



Collective Worship Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body: October 2024

Date Last Reviewed: Sept 2024

Next Review Date: Sept 2027

Signed: *Laura Richards* (Headteacher)

Signed: *Roderick Clark* (Chair of Governors)

Our policy for collective worship is set in the context of and gives life to our Christian vision and values. It mirrors the Church of England Education Office guidance for collective worship ***Inclusive, invitational, inspiring 2021***.

The law

By law collective worship:

- must be provided for every registered child every day
- must be in accordance with the tenets of its foundation and consistent with the denomination or religious tradition of the school in school's with a religious character

Our theologically rooted Christian vision

“Let your light shine” [Matthew 5:16]

We have a strong vision rooted in ‘Let your light shine’ Matthew 5:16. Our vision means we work to ensure that all members of our school community flourish and shine. We reach out to everyone to maximise potential for all regardless of children’s lived experience.

Jesus says he is the “Light of the world”, who brings the “light of life” to his followers [John 8:12]. He tells us [Matthew 5:16]: “Let your light shine” so that other people see our good lives.

Our core Christian values

Our Christian Values are at the centre of everything we do at Southam St James C of E Academy. They help us live out the Christian Vision of the Multi Academy Trust of 'pursuing life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10)

Each half term, we focus on a different Christian Value. This is done through our Collective Worship and we also focus on Christian Values throughout our curriculum. Children have regular opportunities to reflect on each value and to develop an understanding of the value in action. Our visitors from St. James Church (Revd Vikki and the Open the Book Team), All Saints Church Ladbroke (Revd Andy) and the Congregational Church in Southam (Revd Neil) regularly lead our worship to help us to reinforce our understanding of each value as they share stories from the Bible. We also learn about the Language of Spirituality in our assemblies and use resources from the Diocese of Gloucester to support us with this.

The Half termly Christian values we explore and strive to live by are:

- Service
- Thankfulness
- Compassion
- Perseverance
- Creativity
- Justice
- Peace
- Wisdom
- Hope
- Humility
- Friendship
- Trust

Collective worship and the Church of England

‘Church of England schools are committed to offering high quality collective worship. They are places that recognise and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing the school’s Christian vision. In practice this means that structure, planning, evaluation, participation, collaboration, and inspection of worship are all taken seriously by the school and by diocese. We strive to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish and to ‘live life in all its fullness’ John 10:10. Collective worship is seen as more than a daily ‘awe and wonder’ moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.

We aim for collective worship to be truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality. This is an approach that seeks to meet the needs of all, wherever they may be on their journey of faith and belief.’

Inclusive, invitational, inspiring The Church of England education 2021

Inclusive, invitational, and inspiring

We work to ensure that everyone in the school family has an enriching experience in collective worship.

Inclusive

In our collective worship we meet, explore, question, and respond to others and, for some, to God. We seek to ensure that all pupils, their families and other adults encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. We recognise that pupils and staff in our schools come from different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. We acknowledge that everyone is at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. We give pupils the opportunity to think and ask questions. There is space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. We take care to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective worship will invite and welcome meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. We value pupils’ own experiences that they bring to worship. In our school inclusion is expressed through some pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. We ensure that our collective school grows out of the local context and out of pupils’ experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

Invitational

We aim for our worship to be consistently invitational. There is no compulsion for pupils to do or say anything that makes them uncomfortable. We provide opportunities for pupils 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. Pupils and adults are only invited to pray if they wish to do so and are invited to pray in their own way. Invitation to prayer is always to be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies used in worship reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship. It connects with the theme wherever possible. They are used to enable pupils to explore the sacred, to educate and engage. We strive to choose music to reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community and the spiritual life of our school.

Inspiring

Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in our school to be inspirational. Worship should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate 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, we aim for pupils and adults to be inspired to become courageous advocates for justice. Collective worship will encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

Right to withdraw

We acknowledge that there will always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools. The Church of England recognises the right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils who wish to exercise this option. Parents wishing to exercise their right to withdraw should contact the headteacher (Laura Richards) to discuss this.

