



Woodchester Endowed Church of England (Aided) Primary School

‘Love, Learn and Flourish Together’

Our church school community seeks to inspire children and adults to love, learn and flourish together so we may become everything God has created us to be.

Collective Worship Policy

November 2024

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Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many’ (1 Corinthians 12; 14-16)

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Version	Date	Reason for change
2.0	11/10/24	Policy updated to reflect change in worship timetable as a result of new headteacher.

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Table of Contents

Our Vision and Rationale	3
Legal Framework	3
School Statement on Collective Worship.....	3
Aims and Guiding Principles	4
Invitational, inspirational and inclusive.....	5
Organisation and Planning	5
Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation	7
Roles and Responsibilities	7
Staff Development and Training.....	8
The Right of Withdrawal from Collective Worship	8
Development and Sharing of the Policy	8

Our Vision and Rationale

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School community seeks to inspire children and adults to **‘Love, Learn and Flourish Together’** so that we may become everything God has created us to be.

‘Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many’ (1 Corinthians 12; 14-16)

As a Church of England school, our Christian vision is central to all we do. Our school community seeks to inspire children and adults to love, learn and flourish together so we may become everything God has created us to be. Our Christian vision is rooted in Paul’s letter to the people of Corinth and in our desire to nurture the whole community, flourishing both now and in the future. Paul reminds them that they should live good lives and that their community will be stronger and make a bigger difference if everyone works together to make the most of their individual talents and skills. Our school vision recognises that we are unique individuals, loved by God, and we aim to develop all children and adults to their full potential through a wide variety of opportunities and experiences.

Legal Framework

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools 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. In other words, the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School should be distinctly Christian and reflect 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 evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the Headteacher.

School Statement on Collective Worship

In Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School, worship is central to the life of school and is an important platform for exploring the school’s vision.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many’ (1 Corinthians 12; 14-16)

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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 worship focused on our Christian values, pupils and adults are encouraged to grow spiritually and to work together to be the best that they can be and to make a difference.

For Christians in Church, worship 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.

However, in Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School, the purpose of collective worship will be to lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish. It is a place where all can flourish spiritually.

"Worship in (CofE) schools promotes theological and Religious Literacy and liberates participants to an imagining of a different order of justice, mercy and hope"¹

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 faiths²) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.³ Collective Worship in our school is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

Aims and Guiding Principles

This school follows the guiding principles highlighted in the document: Collective Worship in Church of England Schools Inclusive Invitational Inspiring Guidance Document, May 2021.

Collective worship in Woodchester Endowed Church of England School aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults' in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.

¹ CEE Vision statement "Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good" Autumn 2016

² 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.

³ "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)

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- 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 contributing to the communal journey.
- 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.
- Provide an opportunity to experience the Eucharist through an agreed service or experience (agreed with the local incumbent and the Diocese of Gloucester)
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci 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 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 independent 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.

Invitational, inspirational and inclusive

We are privileged to welcome children to our school from different faiths and none and from different cultures and lifestyles. Our collective worship is open to all, providing an opportunity to share in an experience which is emotional, reflective and invites the community to explore life through the lens of our vision and values. Pupils and adults are invited to engage in worship without compulsions and in a way that never compromises their integrity or dignity.

Pupils and adults who attend an act of collective worship are invited to join in with praying and singing with the option for quiet reflection if they prefer. We aim for our worship to be creative, active and inspirational by giving our pupils opportunities to listen to and act our stories, to listen to music and sing, pray and have time to reflect.

Each worship either allows children to consider bible stories in relation to the value, shows how other faiths may also have the same value or how the value exists in the modern day. Children are asked to think about how their lives will be better as a result of our values.

Collective worship is inclusive in our school as our children and adults are welcome. Children who require extra support are able to sit with trusted adults, wear headphones or bring any other support mechanisms that are required.

Organisation and Planning

Leadership

- Daily Collective Worship is led by the Headteacher, staff, children, visiting clergy, members of the church community, the Open the Book team.
- The local vicar supports and lead collective worship in partnership with the school on a regular basis, including additional services in the church throughout the church's year
- The local vicar supports leaders of collective worship to develop their understanding of Christian theology, the teachings of the Bible and develop a deeper understanding of Anglican traditions and liturgy

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- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that visitors are given appropriate background information to help them prepare worship. This will include the nature of collective worship in school; the theme of the proposed worship, i.e. the Christian value in focus and any other information relating to subject matter; the age range of the pupils; the length of the collective worship; the resources available for use and an understanding that they are not there to proselytise. Any visitors who are leading worship are given guidance by the Headteacher.

Planning

A termly worship plan is collated by the Headteacher and shared with all staff and is based on the Christian values of the school – Generosity, Friendship, Forgiveness, Trust, Hope and Courage. The Year 6 House Captains and Vice House Captains plan and write a prayer each Friday based on the termly value that they deliver. Once each term, they also run a house worship with the rest of their house.

Collective Worship	Worship Leaders
Monday – Open the Book/Spirituality	Open the Book Team and Mrs Holmes (SENCO)
Tuesday – Values	Mrs Loomes (Headteacher)
Wednesday – Values led by Church Community	Reverend Francis or Mr Harris
Thursday – Values (iSing Pop)	Class Teachers
Friday – Values Celebration Worship	Mrs Loomes/Teachers

Pupils will be encouraged, when appropriate, to help to plan and/or lead worship. This may take a variety of form, including being encouraged to ask and answer questions; act or mime a story; reading poems, prayers and stories; exploring artwork or leading the music/singing or reading of the biblical text. Children are encouraged to articulate their thoughts and feelings within a Christian framework.

