, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexuality or religious beliefs have access to worship in our school.

We ensure that each individual receives an equal learning/worship experience regardless of ability, culture, disability, religion, sexuality or gender.