



Collective Worship Policy



Document Detail	
Category:	Christian Ethos
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Version:	2
Status:	Draft until adopted
Next Review Date:	Sept 2029



At St James' this policy has been written and underpinned by our vision and values:

“Make great choices. Be our best.

Wise and Foolish Builders
(Matthew 7: 24-27)

Our school values of *Hope, Peace, Respect, Friendship, Trust* and *Kindness* are captured through the story of the Wise and Foolish Builders and lived out by children, staff and parents across our community. The school's vision and values are reflected in and will be used to implement this policy.

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), living out the Church of England's Vision for Education (2016). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, developing community and understanding of living well together.

Policy Statement

In St James' CE First School and Nursery collective worship is central to the life of the school and is shaped by the school's vision and the Anglican foundation of the school. It is well planned so that the whole school family gathers together four days a week, with a fifth worship reserved for a more intimate classroom-based worship. During collective worship, both children and staff, are engaged on a journey of discovery and spiritual development, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. Collective worship strengthens and supports our school's identity and reaffirms our Christian vision and associated values.

For Christians, worship in church 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 St James' 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 and adults will be offered:

- a space and a place for the telling of the Christian stories;
- an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament 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. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and the world in order 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 links to other faiths calendar;
- pupils and adults will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually. We have therefore considered what spirituality and spiritual development means to us as a school and have



our own agreed definition and language of spirituality. This enhances and enriches collective worship and individuals' spiritual development. (Please see our Spirituality Policy for further information).

Church of England Guidance

The collective worship policy at St James' 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 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 and adults to flourish.

Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools and academies 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. Worship in St James' will be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The trustees/ local school committee (LSC) of the school are tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship in enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually, in consultation with the headteacher. They also have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Framework, school policy, local and national guidance.

They have a responsibility to ensure that:

- Collective worship reflects the school's Anglican foundation and enables the spiritual flourishing of those in the school community
- The school has a regular and meaningful relationship with the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) accessing expertise and support for collective worship, as well as effective regular partnership with the parish/local church

Additionally, the trustees/ local school committee of the school consider the SIAMS sub-questions from IQ3:

- a) How do the theologically rooted Christian vision and the Anglican foundation of the school shape worship and spirituality in the school?
- b) How do partnerships with the DBE, and partnerships with parish/local church/es enhance this?
- c) In what ways is the worship life of the school inclusive, invitational, and inspirational?

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>; <https://www.nse.org.uk/curriculum-and-inclusion/collective-worship>



d) In the context of the school as a Church school, what do pupils and adults understand to be the meaning of spirituality? How does this enhance and enrich collective worship and individuals' spiritual development?

e) How does the trust contribute to and enhance the school's worship and spiritual life?

The right of withdrawal

The 1944, 1988 and 1998 Education Acts state that parents/carers have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

We recognise that some children and families are not Christians and are members of another faith or hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that we are invitational and inclusive to all in the community we serve. All are warmly welcomed to be part of daily collective worship as part of the school community.

Equally we appreciate that, on occasions, a parent/carer may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from collective worship. There is an expectation that parents/carers 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/carer 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/carer will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents/carers have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the local school committee 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/carer asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school will comply.

Guiding Principles

Collective worship in St James' aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school community.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth and development through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.



- Be central in the life of the school and is shaped by the school's vision and the Anglican foundation of the school.
- Provide opportunities for pupils and adults to be inspired by the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to Christian stories and teachings. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and non-religious beliefs 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 present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst appreciating that Christians worship in different ways.
- Help pupils to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church's 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 pupils the opportunity to form their own prayers 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 pupils 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 are supported to take on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship if it supports their own spiritual development.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the diverse work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

Member of staff responsible for collective worship is: Headteacher

How collective worship is organised

Planning

- Worship is planned on a half termly basis by the headteacher. This is often done in collaboration with other heads within the Trust to provide collaboration, continuity on theme and coverage.
- Worship is planned for 5 days a week, each lasting in the region of 20 minutes.
- Support and guidance are given to other staff and visitors leading worship in the form of the planning, resourcing and discussions.
- Pilgrim worship (children who are selected as worship leaders) is planned for in discussion with both the children in this group and the lead teacher.