The children are introduced to Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a symbolic framework which can begin to integrate experience. The children take part in Collective Worship that covers the following Christian festivals: Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. We introduce our children to the worship of the Christian community around them and to participate on occasions in worship at the local Church. Our children need to feel “at home” in the church; to discover it as an interesting place to be and to find they have a significant part to play in worship.

We attend the Parish Church for some of our Services during the year. All experiences, events and festivals can be used as opportunities for spontaneous or prepared celebrations. The teaching of Jesus is full of everyday happenings and his appeal is in his ability to relate to people’s ordinary experiences. Children can understand what they can relate to their own lives.

Our School Christian Vision and our Values underpin our approach to life within and outside school. These are identified and expressed and celebrated through our collective worship in lots of ways, including Bible stories, art, music and learning from the example of others. Worship is a carefully planned rotation focusing on Christian values with opportunities to revisit values through iSingPop workshops.

Collective worship at Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School reflects the traditions of the Church of England and develops learners’ understanding of Anglican traditions and practice. Careful consideration is given to the content, approach and structure of worship. Most worship will typically contain four elements: welcome, learning, reflecting, responding. During the week there will be opportunities for celebration, including marking success as well as celebrating the life of the wider community. Music and song will often be used as a focus for praise and worship and to support opportunities for reflection. We work with our vicar and church community to plan and deliver acts of worship that are invitational, reflective and engaging. There is plenty of flexibility in the provision of collective worship to enable all pupils to benefit without compromising their beliefs.

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We enable our pupils to:

- Engage in an act of community.
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Be still and reflect, and grow spiritually through prayer.
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events.
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness.
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Jesus.
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes.
- Share each other's joys and challenges.
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar. (Taken from the Church of England website)

We use a range of materials and resources to plan the worship at our school (see appendix).

Worship is central to the life and purposes of our school and reflects the Christian understanding of God as Trinity. This includes the belief in god, the source of all being and life. Belief in Jesus who reveals God's love by his life, death and resurrection, and belief in the Holy Spirit, who makes the presence of Jesus known in the world. Prayer and time to reflect are part of each school day and pupils are invited to pray in a variety of creative ways. Pupils and adults are given the opportunity to reflect on the puzzling questions that life poses and to respond to the wonder and mystery of the world around us. We provide opportunities for pupils and adults to foster a concern for others within the school community and wider world and encourage respect and understanding of others religious beliefs and practices.

Organisation

The children and adults meet together daily each morning for 20 minutes for collective worship in the school hall as a whole school. Sometimes worship takes place in class groups or as a Key Stage or in Houses (Merrett/Egypt/Rooksmoor/Griffin). We consider different settings and places for worship (whether in classrooms, the local church, the school hall or an outside space) and how the worship spaces are made special. It is important that an appropriate atmosphere is created and this can be done in a variety of means, e.g. the atmosphere for worship is created by using liturgical colour of the seasons of the Church Year; Christian signs and symbols; candles; music; ritual and liturgical responses. Our beautiful outside space may also be used.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

Worship and its impact are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis by the Headteacher and members of the Governing Body. The views and experiences of staff and children are also sought. Visitors are also warmly invited to evaluate their experience of collective worship in school. This information is then used to inform future planning and developments. Participants may be asked to reflect on how the worship created a sense of special time and place; the balance of the four elements of worship; opportunities to focus on matters of worth to individuals, the school and local community or the wider world; a sense of occasion that allowed for an encounter with God and how particular acts of worship have made an impact on school life and practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors, particularly members of the Ethos Committee, have responsibility for worship in consultation with the Headteacher. There is an expectation that staff will be fully involved in worship in this school and will attend acts of collective worship with pupils.

The Headteachers is responsible for co ordinating collective worship, maintaining clear forward plans and evaluating the impact of worship on the life of the community. Other stakeholders, including children and governors, also contribute to this evaluation. In planning worship, the Headteacher will consider how worship takes account of the church year, the Bible as a source book of inspiration and learning and the Church of England's commitment to ecumenism and dialogue with other faiths. They will also consider the range and variety of materials used, including

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different leaders; visitors; outside groups; websites; artefacts; stories; artwork; music; film clips and focal points, e.g. a picture or candle.

Pupils understand their role within the school community from the start of their journey at Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School. The youngest pupils are welcomed and invited to join in collective worship from the time they start school and very quickly understand what is expected of them.

Parents and carers are invited to collective worship during the school year in school and at the local church and can access the collective worship policy on the school website. They are informed on induction that collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school.

Visitors are invited to join in collective worship when in school and given clear guidance if they are to take Collective Worship.

Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. Additionally, support and guidance are provided for visitors and the clergy who lead collective worship. We take advantage of the training opportunities offered by the Diocese. This includes attendance at Illuminate sessions and through our RE Hub ensuring that staff are kept up to date with key national and local church developments.

The Right of Withdrawal from 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.

In Woodchester Endowed there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non- religious world view.

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 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 particular faith or denomination, the governors and Headteacher 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.)

Development and Sharing of 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 our school website.

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This policy was developed as a model policy by the Diocese of Gloucester. The Headteacher and R.E. Subject Lead amended the policy taking into consideration the previous worship policy, the guidance document from Gloucester Diocese, information from the Church of England website and guidance published by Guildford Diocesan Board of Education.

Links to other policies and documentation

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Diocesan Collective Worship Guidance Document.

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 PSHE
- 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 on the school website.

Appendix 1

Resources for Worship

Worship cloths	Imaginor resources	Wild Lent
ISingPop Classroom Worship	SPCK Assemblies website	Open the Book
Pictures News Collective Worship	Archbishop of York Trust resources	
Roots and Fruits	Spinnaker Assembly Resources	
Explore series	Wild Advent – Discovering God through Creation	

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