St Mark's CofE Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

'Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs'

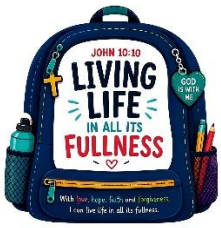
Psalm 100

Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Board of Education

Introduction

This policy is an agreed statement of the values and aims of collective worship at **St Mark's CofE Primary School**. It has been prepared by the governors and headteacher with assistance from other staff and diocesan advisers. Collective worship is valued as a central aspect of the life of our church school, through which children grow spiritually, emotionally, morally and culturally.

Collective worship is also a core part of helping children understand "Life In All Its Fullness", which is the school vision. It provides opportunities for children to think, engage, be challenged, and to grow in their understanding of our world and of life – both the seen and unseen. It also helps us to explore our "Four Ways To Flourish", too. Through collective worship, children understand what it means to value everyone, to develop their character, to develop their sense of awe and wonder, and to see how they can make a difference in our world. All of this is underpinned by our deeply rooted Christian values of Love, Hope, Faith and Forgiveness, which help us to live out a life in all its fullness.



Legal status of collective worship

In a Church of England school, worship must be in line with the trust deed of the school and will reflect the traditions of the Church of England, i.e. the Anglican tradition.

The right of withdrawal

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship. We ask for this to be discussed with the headteacher so the exact nature of worship is understood by the parents before this becomes a permanent arrangement. If parents nevertheless require their child to be withdrawn from collective worship, they will be required to advise the school on what alternative spiritual activity they wish their child to engage in during this time. Please be aware that this does not mean that the children will be exempt from the Christian ethos of the setting which underpins our teaching, learning and relationships.

Worship in our school should:

As worship:

- Be at a level to enable children and adults to explore their own understanding of God within a Christian framework
- Explain and promote the core Christian values of the setting
- Have Integrity as acts of Anglican worship whilst being *invitational, inclusive* and *inspirational*
- Be based on Biblical text or themes
- Be central in importance to the life of our school community, which is part of a wider community that embraces the whole world
- Mark the seasons and festivals of the Christian year
- Develop understanding of Anglican traditions such as the lighting of a candle or use of a cross

For people:

- Develop personal spirituality within the setting community through a range of experiences including individual and collective prayer

- Celebrate the God given gifts and talents of individuals
- Make a significant contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of members of the school community

Aims of our worship

- To promote the joy of worship as engaging, inspiring, inclusive and transformative
- To develop spirituality, morality, social and cultural values
- To give an opportunity to experience the meaning and significance of faith as revealed in the Bible
- To understand, celebrate and develop children's knowledge of Christian beliefs, celebrations, traditions and religious festivals in the Anglican Church's year
- Facilitate a deeper understanding of the Christian story narrative, from creation to the present day
- To appreciate that people, cultures and beliefs differ and to demonstrate respect, tolerance and generosity towards them
- To develop young children's sense of self-worth and to provide opportunities to celebrate achievements.
- To develop a caring attitude to others and a sense of community and loyalty
- To provide opportunities for children to plan, lead, contribute to, monitor and evaluate collective worship
- To invite clergy of the parish, other lay members of the parish and other Christian leaders in the community [as are acceptable to the parish church] to lead worship weekly

How we achieve our aims

We aim to promote collective acts of worship, which are rich, meaningful experiences that are appropriate and significant to the pupil's needs, age, development and interest by:

- Creating a sense of occasion and reverence
- Providing opportunities that develop pupil's awareness of what is beautiful, good, wonderful, awesome and puzzling in life experience
- Arranging worship at different places when possible, different times with different people and groupings, involving all members of the setting community at some time
- Planning and linking themes which focus on a particular idea/concept, i.e. the liturgical year; festivals and celebrations, our Christian values
- Using a wide range of resources, artefacts (from religious and secular sources), music, art, drama and external visitors to engage children's interest
- Encouraging children to participate and experience different styles of worship, e.g. prayer, praise, silence, rituals, and become familiar with the language of worship, Biblical readings and liturgy
- Providing opportunities for children and adults to reflect, contemplate their own thoughts, feelings and beliefs
- Using the centrality of prayer – personal silent prayer, personal shared prayers, collective prayers, writing prayers; all prayer will be invitational
- Involving young children and members of the wider community to participate in collective worship and activities within the parish
- Presenting and creating displays that promote and enhance spiritual ideas, thoughts and questions
- Through providing a peaceful environment enabling stillness, reflection and prayer as well as times for a joyous environment with singing, music, dance, drama, etc

Central attributes of an act of worship

The setting will endeavour to fulfil the following 'central attributes' of worship:

Gathering	Making worship a special time of the day.
Engaging	Using the best available techniques to stimulate interest in the content.
Responding	Ensuring there is time and opportunity for individual, group reflection and thought, so those attending can respond in a variety of ways.
Sending	Summarising the worship in a meaningful short message used to create an opportunity for those attending to implement the ideas covered and to conclude the worship.

Collective worship should be planned systematically, so that there is continuity, variety and clear focus on Christian stories, values and traditions. Worship is led by a variety of people that include school staff, children, representatives from the parish church and members of other Christian denominations.

The centrality of prayer

During the collective worship there will be a time for response and reflection, to ponder on a question, statement or thought. This may also be reflected in an invitational prayer, offered spontaneously by a child or adult, read out or recited. This prayer can be displayed and used in class and setting reflective areas so that:

- Children understand the nature and purpose of prayer
- Children understand the part prayer may play in their lives and the life of the setting community
- Prayer contributes to the spiritual development of individuals and the whole setting community
- There will also be appropriate opportunities for prayer and other worship activities, including reflection, outside of collective worship

The school has a 'reflective garden' to engage children in prayer, regular prayer spaces as well as designated special spaces in classrooms or shared areas.

Planning and Organisation

Planning

Collective worship is planned systematically so that there is continuity, variety and clear focus on Christian beliefs and festivals.

Organisation

Monday	Key Stage or Whole School Worship
Tuesday	Singing Worship
Wednesday	Class Worship
Thursday	OPAL Worship
Friday	Celebration Worship

Resources

The setting has resources available to support collective worship and these are stored in the RE/Prayer Spaces Cupboard, this includes artefacts and music resources. Electronic resources can be found on the school network in the Worship Folder.

Communication

The school will communicate with parents our collective worship themes via newsletters and display screens.

Parental involvement

Parents will be kept informed about the themes of worship at the school through our weekly newsletter.

Responsibilities

The normal expectation within our church school is for all staff to view collective worship as an important part of their own well-being and spiritual development as human beings. The school will endeavour to timetable staff so all have an opportunity to attend regularly. Staff will received collective worship training from the Diocesan Education Team with regular updates.

At interview all applicants are informed that the setting holds acts of collective worship that promote the Christian ethos and values of the school. The normal expectation will be that staff will participate in and lead collective worship. The school welcomes offers from any member of staff who feels confident to lead worship.

Nikki Ford is responsible for co-ordinating the programme of induction and training for staff.

Jo Rosso is responsible for planning and organising collective worship.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of collective acts of worship is undertaken by governors and key staff. This process supports the school's self-evaluation and staff development and appraisal. All leaders of collective worship are asked to evaluate continuously, reflect after every worship, to develop and improve their practice.

Review

This policy should be reviewed annually. References to 'parish' refer to the local parish church to which the school is linked.

Policy reviewed by governors: September 2026

Appendices

APPENDIX 1a - Collective worship observation form and 1b Observation pointers

APPENDIX 2 - Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year (*This is for reference, a calendar for each year, showing the dates of festivals and times when liturgical colours are changed is sent out by the diocese*).

APPENDIX 1a Collective worship observation form

Setting _____

Leader: _____ Observer: _____

Worship Theme: _____ Time Allocation: _____ minutes

Collective worship in Church of England Settings should at its simplest create a time and space where we can come closer to God and God can come closer to us.

CRITERIA	ASPECT	COMMENT
Central Attribute 1 **Gathering**	Is there a real sense of a very special time in the day? Immediate impact, relevant, welcoming, stimulates interest or dull, uninteresting, lacks focus.	
Central attribute 2 **Engaging**	Does the worship leader capture the attention of the children and staff so they become actively engaged in the content? Excellent - well expressed, stimulating or poor communicator Convincing, enthusiastic, warm or lack of rapport.	
Central attribute 3 **Responding**	Does the leader allow for a response from the children and adults – whether active or passive, noisy or quiet?	
Central attribute 4 **Sending**	Does the leader send us out with a clear "thought for the day" something that changes our behaviour in some way? Clear summary, learners given opportunity to reflect or unclear what the message was.	
In addition		
Content	Clear Christian / Biblical content and teaching. Woolly, lack of structure, largely secular.	
Summary		

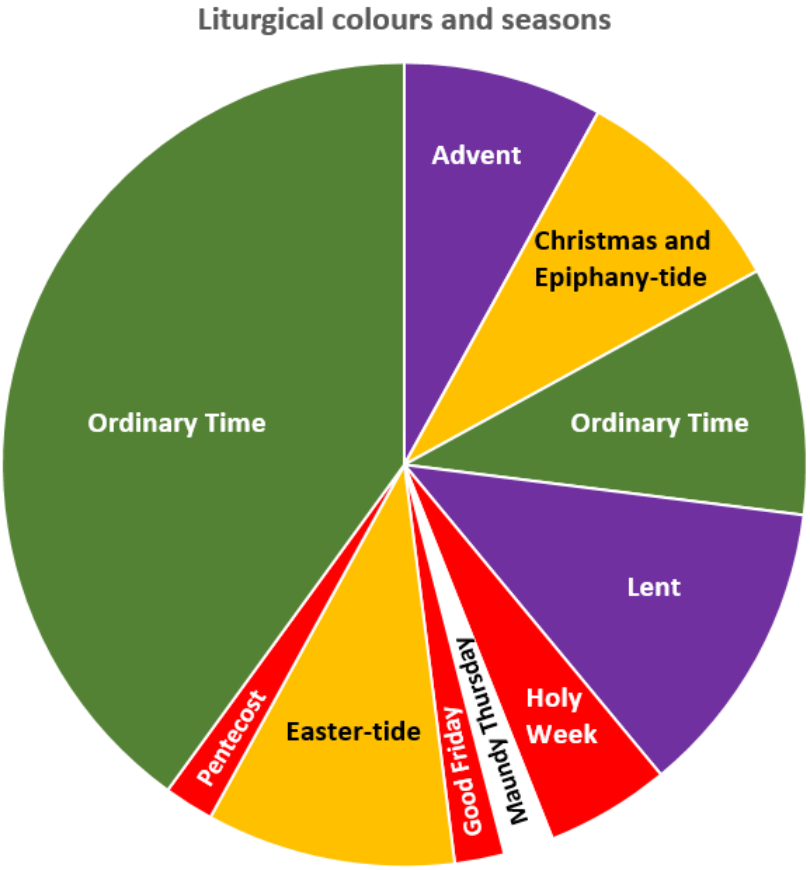
APPENDIX 1b Observation form pointers for consideration - NB not a check list.

Collective worship in Church of England Settings should at its simplest create a time and space where we can come closer to God and God can come closer to us.

Gathering	Music (entry/exit)	appropriate / random, linked to theme, creates atmosphere, delivers a message
	Welcome	whether greetings exchanged and introduction made
	Atmosphere	extent to which act of worship is portrayed as special and important
Engaging	Focus	table, cloth, Bible, cross, candle, artefacts ICT / Visual / drama provides appropriate, linked relevant visual/factual information
	Awe and Wonder	sense given of marvel of world / creation
	Conviction	extent to which message is clear and compelling or words lack power and appear as paying lip service
Responding	Participation	extent to which learners involved in responding, partner talk, opportunities for some to participate directly
	Singing	whether there was appropriate hymn / song, quality, enthusiasm of participation
	Reflection	learners given time to pause and reflect
	Prayers	extent to which prayers are appropriate and learner friendly, whether learners are invited to respond
Sendi	Dismissal	whether the person takes charge, smiles, engages with some learners, says 'thank you'
Other aspects	Distinctively Anglican	clear reference is made to the Bible and Anglican Christian teaching and belief e.g. the Trinity - God, Jesus and Holy Spirit
	Inclusive	the worship reflects the multi faith / cultural nature of the world and feels inclusive to those of other and no faith
	Dynamism & Theatricality	was it a performance rather than an act of worship
	Open or Closed	does the leader give room for the children to build their own meanings / connections / links or are they told what to think?
	Age Appropriateness	are the language, concepts, ideas appropriate? Is it meaningful for the youngest yet appropriate for the oldest?

APPENDIX 2

Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year



Season	Liturgical Colour	Description
Advent	Purple	The period covering the four Sundays before the 25th December: Period of preparation for Christmas.
Christmas-tide	White or Gold	25th December to 2nd February
Gap Between	Green	Gap of Green until Tuesday before Ash Wednesday
Lent	Purple	The 40 days of preparation for Easter
Maundy Thursday	White or Gold	The Last Supper
Good Friday	Red	The Crucifixion
Easter-tide	White or Gold	Easter Day until Pentecost
Pentecost	Red	50 Days after Easter (lasts a week)
The Rest of the Year	Green	From Pentecost to Advent

Meaning of the colours	Purple	Penitence, preparation
	White or Gold	Joy, purity, innocence, Saints who are not martyrs
	Red	Fire & Blood, therefore Holy Spirit and Martyrdom
	Green	Everything else

In some places	Blue	The Blessed Virgin Mary
	Pink	Mothering Sunday (4th in Lent) and 3rd in Advent

There are different versions of the colours used.
Please consult your parish for the colours used locally.

St Mark's Church of England Primary School
Founded 1 September 1996

Terms of Union with the National Society

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church at parish and diocesan level. The school aims to serve its community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all its pupils.

The governing body will ensure that the school is led by a headteacher who is committed, with the help of staff, to preserve and develop the Christian character of the school in its day to day activities and in the curriculum.

The governing body will endeavour to ensure that the staff of the school include teachers who are practising members of the Church or of Christian religious denominations with which the Church enjoys good relations and ecumenical co-operation.

The governing body will offer a school life that incorporates the values of the Christian faith.

The governing body will ensure that all pupils each day engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church.

The headteacher and the governing body will ensure that religious education is given at least five per cent of curriculum time and that such religious education is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church.

The school should observe the major Christian festivals and, where those of other faiths are present in the school, ensure that they are able and encouraged to mark their major festivals with integrity.

The school should maintain and develop an active and affirming relationship with the parish church of the parish in which the school is situated or a parish church of one of the parishes which the school serves.

The school should proclaim that it is a Church school on its external signboard and on its stationery and make appropriate use of Christian symbols inside and outside the school.

Produced by the Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Board of Education to mark the 200th anniversary of the National Society in 2011.

References in these Terms of Union to "the Church" are to the Church of England in respect of schools situated in the Provinces of Canterbury or York.

The governing body and the trustees of the school must ensure that the school is designated by the Secretary of State under section 69 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (or any successor legislation) as having a religious character that is Church of England.

The instrument of government of the school should describe its ethos in the manner set out above or in words to the same effect: