



Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School
Teaching and Living the Christian Way of Life
Building Our Lives on Jesus

Collective Worship Policy

Approved: November 2026

Signed

Review Date: Spring 2029

MISSION STATEMENT AND INTRODUCTION

This Policy is carried out within the context and spirit of the school's Mission Statement. It supports and reinforces the aims of Thurlaston Church of England (Aided) Primary School, valuing all children equally.

Teaching and Living the Christian Way of Life - Building our lives on the teaching of Jesus

The ethos of the school, encompassing all that we stand for, is reflected in and expressed through Collective Worship; it derives from the Christian tradition and seeks to activate our beliefs and values which are set out, clearly, in the school's documents.

Collective Worship, within a Christian context, plays an important part in the life of our school. It is an oasis in the school day when children meet together with members of staff in a calm and peaceful atmosphere and where all present are given the opportunity to reflect and participate. It is regarded as 'quality' time and represents something special or separate from ordinary school routine.

DEFINITIONS

Worship: can be defined as paying homage to (revering) that which is of worth ("Worth-ship.") Religious Worship is the acknowledgement of 'worth' which is attributable to a supreme being. Worth can also be registered in other people and in values and attitudes.

School Assembly: is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself.

Corporate Worship: is a gathering of a body ('corpus') of believers and pre-supposes a particular religious commitment.

Collective Worship: is a gathering of a 'collection' of people of diverse, religious, agnostic and non-religious backgrounds and does not pre-suppose any particular religious commitment.

NB. We note that Collective Worship and Assembly are not one and the same thing. They are, in essence, different from each other, but in practice they often overlap.

RATIONALE – LEGAL

- **Collective Worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school which requires worship to be consistent with the principles and practices of the Church of England and will, therefore, be wholly Christian in character.**
- The 1988 Education Reform Act states that Collective Worship should be part of a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and society.
- All maintained schools – including church schools – must provide a daily act of Collective Worship for all registered pupils.

RATIONALE – RELIGIOUS/EDUCATIONAL

Collective Worship:-

- gives children the opportunity to enter into experiences which lie at the heart of religion; these experiences help them to learn about religious worship and provide a framework for later understanding;
- fosters a reverential attitude to God, the divine, the transcendent;
- encourages pupils to consider fundamental questions about the purpose of being and about moral and ethical stances;
- provides an opportunity, for those who can use it, to participate in religious worship;
- allows us to learn and celebrate values we hold to be important;
- brings children together, enabling them to experience the security of belonging to a community with an identity of its own;
- is the source of much interesting and thought provoking knowledge;
- offers pleasurable expression through literature, art, music and drama;
- makes an important, though not exclusive, contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

“Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.”

(DfEE – Circular 1/94)

The following principles guide our approach to Collective Worship at Thurlaston Church of England (Aided) Primary School.

- Collective Worship should have a sense of occasion.
- Collective Worship should provide experiences within which pupils' spiritual development may flourish.
- Collective Worship should be a means of expressing the ethos and values of the school.
- Collective Worship should be educational and should contribute to the Religious Education of all pupils.
- Collective Worship should be shaped to the needs of the school, (time, place, content, style etc.)
- We should provide a varied pattern of worship to broaden pupils' experience of its different forms.
- Collective Worship should recognise that the school includes children from different religious and non-religious backgrounds.
- During Collective Worship some will be worshipping and some will be experiencing something approaching worship; others will be finding out what it is like to worship by being with those who are.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Collective Worship are to:-

- affirm the Christian faith and the Christian status of Jesus as God, the Son;
- introduce pupils to the practice of religious worship through music, art, story, poetry, movement and prayer;
- create a warm, caring and respectful atmosphere in assemblies, conducive to worship; including the manner of entry and exit;
- encourage, in children, a thoughtful and reflective attitude;
- help pupils experience a sense of awe, wonder, reverence and inner stillness;
- enable pupils to use silence for reflection and contemplation;
- raise pupil's curiosity about the ultimate mysteries of life;
- enable pupils to learn about and consider in depth Christian teaching, Christian festivals and biblical material;
- help pupils appreciate that we are 'stewards' of God's world;
- enable pupils to reflect upon their own beliefs in relation to those of others;
- enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- guide children towards the spiritual and religious options open to them;
- help children distinguish between right and wrong;
- affirm pupils' personal worth and responsibility;
- celebrate individual and collective achievements;
- develop a sense of community within the school;
- celebrate religious festivals and special occasions with specified worship.

MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Foundation of the school is honoured and that the worship policy is firmly based upon the intentions set down in the Trust Deed.
- Ensuring that the Collective Worship Policy is put into practice and monitored by the appropriate Governor.
- Engaging in SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections to fulfil Section 23 Inspection of a church school.

The Collective Worship Co-ordinator has responsibility for managing the worship on a day to day basis, ensuring that all legal requirements are complied with. The co-ordinator also keeps in touch with national developments in school worship and acts in an advisory capacity, supporting colleagues. They also arrange the following:

- Themes and approaches
- Staff training and support
- Development of resources
- Pupil participation and response

Monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship is an on-going process carried out on a weekly and termly basis so that effective review can take place by the appointed date. Governors also evaluate collective worship through appointing a governor responsible for it.

The Right of Withdrawal from Collective Worship

At Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship for any reason. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history and citizenship. This will be granted immediately.

However, we would ask any parent considering this to contact the headteacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Collective Worship at our school. (But there is no obligation for parents to do this.)

Children should not be withdrawn from Collective Worship for other purposes, e.g. reading, music lessons, to do so is to break the law.

ORGANISATION

Daily acts of Collective Worship involving the whole school take place in the school hall four days a week. See appendix 1 for more information on a typical weekly structure.

Each week the worship follows a planned theme. The themes are planned a term in advance. The structure of assemblies includes a selection of the following: music, a song of praise, a story or talk, a reading from the Bible, a period of reflection, prayer, liturgy, the Lord's Prayer and a reminder each day of the theme for the week.

The structure of the collective worship should take the form of:

Gathering – an indication of the beginning of the time together e.g. prayer, a question or liturgy
Engaging – introduction of the theme for the assembly, teaching of a concept or collective celebration

Responding – giving the children a chance to reflect on the message or theme. This can be through a reading, song, time of silence and other creative means

Sending – an indication of the close of the Collective Worship

One day a week, the act of worship takes place in the classroom, sometime during the day at the discretion of the teacher but usually between 10:25 and 10:45, and may last up to 20 minutes. It focuses on the value for the “month” from the schools Christian Values.

All staff are encouraged to attend collective worship when possible.

SPECIAL ASSEMBLIES AND VISITORS

Within a Christian context, special assemblies are held for Harvest, Christmas, Easter and End of the School Year. Parents, Governors and visitors are especially welcome to attend. The school worships in church on the following occasions: Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Other opportunities to worship at the church building will be organised by the coordinator.

The local clergy regularly take collective worship. The church runs ‘Open the Book Club’ which regularly leads Collective Worship. Occasionally outside speakers, such as representatives from charitable organisations will also be invited to lead Collective Worship.

THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN LEADING WORSHIP

Children from Class 4 will be given the opportunity to be on the ‘worship team’. The children will be able to regularly help lead Collective Worship under the guidance of the adult responsible on the given day. Children will be involved daily with readings, prayers, leading the gathering and sending and any other ways directed by the staff member leading the assembly. For the Gold Award collective worship the worship leads will choose the gathering and sending, prayers, the song and a bible reading.

The worship team will also take responsibility for practical issues including the PowerPoints, making sure the room has been set up appropriately and tidied up afterwards.

During class collective worship, children in other classes may be invited to lead prayers and readings.

ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP

“There are times when worship will be quiet, contemplative and serene and others when laughter, music and dance will be the appropriate form of expression.”

Atmosphere -

is all-important in creating the right foundation for Collective Worship. Quiet, orderly behaviour and respectful attitudes on entering, leaving and throughout the assembly are expected. Staff enhance the atmosphere by their presence and participation. A covered table with a cross and a bible help to set the scene.

Music -

is played at the beginning and end of the assembly sometimes accompanied by a visual presentation.

Stories and talks -

are carefully chosen to fulfill the objectives of Collective Worship. Stories of a religious or secular nature may be used whilst personal anecdote from pupils, teachers and visitors is effective in expressing that which is important in our own lives. Particular emphasis is laid upon helping children to understand themselves better, to develop empathy and to face up to moral issues.

Songs -

are chosen from a wide variety of traditional and modern hymns and choruses. One is used at each assembly, relative to the theme. Most are displayed using a data projector but some are learned by heart and actions are incorporated. Hymns and songs create the opportunity for

children to express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to put into words; and they provide a real source of pleasure.

Prayer and reflection -

are the most personal part of an act of worship. Collective Worship in school should provide opportunities for children to be taken to the threshold of prayer, and to cross it if they wish, in a way that respects the integrity of all present. Participation in prayer can never be imposed but we stress the need for stillness, reflection and respect for others. Silence, written prayers, impromptu prayers, The Lord's Prayer and children's prayers. Reflection and thinking time are given some direction by the leader in order to concentrate pupils' response.

Scripture -

sentences may be quoted from the Bible. Longer passages may be used as readings.

Presentation -

sets the tone within the act of worship. In keeping with the reverent atmosphere, use is also made of visual aids, artefacts, drama, demonstration, video and powerpoint presentations.

CONTENT

Planning – is the responsibility of the individuals or groups taking the Collective Worship. The Diocesan Themes are used to give suggestions and some structure for the year but do not need to be adhered to slavishly. Each time the whole school meets for Collective Worship, the adult leading the time should complete a planning sheet and this should also indicate the role the worship team will take during the Collective Worship.

Themes might have a specific religious base such as 'the early Christian Church' or 'miracles of Jesus,' or they may wish to reflect a theme common to all religions such as 'creation' or be concerned with common values held by religious and non-religious people alike such as 'caring and sharing.' Themes are closely related to the school community and are often illustrated by stories of human endeavour. At Thurlaston Church of England (Aided) Primary School we use the Diocesan Themes as a basis for our Collective Worship.

Communion will be chosen as the theme of at least one collective worship time per year. This is to help the children understand the importance of the celebration to the Christian community. However, staff and children will not be given the opportunity to partake in this during the Collective Worship.

Links with R.E. and the Curriculum are incorporated wherever possible. Common themes link R.E. and Collective Worship. The apt choice of story can link worship with current topic work e.g. 'Caring' = 'Florence Nightingale' = 'Victorians'. Assemblies can be followed up in the classroom by further discussion and emphasis throughout the day. There is often an overlap between Collective Worship and Personal and Social Education.

N.B. No worship programme can ever be entirely pre-planned. There will always be the spontaneous moment or occasion when it is important, spiritually, to focus on the immediate, so that pupils become aware of how the spiritual dimension transcends all our experience. Do not worry if the theme is neglected, as long as this is recorded!

RESOURCES

- Staff, pupils, visiting speakers.
- Selection of religious artifacts.
- Religious/informative websites see appendix 2.
- Selection of assembly topic books for teachers.
- Primary Assembly File.
- Selection of assembly song books.
- Piano, Music, CDs with spiritual, classical, folk, ethnic.
- Data projector and other IT equipment.
- Powerpoint presentations of hymns and songs.

IMPACT - RECORDS AND ASSESSMENT

Themes for Collective Worship are noted on the termly rota, a copy of which is given to each person taking Collective Worship. Stories, songs, prayers/thoughts and music are entered on the daily Collective Worship planning sheets, kept in the hall. These are monitored and collected by the coordinator.

Children will be given regular opportunity, in discussion with the coordinator, to evaluate times of collective worship. Feedback can be used to improve and contribute to collective worship. Children and staff may also evaluate some sessions of Collective Worship in agreement with the leader, however this will not be done every session in order to make the time together not feel like a 'performance.'

Staff meetings are used for discussion and the update of information as and when necessary.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All pupils have equal opportunity to take part in Collective Worship and to benefit from the experience. The school prospectus informs parents of their right to withdraw pupils from Collective Worship.

MULTICULTURALISM

A variety of multicultural material is available throughout the school. Stories are shared and festivals celebrated. Tolerance and understanding of other religions is encouraged.

ROLE OF CO-ORDINATOR

- To write the school's policy for Collective Worship in consultation with foundation governors.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of and use the policy document.
- To review the policy on a regular basis.
- To plan an overall balanced programme of worship for the year.
- To draw up Collective Worship rotas.
- To involve colleagues, pupils and visitors in worship.
- To advise on planning, ideas and resources.
- To be responsible for ordering, maintaining and displaying resources.
- To administer the budget for Collective Worship.
- To ensure that Collective Worship maintains a high profile in the school.
- To monitor and evaluate, with others, Collective Worship in all its forms.
- To report to the governors.
- To ensure display boards in the hall support a conducive environment in which Collective Worship can take place.
- To arrange INSET for staff as necessary.

- To keep up to date with recent publications, attend Diocesan courses and disseminate information and feedback to staff.
- To liaise with the incumbent, governing body and Diocesan officers on matters relating to Collective Worship.

REVIEW

The Governing Body will review this policy, formally, three years from the date of its adoption. Informal Review may be necessary in the interim and should take place as and when required.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

A typical weekly timetable for Collective Worship is as follows:

Monday 9:05 – 9:25	Whole School	Headteacher	Celebrating Achievement (9:05 to 9:25am) Open to Parents
Tuesday 10:25 – 10:45	Whole School	Staff member	Bible Stories- Chronologically
Wednesday 10:25 – 10:45	Class	Teacher led or class	Christian Values
Thursday 10:25 – 10:45	Whole School	Headteacher or visitor	Diocesan Theme
Friday 10:25 – 10:45	Whole School	Teacher or Open the Book Club	Diocesan Theme or children led

Appendix 2

Some useful websites giving resources for Collective Worship are:

Big start assemblies

Worship Workshop

SPCK assemblies.org.uk

Barnabas in schools

Freebibleimages.org

RE online