

Ashford CE Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

Updated Policy: February 2024

Approved by FGB: 26 March 2024

To be reviewed: Spring term 2025

Signed: _____ P Wells _____

Chair of Governors

Collective Worship Policy

Our School Vision

We are a caring Christian community where everyone adopts an “I can” attitude; everyone feels valued, safe and loved by God. We celebrate our God-given individuality, achievements and talents and we aspire, with God’s help, to become the best that we can be. We believe that each one of us has the ability to achieve our highest potential, living and learning in the fullness of God.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

Philippians 4v13

Our school is a Church of England Voluntary Aided school and works in partnership with our two local parish churches, St Matthew’s and St Hilda’s along with other Christian churches and groups. We aim to reflect the values, traditions and beliefs of the Christian faith and to demonstrate a continuing educational and pastoral concern within the life of the school and community.

Each member of our school community knows they are individually valued, unique and special to God and is committed to working together in a Christian spirit of co-operation, courtesy, care and consideration.

Our community at this school is diverse and our Collective Worship aims to be inclusive and respectful of individual beliefs, as well as distinctively articulating Anglican beliefs and practices.

Meeting together as a school community to worship together is a central part of the life of the school, and all we are. As a Church of England Voluntary Aided School, our worship is essentially Christian, but conducted within an educational context in which inclusion of the whole community is a key focus.

Aims of Collective Worship

Through our collective worship we aim to give our children opportunities to:

- explore and share Christian values and beliefs and to appreciate and understand their significance for those who hold them
- see the importance and relevance of Bible teaching in our daily life
- consider the importance of prayer, meditation and silence

- think about the needs of others and to develop a sense of community, providing time to celebrate the example of members of the school and community
- reaffirm, interpret and put into practice the ethos and values of the school
- develop a sense of awe and wonder
- develop a caring attitude towards self and others
- come together as a school family

The Purpose of Collective Worship

Worship in an educational context seeks to serve three main purposes:

1. To provide a meeting point for the school community to focus on and reaffirm those common principles which are considered of extreme worth and importance. **Our school Christian values are: Friendship, Service, Trust, Thankfulness, Wisdom, Forgiveness, Endurance, Justice, Reverence, Koinonia, Peace, Humility, Compassion, Creation and Hope.** These are central to the Christian faith, as well as being common human values, and are taught through our half termly **iShare Learning** themes.
2. Collective Worship gives us opportunities to deepen our spiritual understanding. It provides us with opportunities for reflection on issues of supreme importance and worth. It allows children to approach the 'threshold of worship' and through quiet reflection, as well as lively celebration to develop an understanding of worship within the Christian community, to learn more of the Bible's teachings and to reflect and celebrate alongside people of other faiths.
3. It allows children and adults the opportunity to enter into worship, as well as the opportunity to be observers of that worship if they so wish.

As well as contributing to the spiritual development of pupils, collective worship also contributes to the following areas, which will be evident in our worship at Ashford CE:

Moral Development, providing opportunities to:

- reflect on matters concerning right and wrong
- hear and respond to situations where goodness and right are exemplified
- learn about Christian and other teachings on right and wrong

Social development, providing opportunities to:

- gather with others for a common purpose
- share times of joy and sadness with others

- learn the importance of responsible social behaviour

Cultural development, providing opportunities to:

- hear and respond to music and stories from a range of times, places and cultures
- reflect upon ideas concerning the concept of beauty. Particularly through the wide use of the arts
- appreciate the range of talents and gifts found within the school community and beyond

Intellectual development, providing opportunities to:

- develop their thinking through questioning and engagement
- have ideas concerning values confirmed or challenged
- consider the power of words and other forms of communication

We see worship as a central part of school life and worship together daily, giving ourselves time to reflect, respond and revere.

Meeting Our Statutory Obligations

Collective worship takes place on a daily basis as a statutory requirement, either as a whole school, key stage, year group or class worship as appropriate. They are wholly of a Christian character but can include discussions / comparisons to world faiths and other religious festivals.

At the beginning of a person's relationship with the school, for example on a tour of the school for a new child or at an interview for a new member of staff, it is explained that by becoming part of a faith community, there is an agreement to embrace and accept our ethos by taking part in RE lessons and acts of worship. However, Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship, although this would be unusual given the religious character of the school. If children are withdrawn the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child. Ashford Church of England School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities

Teachers also have the right to withdraw from collective worship, although this again would be unusual given the religious character of the school they have chosen to work in.

