

Collective Worship Policy for Forty Hill Primary School



Our Vision



Jesus said *"As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples."* John 13:34 -35

Following Jesus's example, we treat each other, our community, and God's amazing world with love, respect and compassion. We aspire to ignite curious minds, nurture a passion for learning and enable everyone to experience and share **faith**, **hope** and **service**.

Learning and living in Faith, Hope and Service

Intent

Collective worship is central to our identity as a Church of England School which is committed to the human flourishing of all. It is an integral part of the daily rhythm of school life and enables us to foster a sense of community through which we explore Christian teaching and the school's theologically rooted vision.

"As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples."

(John 13:34–35)

At Forty Hill we aim for worship to be welcoming, inclusive and inspiring: a safe place where both pupils and adults encounter faith and reflect in ways that honour their own beliefs while fostering respect for others. Drawing on the rich traditions of the Church of England we promote the virtues of faith, hope and service and nurture curious minds as we encourage children and adults to engage critically and thoughtfully with questions relating to them and their place in today's world. Through worship, children are invited to think and reflect as theologians, asking questions about what people believe; as philosophers, questioning how people think; and as social scientists, examining how people live their lives.

Following Jesus' example, we seek to create a community where love, respect, and compassion are lived out daily, and each person grows in their understanding of responsibility and stewardship towards God's amazing world. Worship nurtures spiritual development and challenges children to reflect upon virtues and values such as compassion and hope, prompting them into action at school, home and the wider world.

Collective worship is not simply an act of tradition, it is a practise that seeks to support children in learning how to navigate school life and an increasingly complex world. It strengthens our shared sense of belonging, celebrates diversity, recognises achievements, and supports children to grow into thoughtful, resilient, and compassionate individuals prepared to flourish in, and beyond, the life of Forty Hill School.

Introduction

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 will be 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.¹

¹ 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 is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather together as a whole school family. Collective worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school and reaffirms our Christian vision and associated values of Forty Hill School.

Aims

Worship is essential to the life of our school and plays an important part in the fulfilling of our role as a Church of England school. Through Collective Worship, the school aims to provide a caring and supportive environment for pupils and adults to:

- develop a knowledge of Christianity, its stories, traditions, festivals, teachings and to experience worship.
- Grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection

- help children to explore beliefs, and understand other religions, especially those represented in school, and to respect people holding those beliefs
- learn about the life of Jesus and experience the essential features of Anglican prayer, Worship and values
- develop children's feelings of awe, wonder, mystery, delight and joy in God's creation, including the natural world
- develop an understanding of the Trinity
- explore and explain with examples how we 'live out' our school vision, virtues and values
- become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and in the wider community
- consider the importance of prayer, including opportunities for short reflection and silence; a time to talk to God
- make appropriate use of music, both sacred and secular
- help children to respond to challenging experiences, to develop a moral sense, and to respond to moral issues
- provide the opportunity to celebrate achievements and special occasions

Legal requirements

Collective worship:

- Should be conducted in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school and Instrument of Government and be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- Unless the right of withdrawal has been exercised all pupils must take part each day in an act of collective worship (DfE circular 1/94 para. 51) and the Governing Body should ensure that all pupils each day engage in a distinctively Christian act of worship.

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents/carers is essential to help pupils flourish. 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, However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we hope that all pupils will participate in collective worship, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child will discuss this with the headteacher before making their decision. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw pupils from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.

Planning of worship

Collective worship is planned and delivered by the Senior Leadership Team alongside the incumbent of Jesus Church, Forty Hill, the Rev'd Chris Bolster. Rev'd Bolster shares this responsibility with Rev'd Mandy James who supported us during Jesus Church's interregnum, we are proud of this ecumenical link with the Baptist Church.

Whilst overviews for worship are in place we recognise the need for flexibility in order to respond to emerging events both locally and globally.

Worship follows the following format:

Gathering – Our community are welcomed with music and candles are lit on the holy table. We open worship with a familiar greeting.

Engaging – A reading, or activity are shared to engage everyone with the Christian message or teaching of the day.

Responding – Time for pupils to engage with teaching by asking and answering questions. Pupils and staff are invited to pray or reflect quietly particularly with regards to how what they have heard might impact, shape and influence their actions that day and moving forward. Sometimes an invitational challenge might be set.

Sending – We finish by briefly re-capping the message with a reminder for how this will affect their day, in learning and/or behaviour. We close by singing a song which appropriately supports the focus that day.

The daily Christian act of worship is central to our Christian ethos. Collective Worship takes place every morning for the whole school. It makes an important contribution to the spiritual flourishing of the whole school community. We are committed to providing a daily act of Christian worship which is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifies the principles of Christian hospitality.

Planning and resources

- The Bible, a sacred text for Christians and a source of authority for teaching.
- LDBS Collective Worship Planning
- SPCK Assemblies
- BBC Teach RE
- Identified prayers and traditional responses
- Observing the cycle of the Anglican year
- Opportunities for reflection and silence
- Secular stories and readings
- Pupils' contributions
- Music, dance and drama
- Visual aids and works of art
- **Visitors (Pathways, Pupil and Parents, NSPCC, Faith Leaders)**

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and our planning incorporates a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. These include: music, silence, symbolism, drama and the use of technology.

