



St Paul's CofE (VC) Junior School

Collective Worship Policy

## ***Promoting, Valuing and Celebrating Achievement in a Christian Setting***

Last updated: September 2025

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do;

*'I am the Good Shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.'* John 10:14

### **Policy Statement**

Collective Worship is a statutory requirement for all schools in England and Wales. At St Paul's C of E Junior School, Collective Worship is much more than this. It is a time where the school family meets together, learns together, reflects together, a time within which children and staff are given a time to be still, to engage and reflect in a safe environment. It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

At St Paul's C of E Junior School, worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

Through Collective Worship, pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered 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 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 other faiths) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

### **Legal Requirements**

Collective Worship is a statutory requirement for all schools in England and Wales. This daily active of worship can take place at anytime in the school day and in any groupings. As a Church of England school, worship must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.' Worship in St Paul's is distinctly Christian and reflects Anglican traditions.

The governing body of the school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluation the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher and Collective Worship Leader.

Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

“To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God”. William Temple (1881-1894)

### **The right of withdrawal**

At St Paul’s C of E VC Junior School, there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As Collective Worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

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

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. **There is an expectation that parents 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 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 will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their faith or denomination, the governors 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 asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

*(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)*

### **Aims of Collective Worship**

At St Paul’s, 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.

- To provide opportunities for the whole school to be together, celebrate, give thanks and praise to God.
- To develop children’s spiritual understanding.
- To develop children’s understanding of the Christian faith.
- To provide experiences for all children and understanding of different faiths and cultures.
- To foster the school’s Christian vision and ethos.
- To share and experience cultural differences.
- To encourage a sense of personal, social and moral responsibility.
- To build a sense of group identity.

- To involve children of different (or no) religious belief in celebrating their personal worth.
- To allow children to reflect, express, affirm or challenge commonly accepted personal views and social values.
- To provide time for stillness, quiet and reflection.
- To evoke within the children senses and feelings.
- To evoke a sense of awe and wonder.
- To relate spiritual and moral values to the daily of the school.
- To celebrate the life of the Church.

### **Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation**

This policy was developed in consultation with the Headteacher and Governing Body at St Paul's C of E VC Junior School. It has been written considering the history of the school and existing community in which the school serves and in response to publications from the Church of England. We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and RSE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development.
- Care, guidance and support.
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community.

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and/or on the school website.

### **Guiding Principles**

Collective Worship in St Paul's C of E VC Junior School aims to;

- Remain a central focus for the daily life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Play a central role in unpacking and exploring the Christian vision of the school so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an invitational space allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none 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.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.

- Offer opportunities to all children 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 will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independently roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

## **How Collective Worship is organised**

### **Leadership**

- The headteacher, staff and clergy lead daily worship on a rota with increasing opportunity for children to play an active role in person and sometimes through virtual means.
- Visitors leading worship are expected to follow and adhere to the wholly Christian nature that Collective Worship follows at St Paul's.

### **Planning**

- The Collective Worship leader will arrange a rota of people to lead worship throughout the half term.
- There is a focus for each Collective Worship that is linked to our 7 school values. Each value in term is maintained for a half term.
- Multi-cultural stories and resources are used when relevant.
- Old and New Testament stories are included and seasonal worship such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.
- Recognition of world events are held with Collective Worship often reflecting the importance of these and encouraging children to recognise the importance of them to themselves.
- There is a weekly opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our children within the life of the school or in the wider world and how they are promoting our school Christian Values.
- Music is selected for the children to enter and leave worship nurturing a period of reflection and stillness. We celebrate in music and song.
- A candle is lit to mark the beginning of Worship, encouraging children to begin their reflective time. This is helpful during In Class Worships and where the Hall is used for other activities so that children can distinguish the difference. It also supports children as it is a key focal point.
- Teachers and children leading worship will follow the Gather, Engage, Respond and Send model (GERS) and provide opportunity for children to develop their spiritual awareness and understanding.
- Questions, or meanings and purposes, concerning human nature are explored through story of reference to the lives of individuals who lives have been significant.
- Teachers encourage children to reflect on the theme of the worship when in class using discussion.
- Children are encouraged to take an active part in Worships by responding to questions, offering solutions to problems by taking part in role play situations or by writing and reading prayers. These can be used in worship with the whole school or in class worship stored in the Prayer Well or in Reflective areas in classrooms.