Our Programme of Collective Worship

Our worship at Ashford CE includes:

- **Worship led by Clergy.** At least once a week, clergy from our parish churches, St Matthew's and St Hilda's, lead collective worship.
- **Class Worship.** Each class worships together at least once a week where there are more opportunities for personal reflection.
- **Hymns of Worship.** Once a week the children have Key Stage singing worship where they learn new hymns and faith songs.
- **Whole School Worship.** Once a week the whole school comes together for worship, usually led by the Headteacher, or senior leader, often centred around our iShare Learning theme.
- **Celebration Worship.** During this worship, the achievements of the children that have been entered into the Celebration Book are shared. Class attendance is acknowledged. Staff achievement is also acknowledged when appropriate.
- **Services in St Hilda's and St Matthews.** During the year we hold a range of services in our parish churches. Some are led by the children and others by the clergy. These may include Harvest, Christmas and Leavers' services. Parents and Governors are invited to join us.
- **Daily Prayer in class.** Each class has a prayer at the end of the school day. These may be led by a pupil or the class teacher.
- **Prayer Tree.** All the children are encouraged to stop and write a prayer for the school prayer tree. These are periodically included in Collective Worship.
- **Worship led by other Christian ministers and organisations.** From time to time, we also welcome other ministers, children/youth leaders or Christian organisations to lead the school in worship.

Content of Collective Worship

Although flexible, the format of Collective Worship should usually include:

- the children coming in and going out to music and images
- the lighting of a candle to set the atmosphere and indicate a special time for the children to reflect and think and remember that Jesus is the light of the world. (Any information that needs to be given to the children should take place either at the end or the beginning of Collective Worship when the candle is not lit.)
- a focus on Bible teaching or Bible stories
- a time for reflection on their own or others' experiences or on the theme of the worship, for children to apply the teaching of the worship to their own lives (sometimes still and quiet)
- opportunities to learn more about the world in which they live, including other communities, cultures and faiths

- prayer (this can be spontaneous, read out, responsive or something written by a child)
- singing a song of praise, sometimes with actions
- when possible, children being involved in the worship through discussion, demonstrations, quizzes, games or drama
- children can also be given a time of reflection in the classroom after worship

Please also see the Expectations for Collective Worship document, which gives guidance to all those who are leading worship at Ashford CE.

Planning Worship

The Headteacher, SLT and RE Leader share responsibility for the planning, implementation and monitoring of collective worship. The RE Leader is responsible for general dissemination of information, 'in-house discussion' and guiding teaching and SLT staff on planning and leading worship.

All collective worship is planned around the half termly iShare Learning Themes, which are planned for the year ahead. Each theme is centred around a Bible verse and is used to teach a number of school values. The worship for the year is also related, where possible, to notable dates in the calendar, and the LDBS Worship Calendar.

A rota is circulated each term, showing who is leading worship each day during the term. Each worship is planned by the person leading to ensure a variety of delivery and teaching styles. A standard worship planning format is used by all staff, and these plans are held centrally in the Headteacher's office for easy reference.

On occasion, the worship programme may be changed to reflect and respond to current affairs. Every effort is made to ensure worship is enjoyable and fun for all and actively involves the children where appropriate.

We aim to work with our parish priests to develop our worship and integrate the worship they provide on a weekly basis into the wider RE curriculum within the school. Our parish churches describe themselves as follows:

- St Matthew's - "We stand within the Catholic tradition of the Church of England, seeking to respond faithfully to the Gospel message in our own age". St Matthew's Church is now part of the Parish of St Mary the Virgin Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford. The school foundation relates to St Matthew, Ashford.
- St Hilda's - "St Hilda's Parish Church aims to be a Christ-centred community".

We recognise the Christian experience within our local community and celebrate both our local churches and the experience they bring to school worship. We also embrace a desire to ensure that our school worship is reflective of the school's wider community.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Worship

The Senior Leadership Team, RE Leader and governors monitor collective worship to ensure that those who regularly lead it are observed at least once a year.

A brief evaluation of each worship is written by the worship leader themselves and for whole school worship, an evaluation is also written by Year 6 pupils. We also invite informal feedback on worship from staff, parents and other leaders of worship. This is to ensure we continuously strive to develop and improve on planning and delivery to ensure the children have a deeper understanding of Christian values and faith.

The governors are given feedback on the effectiveness of Collective Worship in school regularly and visit collective worship in school themselves where possible.

All our collective worship and assemblies are underpinned by the principles of inclusion, equal opportunities and race equality.