- Planning of worship reflects the cycle of the Church's year and includes special services.
- Songs and welcome music are planned to support themes and/ or times of the year for celebrations.
- Christian vision and values of the school are identified, expressed and celebrated through every collective worship. They may be focused upon individually or as a whole.
- Explicit links are made between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school by selecting bible story/ verse that supports the teaching and living out of that value.
- Worship is planned to follow a pattern which reflects Anglican tradition. We follow a gather, engage, reflect, send model for each worship
- A range and variety of materials used, including: websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle.
- Opportunities are provided for children and adults to explore faith in today's world and to give a view of Global Christianity.
- Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God is explored.
- How spiritual growth and development is nurtured through Big Questions, exploring song/ dance/ art/ music, prayer, stillness and reflection.

Organisation

- The majority of worship involves a whole school gathering, with Nursery classes joining on occasions. Once a week, children gather as a class for class worship.
- The headteacher or assistant headteacher usually leads daily school worship, class teachers will lead class worship
- A member of clergy (on a rota) attends weekly to deliver worship and will often deliver celebration worships. This includes individual visitors or teams e.g. Open the Book
- A pupil or small group of pupils, may request to lead worship and propose their idea to the headteacher who will assist them in delivering their worship.
- Worship is held in the hall, where display boards support the vision and value messages. The atmosphere is usually quiet and calm (unless a livelier atmosphere is more appropriate e.g. celebrations).
- Children bring a classroom candle as they gather to symbolise the coming together of all. The children are welcomed in with music. Pilgrims, worship leaders, begin by lighting their candles and saying the welcoming refrain which all children are invited to take part in.
- Pilgrims close the worship with the ending refrain; extinguish the candles and take their back to class (which they then use in class worship). Children sing as they exit.
- The worship table at the front of the hall acts as a focal point on which candles are placed alongside other Christian symbols and anything relevant to the theme being discussed.
- Children are seated in their class groups unless otherwise organised.



- Some worship may be held in either the local Church or Chapel- this is usually to celebrate certain Christian festivals.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Trustees will have oversight of the legalities of collective worship in Church schools and have a knowledge of how collective worship is carried out.
- The Local School Committee, more specifically the Christian Ethos Committee (CEC), will be involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality and impact of collective worship in school.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team are responsible for the day to planning and delivery of collective worship. They will also act as guides for other staff and carry out monitoring and evaluation, particularly with regards to class-based worships.
- Clergy and church partners will take part in worship and be supportive of the school's vision, values and Christian ethos. They will be involved in planning as/ when necessary and also involved in festival celebrations.
- Teaching and support staff will attend worship and be responsible for their class during his time. On occasions they may be asked to lead worship.
- Pupils have a responsibility to attend worship and be as involved as they wish. They must remain respectful and conduct themselves in a calm and ordered manner as would be expected within school.
- Parents and carers are invited to join worships throughout the school year.
- Visitors are welcomed to worships on occasions through the school year.

Staff development and training

The school's named lead for collective worship accesses updates and training through the optional annual training offered by the diocesan education team and through the termly diocesan update meetings and QA sessions.

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, who request training in this area receive appropriate training and have opportunities highlighted for professional development, both as individuals and as groups. Support and training can also be made available to partners from the local church who lead worship as well as LSC members.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Planning worship alongside other heads allows for professional discussions to be held on a half termly basis and for formative assessment to take place through the academic year.
- Strategies used to monitor and evaluate the impact of worship includes taking part in worship observations, pupil and staff conferencing, children's worship observations and staff discussions.



- The CEC group, children, staff, link/foundation governors, clergy, SENDCO are all people who may be asked to undertake monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. A wide variety of views and opinions gathered allows for worship to be as inclusive in its approach as possible.
- Monitoring and evaluation supports the collection of evidence to support SIAMS inspections. Evidence is collected, passed to the SLT and analysed in order for changes/ improvements to be made.

Disseminating and reviewing the policy

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in other policies where relevant.

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

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if there is a significant change to the current legislation or guidance.

Date of review: September 2026

Headteacher signed: J. Hudson

Chair of Governors signed: TBC

Date of next review: September 2029 (unless needed beforehand)

The school's current vision and values underpin this policy and have been used to drive and shape this policy	This policy was reviewed on:
	September 2026