



## Collective Worship Policy

This is a Trust Policy– details specific to individual academies and their procedures are added by the academy in the *Appendices*. *(For a copy of the policy for a specific academy which includes the Appendices – see the individual academy website).*

March 2022
Date for Next Revision – March 2024

**Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (the Trust) and all its academies (the Academy / Academies) is committed to the flourishing of all, and the Trust's vision is:**

***'For every child, within our Trust, to experience an excellent education and to realise their God-given potential to flourish.'***

### **Rationale**

The Trust understands collective worship to be an essential component within an educational experience that enables all pupils to flourish. It provides an opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter and appreciate the relevance of faith in the world today. Collective worship involves pupils and staff coming together and participating in a daily gathering. In Community Schools in line with the 1988 Education Reform Act collective worship should be "wholly or broadly of a Christian character". Collective worship in our Church Academies is required to reflect its Anglican status as expressed in their trust deed, and so will be based on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. However, we aim to conduct our collective worship in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the academy.

Collective worship contributes significantly to the Christian ethos of the Trust. In doing so, it seeks to provide an inclusive, invitational and inspiring experience for all members of our academies by providing opportunities for each Academy to:

- Explore its Christian vision and underpinning values and virtues;
- Deepen a sense of community through sharing its common aims, values and morals;
- Consider current national and world events as they occur;
- Celebrate achievement and special times;
- Explore together the world in which we live;
- Develop a community spirit.

### **Aims for Collective Worship**

The aims and purpose of collective worship are based on the *Church of England Education Office's Inclusive Invitational Inspiring: A Statement of Entitlement and Expectation* (a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1), that it is:

Inclusive by:

- Ensuring it is accessible to pupils and adults of different faith backgrounds, those exploring their own beliefs about faith and those of no faith;
- Providing time for reflection so nurturing the awareness of life as a spiritual journey;
- Involving pupils in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship;
- Reflecting the cultural backgrounds of the local context.

Invitational by:

- Enabling all to be present whatever their faith or beliefs;
- Recognising that pupils and adults are free to engage with integrity;
- Providing optional invitations for prayer and space to reflect.

Inspiring by:

- Enabling pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we are here;
- Motivating pupils and adults into action and into the possibilities of thinking and behaving differently;
- Encouraging pupils to become courageous advocates for change.

For further details of an individual Academy's aims and purpose of collective worship – see *Appendix 2*.

### **Practicalities of Organisation**

Our Academies hold a daily act of collective worship.

For Academy specific details – see *Appendix 2*.

### **Content**

A plan of themes is produced annually reflecting the values an Academy has chosen.

Our Academies also consider and reflect on the festivals and special times of the Christian calendar.

For academy specific details – see *Appendix 2*.

### **Resources**

For details of resources individual Academies use – see *Appendix 2*.

### **Evaluation, Monitoring and Review**

It is the role of the Academy Governance Committee (AGC) to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. As part of this, pupil interviews are carried out / pupil evaluation forms are reviewed.

Any Academy specific details in relation to evaluation, monitoring and review are set out in *Appendix 2*.

### **Right of Withdrawal**

As our Academies are Church Academies, we expect all pupils to attend collective worship, and we discuss this with parents / carers at the time of admission. However, any parent / carer can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the academy will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the pupil during the period concerned. Parents / carers do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with current legislation. The Headteacher keeps a record of any pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship.

## Appendix 1



### Collective Worship in Church of England Schools

## Inclusive Invitational Inspiring

### Guidance Document

#### Introduction

Church of England schools are committed to offering high quality collective worship. They are places that recognise and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing the school's Christian vision. In practice this means that structure, planning, evaluation, participation, collaboration, and inspection of worship are all taken seriously by the school and by diocesan authorities.

This 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 to flourish and to 'live life in all its fullness' John 10:10.

In Church of England schools, collective worship is seen as more than a daily 'awe and wonder' moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.

*We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives...Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.<sup>1</sup>*

This form of encounter through worship should be truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality. This is an approach that seeks to meet the needs of all, wherever they may be on their journey of faith and belief.

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<sup>1</sup> The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. (The Church of England Education Office 2016) page 10



## Collective Worship and the Law

Collective worship in community schools is grounded in the historical past and enshrined in educational law to be *'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'*<sup>2</sup>. In Church schools the requirement instead to reflect the Anglican status of the school as expressed in its trust deed liberates those leading collective worship to build on the rich, lived diversity of Anglican tradition and identity. In the same way as worship in churches is aspirational, constantly evolving and being re-imagined there is an expectation of a continuous, dynamic reimagining of what collective worship means in the Church school.

## Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring

**Inclusive:** Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. In the Church school pupils, their families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our schools will come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. Pupils should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. Although part of a national legislative framework, collective worship in the Church school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

**Invitational:** Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should 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. The metaphor of 'warm fires and open doors'<sup>3</sup> captures this idea. The warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. There is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith. Importantly the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable. Pupils and adults should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer should always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies<sup>4</sup> used in worship should reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship, it should connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used should reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community.

