



# **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY**

# **Collective Worship Policy for St Mary's C.E. School**

**Approved by the Governing Body:**

**September 2023**

**Date of next review:**

**September 2026**

# Collective Worship Policy

## Our school context

Families who send their children to St Mary's are from a wide range of faith backgrounds and ethnicities. Some children are from practicing Christian families who may attend St Mary's church, other Anglican churches or Christian denominations. There are children attending St Mary's who have other faiths and children who have a non-religious background. We recognise that in inviting our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times. We **nurture** and support pupils, staff and families to have the opportunity, to grow spiritually through experiences of stillness, reflection, worship and prayer.

## Principles

Our school has a Church of England foundation and works in partnership with St. Mary's Church, Twickenham and other Christian churches and groups. We aim to reflect the Anglican traditions and beliefs of the Christian Church and to demonstrate a continuing educational and pastoral concern within the life of the school and community.

Members of our school community are committed to working together in a Christian spirit of co-operation, courtesy, consideration and compassion.

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

Worships are linked to our vision of **growing and learning together to be our best, inspired by Jesus' love**. We encourage children to demonstrate '**True love shows itself in action**' and we celebrate those children who do so.

Our worships and day-to-day school life are under pinned by our shared **school values of Thankfulness, Friendship, Forgiveness, Endurance, Service and Wisdom**. We develop our understanding of these values through the reading and exploration of our chosen linked Bible stories:

- **Thankfulness:** The Samaritan Leper, Luke 17 V11-19
- **Friendship:** Ruth and Naomi, Ruth 1 V1-21
- **Forgiveness:** The Prodigal Son, Luke 15 V11-32
- **Endurance:** The temptation of Jesus, Matthew 4 V1-11
- **Service:** The Good Samaritan, Luke 10 V25-37
- **Wisdom:** The Wiseman, Matthew 7 V24-27

## Format for Worship

Collective Worship at St. Mary's may follow one of these formats:

### Class Worship

Class worships follow a shared theme across the school. They give children the opportunity to explore their own faith and beliefs whilst respecting that of others in a smaller setting. Children are given the opportunity for reflection, prayer and to sing a hymn. They are encouraged to participate and share ideas. We value their input and record examples of pupil voice in our class worship logs. Children can nominate and vote peers for our '**True love shows itself in action**' award.

### Hymns of Praise (HOP)

During hymns of praise, children are given the opportunity to learn and practise hymns, explore the messages, meaning of words and **school values** within the hymns. HOP includes time for

reflection and prayer.

### Celebration Worship

This worship is an opportunity to celebrate our vision of compassion and excellence demonstrated throughout the school. We celebrate the achievements of pupils through the sharing of **excellence** shown in work, and in the **actions** of children who have demonstrated our **school values**. We also announce and celebrate **excellence** shown by each site's star of the week. We conclude our worship with a child led prayer and a hymn. Each week, children, staff and parents may also make suggestions for prayer by placing it in our **compassion** prayer basket.

### Clergy Worship

This is led by members of St. Mary's church including the vicar, Father Jeff. This gives pupils the opportunity to explore the teachings of Jesus, our Vision and Values. This also includes time for reflection, prayer and a hymn.

### Vision and Values Worship

This is a chance to introduce new themes, explore the teachings of Jesus, Christianity and make links to other faiths, significant festivals and national awareness days. Worships are linked to our **school values** and **vision**. Vision and Values Worship also includes time for reflection, prayer and a hymn".

### Services in St. Mary's Church

During the year we hold a range of services at St. Mary's Church, some led by the children and others by the clergy. Key church services at St. Mary's include: Blessing Service, Bible Service, Harvest Festival, Christmas Service, Easter Service, Eucharist Service, and a Leavers' Service at the end of the school year. Parents and Governors are invited to join us.

### Class Assemblies

Each class shares their topic with the rest of the school and with their parents, once a year. Class assemblies include prayers and hymns.