## Organisation

- There is a daily Act of Collective Worship which takes place usually in the morning but some afternoons. The children will meet as a whole school altogether or in year or class groups, more often in the Hall but sometimes virtually. Worship themes are linked to the promotion of our school Christian vision, Christian values, religious festivals, key events and celebrations.
- All children and staff attend school worship. *Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from worship and the Headteacher will meet with parents to discuss their wishes.*
- A reflective atmosphere is created before, during and after Worship through the use of candles, music, stillness, artefacts, signs and symbols. Each worship begins with a lighting of a candle (three in Hall) with use of a liturgical lead phrase and a liturgical response from all members. This upholds and enforces the Trinitarian nature of God both through the wording of the response and the use of three candles in the Hall to represent each part of the trinity.
- Each class has a reflective area in their classrooms that where able, children use as a focal point, prayer station or for a moment of stillness and quiet. All reflective areas are expected to have the school's Christian vision (supported by a knitted shepherd and sheep), the Christian values, a Bible, school prayer, candle and cross. This is similar to the set up in the Hall with the addition of an altar table and cloth that depicts the school's Christian values.
- The use of the church liturgical colours mark the seasons of the Church Year for a further focal point for the children and staff. Further support of the understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God is reflected by a single image of the trinity which is also given as a badge to Collective Worship Ambassadors, and image to new children and for new staff members.
- The Lord's Prayer is used during Monday Worship. The School's own prayer based upon the school's Christian values is used weekly in Friday Celebration Worships.

## Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Focus/Style	Whole School Virtual Worship lead by Headteacher  Hall at the beginning of each whole term	Singing Worship	Clergy Worship/Op en the Book team	Class led Worship  Values Worship in class	Whole School Celebration Worship  Value Champion Celebration Worship

## Monitoring and Impact

Evaluation of worship is carried out by the Collective Worship Ambassadors, staff and Foundation Governors through: -

- Checking that practice matches aims and objectives
- Observation of children's attentiveness and level of interest
- Classroom feedback from pupils, both written and verbal.
- Use of pupil voice through use of the Rochester snowflake tool whereby actions are acted upon by the Collective Worship Lead, Headteacher, Clergy and children.
- Comments from parents, visitor and governors.
- The extent of the influence upon pupils' attitudes and behaviour throughout the school day and beyond.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- The governing body: to promote the school's Christian Vision within and outside of the school. Monitoring plans and liaising with the subject lead.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team: to promote the school's Christian Vision within the school. Providing support to members of staff and carry out monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship.
- Clergy and church partners: Reverend Jonathan Hunter-Dunn and Reverend Graham Dart, support our school through leading Collective Worship on a rota. They will in turn lead a Worship once a week. They support in the planning of Worship and Reverend Jonathan plays a key part in our annual services held in the Church.
- Subject lead: They will provide an overview of Worship per half term accessible by all. They will liaise with clergy to produce a timetable of services and weekly clergy worships. Support and guidance will be offered to all members of staff for leading class worships. The subject lead will work with Collective Worship Ambassadors to plan, monitor and evaluate.
- Teaching and support staff: Facilitate Collective Worship on a daily basis, whether attending with their class in the Hall, virtually via TEAMS or leading separate in class worships. Use the planning provided but feel able to adapt to suit their class needs. Encourage children to take on and live out our Christian Vision and promote our 7 Christian values.
- Pupils: To take on Christian Vision and live it out alongside our 7 values. To feedback to Collective Worship Ambassadors and members of staff to evaluate and improve our Collective Worship provision.
- Parents and carers: To support our Christian Vision and support their children to live out our 7 Christian values.
- Visitors: Respect and adhere to the guidelines in this policy, particularly about leading Collective Worship and adhering to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The document, guidance for visitors leading Collective Worship is a useful resource.

### **Staff development and training**

We ensure that all staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. The Collective Worship lead disseminates information to teaching staff and is available for support and questions.

### **Disseminating the policy**

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on the school website.

**Other Useful Documents:** (can be found on the diocesan website)

- Guidance for visitors leading Collective Worship, including a code of conduct
- Example Visitors Leaflet about Collective Worship
- Collective Worship Planning Proformas
- Evaluation and Monitoring – Ideas and Systems
- Suggested Resources for Collective Worship
- Spirituality – What is it?

**We wish to emphasise the importance of Collective Worship within St. Paul's C of E (VC) Junior School. It is distinctively Christian and makes a significant contribution to the life and wellbeing of the school.**

Date of last review: September 2025 (Caroline Owen and Kelly Symms)