



Worship Policy

FROM APRIL 2023

Aquinas Church of England Education Trust





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V1.0	01/04/23	BBL	New policy based on Rochester model
V1.0	01/04/25	BBL	Reviewed: no materials changes



Worship

Overview

[Statement of Intent](#)

1. [Vision](#)
2. [An introduction to Collective Worship](#)
3. [Aims of Collective Worship](#)
4. [The Anglican Christian Tradition](#)
5. [Implementation](#)
6. [Expectations of pupils](#)
7. [Developing worship](#)
8. [Visitors leading worship](#)
9. [Self-assessment and inspection](#)
10. [Parental withdrawal](#)
11. [Monitoring and review](#)

Appendix: [What is Collective Worship?](#)

Statement of Intent

Keston CE Primary is committed to high-quality Collective Worship which embodies and lives out the Christian vision and Biblical narrative each day.

1. Vision

To provide all our children with knowledge, perseverance and the imagination to develop their God given talents, living out Christian values in order to live happy, fulfilling and considerate lives. We uphold the right of every individual to learn, be valued and achieve their full academic potential.

‘In God’s hands we love, learn and grow.’

How is this policy a reflection of our distinctive Christian vision?

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community. This policy details how we encourage all in our community to flourish by clothing themselves with love.

2. An introduction to Collective Worship

As a Church of England school Collective Worship is the beating heart of our school life. It brings and gives life to all we do. Collective Worship is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather together as a school family.



Collective Worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of love, wisdom, friendship, trust, forgiveness and thankfulness and celebrates the central role that each pupil and adult have to play in our community.

Our acts of Collective Worship reflect the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of the whole school community.

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive, and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective Worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening, or watching.
- **Invitational** – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to ‘do anything’. Rather, worship will provide 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. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community’s behaviour and actions.

3. Aims of Collective Worship

Collective Worship offers pupils, staff, and the wider school community the opportunity to:

- Gather together to share sacred moments of joy, challenge, grief, and love.
- Explore the school’s distinctive Christian vision and values in action.
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts.
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Be still, pray and reflect.
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events.
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness.
- Explore Christian values and attitudes.
- Share each other’s joys and challenges.
- Celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar.



In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that Collective Worship:

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship, and reflection whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of Collective Worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for Collective Worship.

4. The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of Collective Worship through invitational and inclusive language:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories, and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence, and reflection

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Using Collects as a focus for worship

5. Implementation

Collective Worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors such as Spinnaker in consultation with the Collective Worship leader. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g., whole school, key stage, or class. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using Rochester Diocesan Collective Worship Planning



which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long- and short-term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. For example our Monday worship which allows children to be reflective about things that are happening in the world and ask deep and meaningful questions.

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – we welcome the community, for example by using music, lighting of a candle or singing our values song.
- **Engage** – we share, for example, by using a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message.
- **Respond** – pupils, for example, are encouraged to discuss, share, reflect, pray, or sing.
- **Send** – we share, for example, by repeating the message of the worship again and asking pupils to think about how they will affect their day, learning or behaviour.

Expectations of pupils 6.

There is an expectation that all pupils will be involved within worship on a regular basis. This may be opportunities planned ahead of time or unplanned through questioning, asking for volunteers or simply responding to moments of spontaneity.

Pupils are invited to evaluate and reflect on the impact of acts of worship they have joined with. Their voice is integral to improving the structure, content and in shaping future plans for worship.

Pupil worship leaders are supported, encouraged, and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the Collective Worship leader during (lunchtime/ after school club) to develop their own understanding of worship and to design an act of worship to support the spiritual development of their peers. Y6 are responsible for Wednesday Worship and run the worship committee.

7 .Developing worship

Parents, pupils, and adults in our school are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of Collective Worship in a Church School context.

Therefore, all those leading worship, including clergy, should have access to regular Diocesan led training.

The leader for Collective Worship will:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a daily act of Collective Worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements.
- Ensure that Collective Worship is inclusive, invitational, and inspiring.



- Attend regular training and network meetings with Canterbury Diocese
- Produce and regularly review the Collective Worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of Collective Worship across the school.
- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning, and joining worship.
- Join those who are leading worship to provide supportive feedback on how worship could be developed.
- Evaluate the impact of Collective Worship on the whole school community by gathering pupil and adult voice.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources, to help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited to lead Collective Worship.
- Meet with and encourage pupil leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

8. Visitors leading worship

Visitors are asked to read and comply with our procedures for visitors and our **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**. This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of senior leadership to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of the Collective Worship leader and Head Teacher to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and our school's vision. They will be supported and monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation process of worship.

9. Self-assessment and inspection

Our school regularly evaluates all acts of Collective Worship and the impact they have on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by leaders, staff, pupils, and the education team to grow and develop.

We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils, which are reviewed and considered on a regular basis. These are shared with our AAC and play an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school.

The impact of Collective Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).



10. Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time in our school day where we gather as a school family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, Collective Worship is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity. We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of Collective Worship, so would welcome the opportunity to discuss this decision with them. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw children from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.

11. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed on a biennial basis by the **Education Scrutiny Committee** and **Chief Executive**. Monitoring is conducted through the Trust's programme of quality assurance and that undertaken by the individual Academy. Changes to this policy are communicated to relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **April 2027**.



Appendix

What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

"... Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'.

(DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e., a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

Collective Worship, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values. Collective Worship should be:

"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes."

(DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)

Therefore, Collective Worship in Church of England schools must be inclusive and invitational of all, to ensure all can be present with integrity.

Legal requirements in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- Governing Bodies should ensure **all** pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian Worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church.
- Arrangements for Collective Worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher (DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53)
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- **All** registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship'.
- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending Collective Worship at the school, then the school must comply. (Education Reform Act 1988. s9 (3)) The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from Collective Worship.