



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Jesus said, 'I am the Good Shepherd... I know my sheep and my sheep know me.' John 10.14

Our school vision

We are inspired to be a vibrant, joyful community in which we know and love one another, leading together and growing together by:

- Appreciating everyone and everything around us
- Making one another feel safe
- Sharing, so no one feels left out
- Living well together in love
- Moving forward together in hope

Our vision for collective worship

Our school community is Christian in its foundation and ethos, but it was founded to serve the whole community and is open to all. All are welcome to work here, as part of the paid staff team or as volunteers, and all children are welcome to learn and to grow as people with us. As a Christian community prayer and worship are at the heart of our common life. Our school vision is inspired by Christian faith and by the example of love modelled by Jesus. We believe that a daily act of collective worship is both an expression of our vision and a means to support us in our daily work to make that vision a reality. However, we also recognise that as an open and inclusive community we can never exert any pressure on anyone to take part in anything with which they are uncomfortable or which is contrary to their own faith or world view. This policy describes the place of collective worship in our community life and the invitation the school makes to everyone to share in that experience, whilst respecting the rights of anyone within the community not to participate.

Introduction

- Collective worship is central to the life of Bayford Church of England (VC) Primary School and Nursery.
- Worship offers the children, staff, parents, governors, and others in our wider school community an opportunity to reflect on values and issues in the context of our Christian ethos.
- Collective worship reflects our vision statement and core values, and shapes our approach to others and to everything we do in school.
- Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community, whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive, and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.
- Our school is a community which is shaped by the Christian ethos expressed in our Trust Deed and we therefore celebrate religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity and encourage dialogue and understanding.

- We believe that collective worship contributes to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of our pupils, and of all who are members of our school community, and that worship is intrinsically educational in the fullest sense of the word.
- As worship is important and foundational, everyone in our school community is encouraged to behave appropriately, listening, reflecting, learning, and participating as actively as they feel comfortable.
- Our intention is that collective worship will be both inspirational and challenging, helping us all to make our core values come alive and find expression in acts of charity and love.

Aims and objectives

Collective worship in our school provides the pupils, staff, and our wider school community with the opportunity to:

- worship God;
- experience a variety of styles of worship;
- celebrate:
 - Christian festivals
 - our school values
 - achievements
- grow in understanding of, and participation in prayer;
- develop a reflective approach to life and reflect on Christian values;
- develop as a community based on Christian values;
- experience the reality that Christianity is a diverse, multi-cultural, world faith;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading, presentation, and evaluation of worship;
- feel safe and affirmed.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

At times our collective worship will reflect aspects of the curriculum and in particular will aim to:

- nurture spiritual growth;
- consider moral and topical issues in a Christian context;
- enhance social understanding;
- explore beliefs drawn from the faith and cultural heritage of all members of both our school community and the wider community in which we live.

The pattern of collective worship in our school

- Collective worship takes place in our school every day.
- Worship may take place in the school hall, or occasionally in classrooms, in the parish church, or in other external venues.
- Our collective worship follows the seasons of the Church's calendar (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter) and marks significant festivals and other special days (including Harvest, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, and Pentecost).
- Whenever worship takes place it is planned to promote thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

Leading worship

- Worship has a variety of leaders from both within school and from the local Church community, including Anglican and other Christian traditions.
- Children are given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year.
- Visitors are welcome to lead collective worship from time to time and are given guidance on our worship policy.
- Leaders from other faiths within the area help us to increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect, and raise the esteem of any pupils who belong to these faiths.

Planning acts of collective worship

- Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience.
- Leaders, including pupils and local clergy, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme, and the ages, aptitudes, and backgrounds of the pupils.
- Throughout their time at our school pupils will encounter a wide variety of activities in the context of worship such as formal and free prayer, storytelling, dance, drama, silence, and song.
- Our collective worship will regularly include Biblical material and focus on Jesus and the way in which others have understood him to be God-with-us and responded to that faith.
- Our prayer is always introduced with a form of words which invites, but does not require, participation.
- Our prayer is generally expressed in terms of a Trinitarian understanding of God and within the traditions of the Church of England, including, when appropriate, forms of prayer which would be used regularly in the parish church.

- Staff and pupils who prefer not to participate in prayer are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the themes and values explored within our collective worship.
- Our collective worship is regularly reviewed through observations, discussions with participants, and personal reflection. The planning of future acts of collective worship will always take account of the views expressed.
- Our review and planning will consider the time, location, atmosphere and environment in which worship takes place as well as the content of worship.

Right of withdrawal

Collective worship in line with the school's Trust Deed must be provided by law for every child, every day. However, the law also allows parents the right to withdraw their children from all or any act of collective worship without having to explain or give any reason.

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. However, we fully recognise the right of withdrawal and we will always make appropriate arrangements for any pupil who is not attending collective worship.

We also recognise the right of members of staff to withdraw from collective worship.

A parent who is concerned about collective worship or who wishes to exercise the right to withdraw their child from it, should contact the Headteacher, who will always be willing to meet with parents and discuss their concerns and wishes.

Monitoring and review of this policy

- The governing body has appointed one of its members to have particular responsibility for collective worship.
- The Rev Iain Lane will liaise with the Headteacher and others in the school, including pupils, who have responsibility for planning and leading worship, before making an annual report on collective worship to the full governing body.
- This policy statement will be fully reviewed every two years.

Date of implementation: September 2023

Date for review: September 2025