## Aims

The daily worship offers our children opportunities to:

- Worship God
- Engage in and experience the importance of prayer, stillness, silence and self-reflection
- Consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore and develop their own beliefs
- Explore and share Christian beliefs and to appreciate and understand their significance for those who hold them
- Explore the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God
- See the importance of Bible teaching and how we can implement into our everyday life through our vision – '**True love shows itself in action**'. Think about the needs of others, show **compassion** and think about ways we can help others
- Develop a sense of community, providing time to celebrate the example of members of the school and community who have shown **service** and **compassion**
- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, thankfulness, friendship, endurance, forgiveness and wisdom and develop virtues that develop character and contribute to academic progress

Although flexible, the format of daily worship should usually include:

- A calm transition from school life into our time for worship with specially chosen 'sound of the week' music.
- A time for reflection on the theme of the worship – pupils are encouraged to be still and

- quiet and to respect others.
- The lighting of a candle at the start of prayers along with the words 'we light the candle to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world and is with us in our worship' to set the atmosphere and indicate a special time for the children to reflect and think.
  - Pupils are invited to join in with collective prayer and their own prayer. They are encouraged to be still and quiet in body and mind, to hold their hands for prayer or to sit with their hands in their laps to respect those who are participating in prayer. Pupils are encouraged to end the prayer by joining in with 'amen' to make the prayer their own.
  - Traditional prayers such as the Lord's prayer, our own St. Mary's prayer and prayers written by the pupils themselves.
  - The act of worship through singing hymns with pupils learning a bank of hymns throughout their journey at St. Mary's.
  - Pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in worship through discussion, sharing or ideas, sharing of prayers, acting and roleplay.
  - The timing of an act of worship is expected to be approximately 15 minutes.
  - We use a four-part model for worship: Gathering - we gather together and greet each other, Engaging - we engage with the big things and the little things in life, Responding - we respond together as individuals and Sending - we are sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the world. **'True love shows itself in action'**.
  - Staff leading the worship reflect upon it carefully afterwards, completing a log to aid future worships.

## **Expectations of People**

### Pupils

All children are present at daily worship (unless a parent requests that their child is withdrawn) and the school is committed to respecting each individual's faith and beliefs.

### Staff

The Collective Worship leader will prepare a half termly programme of daily worship inspired by the LDBS scheme of work and linked to the school vision and values. Each half term begins with a focus on our linked Bible story for that half term's value.

All class teachers and support staff attend the daily act of worship to participate in and respond to worship and reflection, develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

### Vicar and Christian leaders / groups

The Vicar, Christian leaders and local Christian groups lead some acts of daily worship. The Vicar is present whenever possible at the services in St Mary's Church.

## **Right to withdraw**

Parents may withdraw a child from collective worship on religious grounds, and are advised of this right through the school prospectus and online. Parents are asked to come and discuss this decision with the Headteacher and then make a formal written request. Pupils cannot be withdrawn from Collective Worship on educational grounds. If, for example, swimming clashes with a scheduled time of Collective Worship for the school, it is the class teacher's responsibility to organise a separate time of Collective Worship later in the day.

## **Monitoring**

The Assistant Headteacher who leads Collective Worship will monitor Collective Worship ensuring that those who regularly lead it are observed once a year. Worship Ambassadors, chosen from pupils in the juniors will regularly meet to share their experiences and views of worship at St. Mary's. The governors will be given feedback on the effectiveness of the Collective Worship in school on an annual basis.

## **Equal Opportunities**

St Mary's positively celebrates diversity and inclusion is core to its Christian ethos. The Governing Body recognises that no one should receive less favourable unlawful treatment than another on the grounds of gender, marital or civil partnership status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. It is the Governors' aim that no-one at the school should suffer unlawful direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on any of these grounds. The Governing Body is committed to embedding fairness and equality at the heart of the school community, and in all aspects of the school's policies, procedures and practices.