When planning acts of worship, we follow the Church of England guidance to ensure that worship is:

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 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.

Prayer

Prayer is an important aspect of school life and is *always* invitational. We have morning, lunchtime and home time prayers which punctuate the day. In addition to these we have a School prayer which was written by our School council and The Lord’s Prayer is used regularly. The person leading worship will prepare a prayer that relates specifically to their focus. They will either read it aloud, inviting those who are happy to, to say “Amen” or invite people to read it communally. Anyone who does not wish to pray is invited to use this time to reflect.

Pattern of Worship

Our Acts of Worship provide an opportunity for all children, staff and visitors, to take time to reflect on God’s Word, His love and importance in our life. Collective worship is inclusive and invitational. We encourage the children to be actively involved by asking questions to challenge their understanding as well as developing the children to be critical thinkers. We also support the children to use what they have heard and learnt during Collective Worship in their day-to-day lives.

Collective Worship takes place every day and the programme of worship for each week is as follows:

Monday’s worship is led by the Headteacher. Its focus is based upon our vision and virtues and how these are lived out through our values. We also use this session to introduce pupils to our *Musician of the Month* to ensure our children gain a wide range of knowledge and experience of different types of music and the significant contributors in Music history.

Information about each musician is provided with context about the culture and period in which they wrote their music. Over the course of the month we listen to a variety of pieces from that musician.

Tuesday's worship is led by our RE and Music Lead. Our regular format is followed alongside warming up and focusing on technical aspects of singing. There is always a clear connection between the songs chosen and our vision, virtues or a service we are preparing for. This naturally feeds into reflection and invitational prayer.

Wednesday's worship is led by Rev'd Bolster or Rev'd Mandy who plan their sessions together. They often choose to support looking at our virtues or values in focus in a biblical context and sometimes follow the Church of England liturgy or choose a theme/focus for the half term period.

Thursday's worship is more varied and will either be led by a Class, Pathways or a member of staff leading a focus session on a British Value or launching an Arts Trophy. Very occasionally there will be an in-Class Act of Worship which is supported by a resource or song and reflection provided by the Senior Leadership Team. Whole Class Acts of Worship take place first thing in the morning to facilitate parents being able to join us. Each Class is expected to include a reflection of their enquiry based RE unit.

Friday's worship provides the opportunity to celebrate the social, emotional and academic achievements of children across the school and reflect and share spiritual wow's too! Led by a member of Senior Leadership it is ably supported by House Captains who enjoy the chance to celebrate and motivate the school with regards to inter house competitions and often enjoy presenting certificates for our value in focus. Our cuddly bear, Attendance Alfred, makes a weekly appearance and enjoys spending the week in the Class with highest attendance marks that week.

In addition to weekly patterns of worship we attend services at Jesus Church to celebrate different festivals and mark important events within the liturgical calendar. Each Class is responsible for leading one of these as they deliver the readings, prayers and lead the singing. Parents, neighbours, family and friends are invited to join the children in their Worship on these occasions, and the church is usually full.

School Blessing Service – Held on the second Sunday after we return. Staff and parents invited to attend

Harvest – Led by Year 4 whose outreach project is working with the Foodbank

Remembrance- Led by Year 6

Christmas – Year 5

Epiphany – Year 1

Easter – Year 2

Pentecost – Year 3

Year 6 Leaver's Service where pupils are presented with a bible and special blessing for the future

End of Year – EYFS

Leading, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Leadership team are responsible for the planning and delivery of Acts of Worship and to support staff and pupils when they have responsibility for leading aspects of worship. It is important to monitor the quality of worship and evaluate its impact across the school community which we do in the following ways:

- Senior Leadership Meetings
- School council
- Pupil reflections after Church Services
- Pupil and staff surveys
- Bi-annual whole school appraisal
- Governor visit and reflections
- Vision parliament

This feedback plays an essential part in developing the spiritual growth of our school community. Feedback is also communicated to the Governing Body via the Newsletter and in person at meetings on an Ad hoc basis.

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

Visitors leading worship

It is a privilege to welcome visitors to school. It is equally important that anyone visiting to lead or participate in worship is aware of our school context and it's theologically rooted vision. Visitors are asked to read and comply with our School Visitors Guide. This document highlights core Safeguarding Policies and Health and Safety information. The content of any worship should be discussed and shared with a member of the Senior Leadership Team before being delivered to ascertain its suitability for the school community and to ensure that our shared format is adhered to. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

CPD and training

Parents, pupils and adults in school are entitled to be led in Christian worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a church school context. When available, and relevant, the Senior Leadership Team, linked Clergy and Governors are made aware of LDBS training. Any important information or areas for action and implementation are disseminated to staff via Staff Meetings.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Headteacher and ratified every *three years* by the Governing Body.

Date of validation.....October 2025.....

Signed.....

Chair of Governors

Date of review.....October 2027.....

Signed.....

Chair of Governors