<sup>2</sup> Education Reform Act 1988 section 7(1) and the corresponding section of the Education Act 1993

<sup>3</sup> Speech by David Thomson, Bishop of Huntingdon 2014 quoted in *The Fruits of the Spirit: A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education* (The Church of England Education Office 2015) page 13

<sup>4</sup> Where there are joint schools the liturgies should reflect this status

Care should be taken with the music and liturgy: the traditional and modern riches of Christian hymnody and music will be drawn upon, but schools should think about what is most appropriate, at a given time, for the spiritual life of their particular community.

**Inspiring:** Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in a Church school to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

There will always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools and so the Church of England recognises the right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils<sup>5</sup> who wish to exercise this option. This, and how to exercise this choice, should be explained fully in the school's collective worship policy and referenced on the school's website.

### **Aims and objectives**

The aspiration to provide collective worship that is Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring is underpinned by the following aims and objectives and will be monitored and quality assured through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools<sup>6</sup> (SIAMS)

Collective worship in a Church of England school will do the following:

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation; and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

<sup>5</sup> Under Section 55 of the Education and Inspections Act, it remains the case that only pupils in sixth form education or over the age of compulsory school age (Section 55. 9) may withdraw themselves from collective worship.

<sup>6</sup> The Church of England Education Office, *Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Evaluation Schedule* (The National Society 2018)



## **Provision**

The rhythm of daily worship allows pupils and adults to step away from the target-driven culture of much of education, creating a space for an encounter with faith in God. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on larger questions of meaning and purpose. Pupils and adults can expect that the school's collective worship practices will provide a shared set of symbols, signs, words and actions which give the community a language upon which it can draw, in times of joy and grief. Such an experience is key to fostering a sense of fellowship and cohesion within the school community. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, this time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community.

Throughout the year, Church school communities may meet to celebrate and mark certain seasons in the Church calendar, such as Lent and Advent. Other important events in the school year, such as the start and end of the academic year, may be marked by formal acts of collective worship. Pupils and adults will encounter the practice of regular prayer and worship as a normal part of the life of the school. These activities will help provide a rhythm and stillness as a pattern of community life.

Parents, pupils and adults can expect that worship in a Church school will follow a recognisable structure that will help focus worship on one idea. This helps to give organisation and clarity to the unfolding of that idea, as well as helping the leader to ensure that worship is age-appropriate and moves away from making it a performance art. This could take the form of a welcome or prayer followed by a consideration of a Bible passage or story that the group can then reflect on through discussion, prayer, silent reflection or music. It will be something that pupils and adults may want to share and discuss with others in school, in the community and at home.

## **Developing staff expertise and knowledge: Confidence through professionalism**

Parents, pupils and adults 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 and by those who are professional in their approach to working with pupils and adults from all faiths and none. Therefore, it should be a priority to build up the expertise of staff, pupils, clergy and other adults in facilitating collective worship in Church schools. To do this the school should ensure the following.

- Worship leaders, including clergy, should have access to regular training, primarily through local diocesan education teams.
- Pupil worship leaders should be supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship.
- Worship leaders, including clergy, should have access to high quality and current resources.
- The governing body should have robust systems in place to monitor the impact of worship effectively; this monitoring will include and meaningfully involve pupil voice. Those facilitating worship should have the opportunity to receive feedback and to hear the outcome of evaluation.
- Those from outside agencies and church groups invited into the school to facilitate

worship should be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and the school's vision. They should be supported and monitored as part of the school's systems for the evaluation of the impact of worship.

- There should be a named member of staff responsible for collective worship with responsibility for ensuring that appropriate policy and practice are in place and publicly available.

### **Collective Worship and Growing Faith<sup>7</sup>**

Church schools owe their existence to the vision of Joshua Watson and the founding of the National Society, and their trust deeds to the foresight of past church communities. The local church community, through its foundation and ex officio governors, are inheritors and guardians of the school's historic trust deed. This involves honouring tradition while re-imagining how this might look today. Today this has found new expression in the 'Growing Faith adventure'.

'Growing Faith' promotes a partnership between the three local communities of church, school and household to provide space to talk of faith & spiritual matters or ask challenging questions within and between these three communities.

Three principles exemplify this approach:

- Connected Communities: looking for meaningful community connections in the intersection between church, school and household.
- Encounters with God: encountering faith and belief by engaging in conversations about God as individuals and together.
- Imaginative practices: searching for 'a new way of being church' and creating new thinking and new doing in relation to children, young people and households.

This has been described as developing 'faith talk' in the 'Faith in the Nexus' report<sup>8</sup>. Specifically, the Church school is a place for 'faith talk' where Encounters with God may happen. The 'Growing Faith adventure' is not part of the SIAMS schedule but the local church should normally expect to be part of a church school partnership that encourages and supports the school in effectively developing the impact of and provision for worship. Families can also expect to be partners in collective worship: involved, informed and enabled to collaborate at home if they should wish.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/growing-faith>

<sup>8</sup> National Institute for Christian Research in Education, Christchurch Canterbury, *Faith in the Nexus*, (November 2020) [Faith In The Nexus \(nicer.org.uk\)](https://www.nicer.org.uk/)



## Appendix 2

**Name of Academy: William Law CE Primary School**

### **Academy specific details**

Collective Worship at William Law Church of England Primary School takes place daily in accordance with the provisions of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The content of all our acts of Collective Worship is in accordance with the Trust deed of this Church of England School.