Aims and objectives

Collective worship in Southam St James will:

- Explore our Christian vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on our core Christian values (above) and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to spiritual and academic flourishing.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship, and reflection.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

Provision

The rhythm of daily worship in our school allows pupils and adults to step away from the rigour of the classroom, creating a space for an encounter with faith in God. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on

larger questions of meaning and purpose. Our school's collective worship practices provide a shared set of symbols, signs, words and actions and traditions which give our community a language upon which it can draw, in times of joy and grief. Collective worship is key to fostering a sense of fellowship and cohesion within our school community. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, this time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community. Throughout the year, we meet to celebrate and mark seasons in the Church calendar, such as Lent and Advent. Other important events in the school year, such as the start and end of the academic year, are marked with special services, sometimes in church.

Pupils and adults will encounter the practice of regular prayer and worship as a normal part of the life of the school. These activities help provide a rhythm and stillness as a pattern of community life. Worship in our school will follow a recognisable structure that will help focus worship on important themes. We use a welcome or prayer followed by a consideration of a Bible passage or story that we can then reflect on through discussion, prayer, silent reflection or music. It will be something that pupils and adults may want to share and discuss with others in school, in the community and at home. In this way worship overflows into our lives and choices.

The general pattern of our worship reflects that of an Anglican church service:

Gather	Gathering in a space with others	Stillness Peace Reflection Together/community Welcome Releasing Expecting Setting the atmosphere	<i>Instrumental music Images A question to think about Worship songs to join in Lighting candles Bringing things to the worship table including liturgical colours Liturgical or other greeting</i>
Engage	Engaging, getting involved	Hearing Seeing Learning Wondering Asking Questioning Experiences Sharing Thinking	<i>Bible stories Other stories Images Film/drama News Vision and values Talk partners Something to hold Church calendar Community joys and sorrows</i>
Respond	Responding to an invitation	Taking action Acting for oneself Acting for others Living differently Putting something right Making a change Making a commitment	<i>Known prayers Prepared prayers Responsive prayers Sung prayers In the moment prayers Sensory prayers Prayer walk Teaspoon prayers (TSP)</i>

		Worshipping Praying Thinking about what I can learn about God, myself, others, the world	<i>Hand of prayer</i> <i>Prayer</i> <i>tree/box/space/garden</i> <i>Fill the blank prayers</i> <i>Meditation</i>
Send	Sending out/living life differently	Being inspired to: Live well or differently To pass the message on To encourage and be encouraged To love and be loved To value and be valued To make a difference <i>To make the world a little more like God intended</i>	<i>Known prayers</i> <i>Sending liturgy</i> <i>Take aways</i> <i>Clergy blessing</i> <i>Sing as you leave</i> <i>Leave in silence</i> <i>Leave when ready</i> <i>Leave to music</i>

Our pattern for worship:

Monday	10.10am	Christian values or Language of Spirituality focus	Teaching staff lead
Tuesday	10.10am	Varies weekly	Teaching staff lead
Wednesday	10.10am	Bible story focus or link to current Christian value	Open the Book, visiting clergy
Thursday	10.10am	Christian values or Language of Spirituality focus	Teaching staff lead
Friday	9.00am	Celebration Worship	SLT lead Parents/families invited

Developing staff expertise and knowledge

Within the context of our resources, we work to build up the expertise of staff, pupils, clergy, and other adults in facilitating collective worship in our school. We strive to ensure that:

- Worship leaders, including clergy, have access to regular training, primarily through the diocesan education team.
- Pupil worship leaders are supported, encouraged, and resourced to contribute to meaningful acts of worship.
- Worship leaders, including clergy, have access to high quality and current resources.
- Those from outside agencies and church groups invited into the school to facilitate are properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and the school's vision.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The governing body/academy board ensures monitoring of the impact of worship; this monitoring includes and meaningfully involves pupil voice.
- There is a named member of staff responsible for collective worship who ensures that appropriate policy and practice are in place and publicly available. This is Laura Richards

References:

Church of England vision for education:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/vision-education>

Church of England Education Office guidance on collective worship:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf>