



“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Policy	Collective Worship
Policy lead	Mrs J. Hackney, Collective Worship Lead
Approved by	Standards Committee
Date adopted	September 2026
Review cycle	Annual
Next review	September 2027, or earlier on publication of revised DfE guidance on collective worship
Version	2026-27

We are a Christian school where quality and opportunities make a difference. We value all children as unique ‘Children of God’ and nurture each other to show **LOVE** in our relationships and **RESPECT** for all. We foster **HOPE** within our community and encourage children to find **PEACE** by creating times and places for stillness and reflection. We build **FRIENDSHIP** that is resilient and faithful, and we show **COMPASSION** for our community, our country and the wider world. We celebrate **COURAGE**, and we share **JOY** — the value at whose heart, as our mission statement sets out, sits collective worship contributing to the spiritual development of both children and adults. We strive for excellence, inspiring dreams both now and in the future, through...

‘Loving, Learning, Laughing in the Light of Jesus’.

Collective Worship Policy

As a Church of England school worship is central to Forsbrook CE Primary School.

Worship is...

*Giving honour and reverence to a supreme being.
Christian worship is concerned with bringing praise, prayer,
thanksgiving and adoration to God.*

It is an activity of response: in words, actions and thoughts.

Mission statement

Collective worship plays a central part in the life of Forsbrook CE Primary School. As an expression of the Christian ethos and spiritual life of the school, it offers the whole school community opportunities to participate in the expression of Christian worship, valued and honoured through the school's Anglican foundation. This is set within the context of the corporate community of our school and its historic partnership with St Peter's Church, Forsbrook, our parish church in the Diocese of Lichfield. We affirm every individual's unique contribution, regardless of age, gender, ability, background or religion.

Legal requirements:

Trust Deed:

Our daily act of collective worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school, which requires worship to be consistent with Church of England principles and practices.

DfE Guidance:

We follow current Department for Education guidance: [Collective Worship in Schools](#).

Circular 1/94 remains the extant national guidance on collective worship. In February 2026 the Department for Education confirmed its intention to replace it with updated guidance reflecting the current legal framework. This policy will be reviewed when that guidance is published.

School Standards and Framework Act 1998:

All pupils at maintained schools must take part in a daily act of collective worship (section 70 and Schedule 20). As a voluntary controlled school with a religious character, our collective worship is in accordance with the school's trust deed and with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. The requirement for worship to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" applies to schools without a religious character and is not the basis for worship at this school.

Worship and/or Assemblies

- Weekly Values Celebration assemblies celebrate pupils demonstrating Christian school values and gifts from God.
- Assemblies throughout the year include parents and carers.
- These assemblies incorporate prayer and thanksgiving and are recognised as acts of worship.
- Worship may also include digital or online elements, ensuring accessibility for all pupils.

Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

All Church of England schools — whether voluntary aided, voluntary controlled or foundation — are inspected on collective worship and its impact on the whole school community under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. Inspection is carried out under the SIAMS Framework 2023 (revised 2024). That

framework does not set out a list of criteria to be met; instead it asks Inspection Questions about impact and allows leaders to explain the school's context and the reasons for its decisions. As a voluntary controlled school, Forsbrook CE Primary School is inspected against six Inspection Questions. Collective worship is the subject of Inspection Question 3: **How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?** In answering it, inspectors explore:

- how the school's theologically rooted Christian vision and its Anglican foundation shape the worship and spiritual life of the school
- the extent to which the worship life of the school is inclusive, invitational and inspiring for pupils and adults alike
- how collective worship enables pupils and adults to flourish spiritually, and what pupils and adults in this school understand spirituality to mean
- how collective worship enables participants to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and a Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, including through prayer, reflection and stillness offered so that all may engage with integrity
- how pupils, staff, governors, clergy and families contribute to the planning, leadership and evaluation of collective worship

The right of withdrawal – see appendix

We recognise the right of withdrawal from collective worship for pupils at the request of their parents. We encourage discussion with the relevant individuals to ensure that there is understanding of the aims and objectives of worship, and of the practical arrangements involved. Requests are handled sensitively, promptly and without stigma to the child, and a written record of each request and of the arrangements agreed is kept by the school. The right of a pupil to withdraw themselves applies only to pupils in the sixth form and therefore has no application at this school.

Staff. Teachers cannot be required to attend or to lead collective worship except where the law expressly provides otherwise; particular provisions apply in voluntary controlled schools with a religious character under sections 58 to 60 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Any member of staff wishing to discuss this should speak to the Headteacher.

Worship is Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring

Inclusive:

Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. Pupils, their families and other adults encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our school will come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. Pupils are given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There is space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider.

It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship.

Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. Although part of a national legislative framework, collective worship in the Church school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

Invitational:

Parents, pupils and adults can encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There is no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship provides the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity.

The metaphor of 'warm fires and open doors' captures this idea. The warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. There is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith. Importantly the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable.

Pupils and adults should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer is always accompanied by the option to reflect. Music and liturgies used in worship will reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship, it should connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used reflects the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community.

Inspiring:

Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter to be inspirational. Worship is formational and transformational: it enables pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It motivates pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, they are inspired to become courageous advocates of causes.

It encourages them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions. There will always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools and so the Church of England recognises the right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils who wish to exercise this option.

Aims of worship

The gathering of pupils each day incorporates collective worship. Worship will:

- Be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils.
- Be provided in a variety of settings, groupings and timings, with a variety of leaders including our Church worker, visiting speakers, clergy from St Peter's and school staff
- Give children daily opportunities to reflect and pray at the end of Collective Worship.
- Be a collaboration between the clergy of St Peter's Church, Forsbrook and the school in preparing and delivering worship services at St Peter's Church.
- Be planned and reflected upon with the influence of our Worship Committee

Worship should provide opportunities to:

- enhance the spiritual development and response of pupils
- foster reflection, meditation, prayer and silence
- create an atmosphere in which God is both normal and natural
- foster a reverential attitude to God
- foster empathy and imagination, enabling pupils to participate in a variety of ways
- actively involve pupils in the delivery of worship in creative and imaginative ways including reading, poetry, drama, dance, quiet / silent reflection, prayer, singing.
- explore and enjoy praise, prayer and the rituals of Christianity (the Anglican tradition in particular)
- affirm the Christian faith and the central Christian status of Jesus as the Son of God
- affirm the Christian belief in the Trinity and explore the meaning of each person of the Trinity
- enable pupils to reflect on the experiences of Christian adherents
- foster and value a search for a faith to live by
- explore the school's Christian values to deepen pupils' understanding of them and how they relate to the school, local community and wider world

- learn about and reflect upon Christian teaching, Biblical material and Christian festivals, in a way that relates to the pupils' experience and to living together in community
- worship together rather than apart
- provide an evocative setting for worship that fosters spiritual growth and reflection
- experience a broad spectrum of Christian tradition (various expressions of worship)
- inspire pupils to explore further their own faith and tradition
- encourage pupils and staff to plan, participate and lead in worship
- develop a sense of community and shared values
- consider the needs of others and to foster charitable works
- celebrate the highest achievements of the human spirit
- celebrate achievements of members of the school in every aspect of school life
- foster a thought-provoking atmosphere allowing for spiritual reflection and response
- make regular use of local church buildings for worship

Other opportunities that worship can offer are:

- celebrate the beliefs and cultures of others particularly those represented in our school
- celebrate the achievements of members of the school community
- reinforce school expectations, good behaviour and school routines
- share local school and community information.

Management of worship

Responsibility for collective worship rests with the governing body, which makes the arrangements for worship after consultation with the Headteacher. The role of planning, resourcing, managing and evaluating worship is delegated to the Collective Worship Lead. In addition, all teachers in a church school are 'spiritual leaders' and have a responsibility to help pupils develop spiritual awareness. Pupils are also part of the planning and delivery of collective worship, principally through the Worship Committee.