Collective Worship is a shared experience that allows for a variety of responses, and provides an opportunity for those of any religious faith or none to focus and reflect on inspiring input and stimuli which allow the human spirit to respond with integrity. The school will provide opportunity to explore, reflect upon and respond to the mystery and meaning of the Christian faith.

#### **We believe that worship should be:**

- Inclusive. All can gain and contribute, no matter what their personal commitment or life-stance.
- Appropriate to children's age and aptitude.
- A learning experience.
- A special part of each day
- Helpful to participants understanding of, and identification with the school's ethos, values and aims; promoting a sense of community.
- Christian in nature but also allowing people of all faiths to be participants. At all times there must be respect for other Faiths and sensitivity to the children's background

### **Aims for Collective Worship**

In addition to the aims already stated, at William Law CE Primary School collective worship is at the heart of our life and work. We provide an opportunity for pupils and staff to worship in a Christian style, which is consistent with the traditional beliefs and practices of the Church of England.

### **Practicalities of Organisation**

The whole school including members of staff, meet together every day to take part in Collective Worship. Worship lasts approximately 20-25 minutes and is done in Key Stages or Departments, except for Friday.

At William Law CE Primary School, Worship takes a variety of forms over the duration of the week. This is as follows for school year 2021/2022.

Day	Time	Year Groups	Location	Leader
<b>Monday</b>	9.05 9.05	Years 1 and 2 Years 3-6	Activity Hall Main Hall	William Law Staff, Visiting members of the Clergy, supported by the music teacher
<b>Tuesday</b>	9.05 9.05	Years 1 and 2 Years 3-6	Activity Hall Main Hall	Music teacher and staff William Law Staff
<b>Wednesday</b>	9.05	All Years	Classroom based	William Law Staff
<b>Thursday</b>	9.05 9.05 2.30	Years 1 and 2 Years 3-6 EYFS	Activity Hall Main Hall Activity Hall	William Law Staff Music teacher and staff William Law Staff
<b>Friday</b>	9.05	Whole School	Main Hall	Class or Teacher led

There is a School Eucharist for KS2 once a year. Children will at least weekly say The Lord's Prayer, say The Grace and share The Peace with one another.

During the year all the children in Key Stage 2 are invited to attend a Eucharist service in St John's Church.

Year 5 and 6 have a Eucharist service in October and then at Easter. Year 3 and 4 are invited to a Eucharist service near the beginning of Lent. Year 6 attend a Leavers Eucharist in July.

Worship at William Law is a quiet, reflective time with an important opportunity for children to discuss and develop their understanding of key Christian beliefs. Over the course of a half term, we focus on a key value and each week there is a corresponding theme to allow the children to develop a strong understanding of how to demonstrate that Christian value. During the week, there are opportunities to share this theme on a whole school, departmental and classroom basis to offer opportunities for every individual to share and thrive. During Worship, we create differing atmospheres to offer opportunities to celebrate, reflect and participate.

On a Monday, during Collective Worship, the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Inclusion Manager, teaching staff and visiting members of local churches are invited to lead the session. On a Tuesday and Thursday in departmental assemblies they are led by teachers within the department and each week each Key Stage has a Singing Practise with the Music teacher. On a Friday, the assembly is led by a class, with every class having an opportunity to share their learning during the year.

## Content

The values we have chosen as an Academy are Thankfulness, Trust, Perseverance, Justice, Service and Truth and Truthfulness based on our Roots and Fruits scheme.

A daily record is kept of all acts of worship, recording the leader and the theme for the week.

We also hold collective worship that reflects the achievements and learning of the pupils. We encourage the pupils to participate in collective worship by showing their work to others and sharing issues that they have discussed in their classes. Collective worship offers an opportunity to acknowledge and reward pupils for their achievements both in and out of the Academy. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the Academy, which is that all pupils are valued and all achievements recognised.

## **Resources**

As a school, our collective worship is shaped around the Roots and Fruits scheme from Imaginor. This encompasses six themes for the academic year on a two yearly cycle. This offers children opportunities to expand their ideas of Christian Values whilst rooted in Biblical stories each week to support the link between everyday life and our Christian ethos.

[www.imaginer.co.uk](http://www.imaginer.co.uk)



#### **Appendix 4**

Each assembly is structured as follows:

Greeting to staff and children, Let the lord be with you.

The Worship often starts with our hymn, led by the Music teacher.

The leader of the assembly shares the content of the Worship. Each Monday this will be based on the Biblical story from the Roots and Fruits scheme.

During the main body of the assembly, there are opportunities for discussion, idea sharing and question and answer sessions.

To close the Worship, children are invited to pray.

Children are then invited to take part in the Grace and share the peace with one another.