Monitoring, evaluating & action planning worship

Worship is monitored and evaluated at least termly to ensure that it meets the needs of all who take part. The views of all stakeholders are sought, including those of pupils, teachers, governors, clergy and parents. A yearly action plan, which feeds into the school development plan, is written and revised to ensure that worship remains relevant and up to date.

Worship themes and current practice

- Weekly themes based on Christian values, Anglican Lectionary, and festivals.
- Delivered in a variety of settings and groupings with varied leaders (staff, clergy, visiting speakers).
- Music, liturgy, and stories reflect Anglican tradition and broader Christian expression.
- Digital or online resources used where appropriate to ensure inclusivity.

Inclusion and accessibility

Collective worship is planned so that it is accessible to all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Reasonable adjustments are made to enable every child to take part fully, and the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Worship avoids assuming faith on the part of those present and offers all who attend the freedom to engage with integrity, whatever their faith or belief.

Related policies and guidance

- Religious Education Policy; SEND Policy and SEND Information Report; Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan
- Church of England Education Office, Inclusive, Invitational, Inspiring: Collective Worship in Church of England Schools (2021)

- Church of England, Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good
- SIAMS Framework 2023 (revised 2024)
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998, section 70 and Schedule 20; section 71 (right of withdrawal); sections 58 to 60 (staff)
- DfE Circular 1/94: Religious Education and Collective Worship

Appendix

Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education and Collective Worship March 2017

Collective Worship

The **1944 Education Act** gave the right to withdraw from RE or collective worship to parents who wished their children to receive a different form of RE or worship. This right is also confirmed in section 71 of the ***School Standards and Framework Act 1998***. In the case of collective worship, the government guidance document is ***Circular 1/94: Religious Education and Collective Worship***.

Collective worship in all Church of England schools and academies should honour the school's trust deed and Christian foundations. Worship is central to school life, offering an opportunity for the whole school community to explore the distinctive beliefs and narrative that underpins the school's Anglican foundations and distinctive Christian character. Worship is the responsibility of the governing body in conjunction with the headteacher, working in partnership with the staff and the local parish church.

Our Church of England schools should strive to ensure they are consistently excellent, distinctive, and inclusive, and that the whole curriculum is underpinned by Christian values. Religious Education is an important part of the curriculum in all Church of England schools and academies. Its nature, objectives, and content should be shared with parents each term to ensure that parents are able to recognise that RE is of educational value to all pupils, whatever their belief background. In the same way, collective worship should lie at the heart of school life, proclaiming its distinctive character and faith in a way that is relevant, inclusive and that leads each pupil a little further in their spiritual journey. In this way, the likelihood for parental requests for withdrawal should be reduced. However, when they are made they must be handled accordingly to the legal guidance, while there is scope for a little realism and adaptability in order to ensure the best for every pupil.

In many of our schools within the Diocese of Lichfield, there is a large percentage of children whose families are members of another faith. It is the purpose and duty of every church school to be distinctive as a Church of England school. In each school, it is part of the mission of the church to welcome those of other faiths and no faith. In most cases, parents will have chosen the school for their child, making a specific choice of the school because of the ethos and education it offers. In a small number of cases, parents of other faiths will have been offered a place at a church school because no other school has a place for their child within a reasonable catchment area.

The right to withdraw from collective worship should be at the instigation of the parents. The right of a pupil to withdraw themselves applies only to pupils in the sixth form and therefore does not arise in a primary school.

The right of withdrawal from collective worship

The right of withdrawal from collective worship would normally be exercised through the physical withdrawal of the pupil from the place where the act of worship is taking place. Indeed the school could insist that this is the way the right is to be implemented. If, however, both the parent and the school agree that the pupil

should be allowed to remain physically present during the collective worship but not take part in it, nothing in the law prevents this.

Experience suggests that, to avoid misunderstanding, a Headteacher / Principal will find it helpful to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right to withdrawal:

- the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part;
- the practical implications of withdrawal; and
- 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 a particular faith or denomination, the governors and Headteacher / Principal will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school; and
- that the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in **section 78 of the Education Act 2002, formerly section 1 of the Education Reform Act 1988. (Circular 1/94)**